

2022-23 WCCA HEAD START & EARLY HEAD START ANNUAL REPORT TO THE PUBLIC

Head Start and Early Head Start is a comprehensive no fee program for income-eligible families. WCCA Head Start and Early Head Start serve children from birth through five years, and pregnant women. It provides children with a developmentally appropriate early childhood education to help them gain the skills needed to succeed in school. WCCA Head Start and Early Head Start is funded through federal and state grants, and through generous donations provided by WCCA Board Members, Policy Council Members, Parent Volunteers, Community Volunteers, Staff and Local Area Churches, School Districts, Doctors, Dentists, and many community service organizations.

Funding Sources and Budgetary Expenditures

2022-23 FUNDING SOURCES		2022-23 FEDERAL EXPENDITURES		2022-23 STATE EXPENDITURES	
U.S. Dept. of HHS – Continuation Grant	2,362,058	Salaries and Fringe	1,784,360	Salaries and Fringe	288,143
U.S. Dept. of HHS—ARPA and CRRSA Funds (two-year funding; Half is reflected here)	143,008	Out-of-Area Travel	588	Travel	5,850
Minnesota Dept. of Education	316,442	Supplies	85,378	Office Expenses	2,385
Pathway II Funding	112,500	Equipment	0	Contractual	15,063
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture	79,789	Contractual	258,954	Program Expenses	5,001
In-Kind/Non-Federal Match Contributions	339,305	Other	205,549		
		Training	27,229		
Total Funds and Contributions	\$3,353,102	Federal Expenditures	\$2,362,058	State Expenditures	\$316,442

Key Information

An estimated 407 children age 0-4 from income-eligible families live in Wright County and western Hennepin County. Approximately 52% of eligible children were served by WCCA Head Start and Early Head Start.

	Average Monthly Enrollment	Participants Served	Families Served	Medical Exams Completed	Dental Exams Completed
Early Head Start	101%	40 children 10 pregnant women	33	54%	42%
Head Start	76%	158 children	138	72%	72%

Reviews

Agency Audit -The annual Agency Wide Audit was conducted for Funding Year 2022. There were no audit findings or questioned costs of any program conducted by WCCA, including Head Start.

Monitoring Reviews - During the week of November 26, 2018, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducted a remote Focus Area-1 federal monitoring review of the Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The report followed in January of 2019 and showed no findings. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducted the Focus Area-2 federal monitoring review the week of March 14, 2022. The monitoring review report followed April 22, 2022 with no areas of concern, no areas of non-compliance, and no deficiencies. The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Monitoring Review was completed during December 2019 with minor findings that were corrected.

Child Outcomes and School Readiness

WCCA Head Start & Early Head Start, along with all Head Start & Early Head Start programs nationwide, promotes the school readiness of low-income children by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development. All Head Start programs are mandated to use research-based assessment methods that reflect the characteristics described in the Head Start Act of 2007, Pub. L. No. 110-134, in order to support the educational instructions and school readiness of children in the program.

Early Head Start (EHS)

In January 2016, WCCA began home visiting services for infants, toddlers, and pregnant mothers. Currently Early Head Start (EHS) serves 31 children and pregnant mothers in the WCCA service area. EHS provides services throughout the entire year. Home visitors work closely with parents individualizing learning strategies and activities to help parents feel confident in their role as their children's first and most important teachers. Home visitors will continue to meet weekly with families and promote responsive and respectful learning environments by providing opportunities for exploration and meaningful play. Home visitors keep the same children on their roster through the child's time at EHS until they are ready to transition into the Head Start classrooms when they turn age three. Home visitors and families develop respectful and trusting relationship and is a foundation of success for families, children and staff. EHS families are encouraged to attend socializations twice each month. During socializations, families can come together and share parenting joys and challenges while reducing isolation they may be otherwise feeling.

WCCA EHS uses the *Partners for A Healthy Baby Curriculum*, which is a nationally recognized, researched based home visiting curriculum. It addresses issues of child health and development within the framework of complex needs of expecting and parenting families. EHS assesses each child's progress using the *Desired Results Developmental Profile* (DRDP) assessment tool. The

home visitors gather information to support children's learning and development. The DRDP consists of the following eight (8) domains- Approaches to Learning-Self Regulation, Social and Emotional Development, Language and Literacy Development, Cognition Including Math and Science, Physical Development-Health. The focus of each domain is on the acquisition of knowledge, skills, or behaviors that reflect each domain's developmental constructs.

Children's progress on the DRDP assessment is based on each individual child and the growth or regression that occurred. Other assessment tools, such as the tool used for Head Start children, show a child's assessments scores compared to overall average for the age. The data in table one below shows how infant and toddlers have made progress from the fall to spring checkpoint. As infants and toddlers continue to learn and master various skills, their development will progress from the left side to the right side of the DRDP data chart below.

Typically, EHS children transition to Head Start once they turn three years old, and are only assessed through their development to Building Earlier (BE). However, this year two children continued with the EHS program, as there was not space in their desired classroom to transition to Head Start. EHS used the DRDP Preschool Comprehensive View to assess these two children. This leads to scores moving into Building Middle (BM) and Building Later (BL).

Table 1: DRDP Group Progress Report (Early Head Start)

RE=Responding Earlier, RL=Responding Later, EE=Exploring Earlier, EM=Exploring Middle, EL=Exploring Later, BE=Building Earlier, BM=Building Middle, BL=Building Later, IE=Integrating Earlier

Approaches to Learning–Self-Regulation (ATL-REG)

The Approaches to Learning skills include attention maintenance, engagement and persistence, and curiosity and initiative. The Self-Regulation skills include self-comforting, self-control of feelings and behavior, imitation, and shared use of space and materials.

	RE	RL	EE	EL	BE	BM	BL	IE
Spring 2023		11%	21%	26%	37%	5%		
Winter 2023		26%	16%	16%	42%			
Fall 2022	21%	5%	16%	42%	16%			

Social and Emotional Development (SED)

The knowledge or skill areas in this domain include identity of self in relation to others, social and emotional understanding, relationships and social interactions with familiar adults, relationships and interactions with peers, and symbolic and sociodramatic play.

	RE	RL	EE	EL	BE	BM	BL	IE
Spring 2023		11%	16%	32%	32%	11%		
Winter 2023		26%	11%	32%	32%			
Fall 2022	16%	11%	21%	37%	16%			

Language and Literacy Development (LLD)

The LLD domain assesses the progress of all children in developing foundational language and literacy skills. These skills can be demonstrated in any language and in any mode of communication.

	RE	RL	EE	EM	EL	BE	BM	BL	IE
Spring 2023		16%	11%	5%	21%	42%	5%		
Winter 2023		26%		16%	21%	37%			
Fall 2022	16%	11%	11%	16%	21%	26%			

Cognition, Including Math and Science (COG)

The Math knowledge or skill areas in this domain include spatial relationships, classification, number sense of quantity, number sense of math operations, measurement, patterning, and shapes. The Science knowledge and skills in this domain include cause and effect, inquiry through observation and investigation, documentation and communication of inquiry, and knowledge of the natural world.

	RE	RL	EE	EL	BE	BM	BL	IE
Spring 2023		21%	5%	32%	37%	5%		
Winter 2023		21%	16%	37%	26%			
Fall 2022	16%	11%	21%	42%	11%			

Physical Development–Health (PD-HLTH)

The Physical Development knowledge or skill areas in this domain include perceptualmotor skills and movement concepts, gross locomotor movement skills, gross motor manipulative skills, fine motor manipulative skills, and active physical play. The Health knowledge or skill areas in this domain include nutrition, safety, and personal care routines (hygiene, feeding, dressing).

	RE	RL	EE	EM	EL	BE	BM	BL	IE
Spring 2023		5%	11%	5%	21%	53%	5%		
Winter 2023		16%	11%	11%	26%	37%			
Fall 2022	21%			21%	47%	11%			

Head Start (HS)

WCCA uses the *Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers* a research based curriculum that has thirty-six (36) learning areas organized into nine (9) broad domains (areas) of development and learning: Social-Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies, the Arts. For Dual Language Learners, children are also assessed in the domain English Language Acquisition. These objectives include dimensions that are specific descriptions of the objectives. This curriculum is aligned with the Head Start *Early Learning Outcomes Framework* (ELOF), which has five (5) overarching developmental domains – Approaches to Learning, Social and Emotional Development, Language and Literacy, Cognition, and Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development. WCCA’s School Readiness Goals are aligned with the ELOF and the Minnesota Early Indicators of Progress.

WCCA uses an online tool to track and aggregate Head Start children’s outcome data called the *Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment System* (TSG), designed to implement on-going assessment from the daily observations entered online for each child. TSG aligns with the *Creative Curriculum* and the thirty-six (36) objectives with related dimensions. The TSG progressions show widely held expectations (WHE) for children’s typical development and learning, based upon their age. Overlapping areas allow teachers to see the full range of development at a glance and then positively plan activities and materials to foster further development and growth. The areas divide into three categories: below widely held expectations for typical children of the age, meets widely held expectations for typical children their age, and exceeds widely held expectations for typical children their age. TSG can identify strengths and areas that need support for Dual Language Learners, children with special needs and children who are exceptional learners.

Children’s progress is typically noted by whole classrooms and individually three (3) times per year during three (3) checkpoint periods (Fall/Winter/Spring) to track children’s growth. At the end of the program year WCCA creates a comparative report from TSG that tracks the same children’s progress, from the start to the finish of the year, rather than a “snapshot” of children who may start at different times during the year. This report tracks the same cohort of children divided by age because the WHE for each group is different. The process of reporting on the same children from fall to spring gives a more complete depiction of progress across the whole program year.

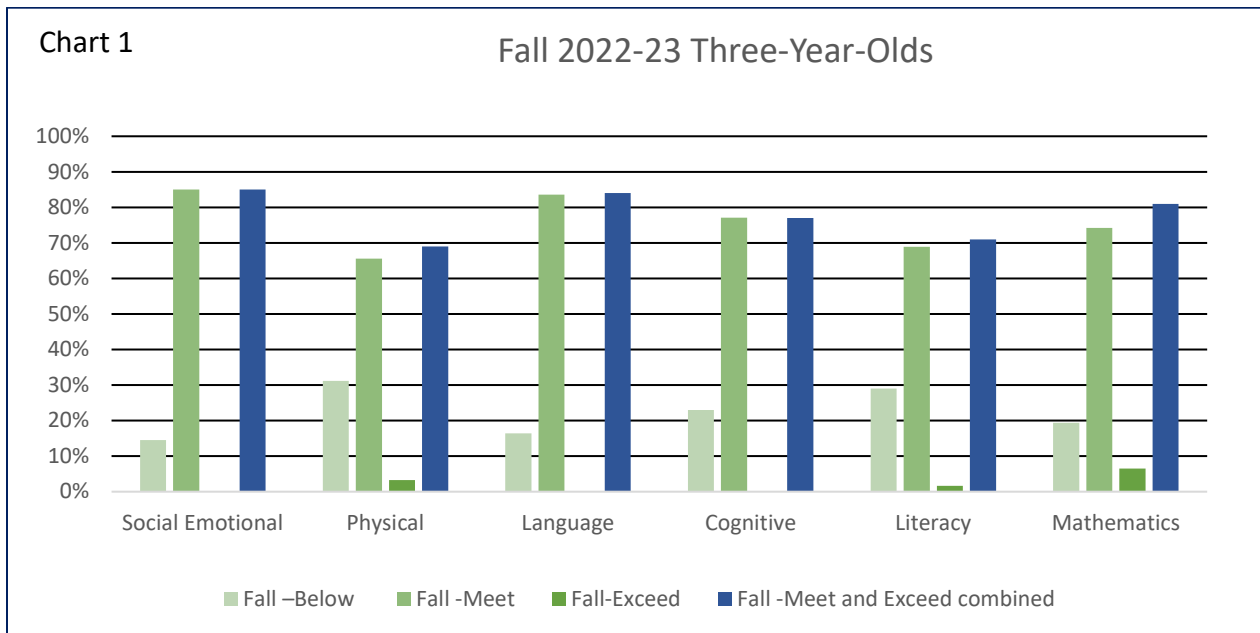
WCCA Three-Year-Old Children’s Progress Across Fall and Spring Checkpoint Periods

In the 2022-2023 school year, there were sixty-two three-year-olds enrolled from the fall to spring checkpoint periods. The graph below (Chart 1) shows the percentages of these children who were below, meeting, exceeding, and meeting and exceeding combined, on the TSG developmental continuum in fall. This baseline information allowed WCCA to track children’s growth and progress as the year continued.

To ensure school readiness, WCCA Head Start uses the *Creative Curriculum* in combination with the *Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment System* (TSG) to measure children’s progress throughout the program year. The tables below demonstrate how the children are meeting and exceeding “widely held expectations” (typical developmental range for the age).

Three-Year-Old Fall Checkpoint

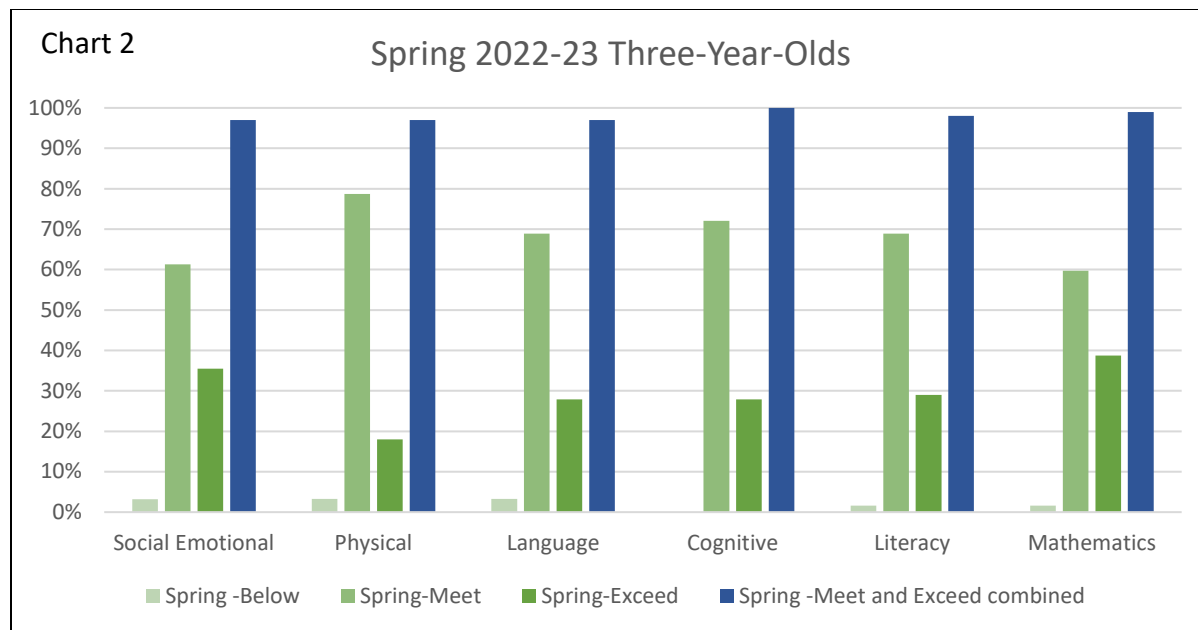
As shown in Chart 1, the three (3) year olds started the school year in the fall with many children below the widely held expectations (WHE) for their age group. The two lowest areas were the physical and literacy domains. Thirty-one (31) percent of the children were below the WHE for their age group in the physical domain. The percentage of children below in the physical domain improved by nineteen (19) percent this program year, compared to last year. Twenty-nine (29) percent of three (3) year old children fell below the WHE in the literacy domain. Historically the math and literacy domains have a higher percentage of children below the WHE in the fall. However, the percentage of three (3) year olds below the WHE in the literacy domain was 35% less than last year's fall checkpoint.



Three-Year-Old Spring Checkpoint

WCCA's spring checkpoint data (Chart 2) shows how the three-year-old children made quite a bit of progress in all learning areas from the fall to spring checkpoint periods. The literacy and physical domains improved the most out of all of the domains. Even though the three-year-old children started the program year with some higher percentages below the WHE, the education staff were able to intentionally plan and individualize their instruction to assist this age group in making significant gains during the year.

The literacy domain increased 27% in the amount of children meeting and exceeding WHE for their age. The physical domain increased 28% in the amount of children meeting and exceeding WHE. With learning opportunities intentionally built into their day to practice gross and fine motor skills, this group of children made quite a bit of gains.



The table below, (Table 2), represents the 14 children (23% of 3-year-olds) that had an IEP at fall checkpoints.

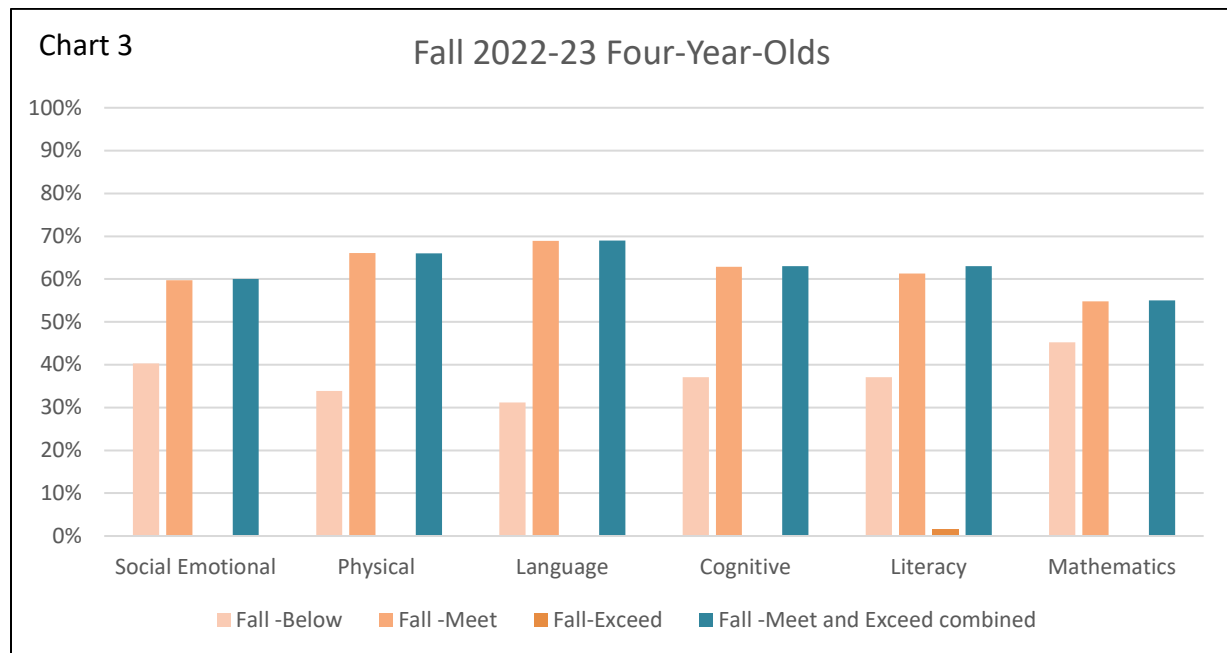
Of these children, 50% were below WHE in the fall in the literacy domain. By the spring checkpoint, 100% were meeting WHE in the literacy domain. Only 7% remained below the WHE for their age in the physical domain at the spring checkpoint. All of these children reached or exceeded the WHE in the social emotional, language, cognitive, literacy, and mathematics domains by spring.

Domain	Spring - Below	Spring-Meet	Spring-Exceed	Spring -Meet and Exceed combined	Meet & Exceed from Fall to Spring
Social-Emotional	0%	71%	29%	100%	+14%
Physical	7%	79%	14%	93%	+14%
Language	0%	85%	15%	100%	+31%
Cognitive	0%	79%	21%	100%	+29%
Literacy	0%	71%	29%	100%	+50%
Mathematics	0%	71%	29%	100%	+29%

WCCA Four-Year-Old Fall Checkpoint

The graph below, (Chart 3), illustrates the four-year-old’s fall development in the six TSG domains in comparison with the widely held expectations (WHE) for their age group. The skill levels by which four-year-olds are measured are more complex than the ones for three-year-olds are. The domains are the same, but the expectations are higher.

The children who were re-enrolled into WCCA’s program may have experienced what is known as the “summer slide”. This refers to students having a tendency to lose some of the achievement gains made during the previous program year because of the long break from Head Start over the summer months. The mathematics domain showed the most potential for improvement, having 45% of children below WHE. Another area for the potential of large growth was the social emotional domain; 40% of the four-year-olds were below the WHE for their age group.

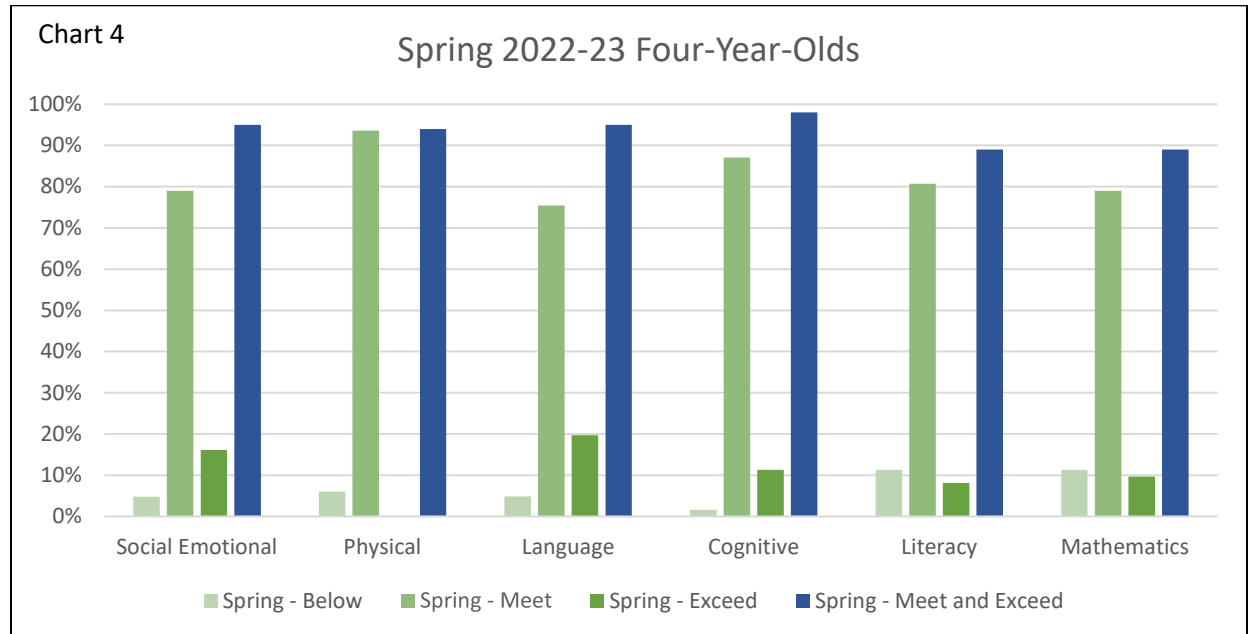


WCCA Four-Year-Old Spring Checkpoint

The spring results (Chart 4) show a significant increase in the number of children who were meeting or exceeding the WHE for their age across all domains.

The mathematics domain made great progress with a 34% increase in children meeting and exceeding the WHE for their age group. This area has historically been a lower area for the children enrolled with WCCA. The teachers intentionally planned a variety of mathematic activities daily to help scaffold their children’s learning. After winter checkpoints, the teachers analyzed where children had grown, and where they needed more individualized instruction. The four-year-old children also increased significantly in their social emotional skills. In the fall, 40% had been below the WHE in the social emotional domain. WCCA teaching staff were well

aware of this possibility because of the impacts from COVID-19 and made social emotional skill building a priority in their daily routines and activities. By the spring checkpoint period, 95% of this age group had been meeting/exceeding the WHE for their age in the social emotional domain.



Of the four-year-olds who were in the program from fall to spring checkpoints, 21 children (34%) were on an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Of those children, 53% were below the WHE for their age in the social emotional domain and 57% were below in the mathematics domain in the fall. It was rewarding to see that 95% of children ended the program year meeting or exceeding the WHE for their age in the social-emotional domain and 86% ended the program year meeting the WHE in the mathematics domain.

Domains	Spring - Below	Spring-Meet	Spring-Exceed	Spring-Meet and Exceed combined	Meet & Exceed from Fall to Spring
Social-Emotional	5%	90%	5%	95%	+47%
Physical	14%	86%	0%	86%	+29%
Language	9%	86%	5%	91%	+34%
Cognitive	5%	95%	0%	95%	+47%
Literacy	9%	86%	5%	91%	+43%
Mathematics	14%	81%	5%	86%	+43%

Dual Language Learners

WCCA Early Head Start assesses English language development (ELD) using the DRDP assessment. The ELD developmental continua assesses English Language and literacy development for children who arrive at preschool or kindergarten from homes where a language other than English is used.

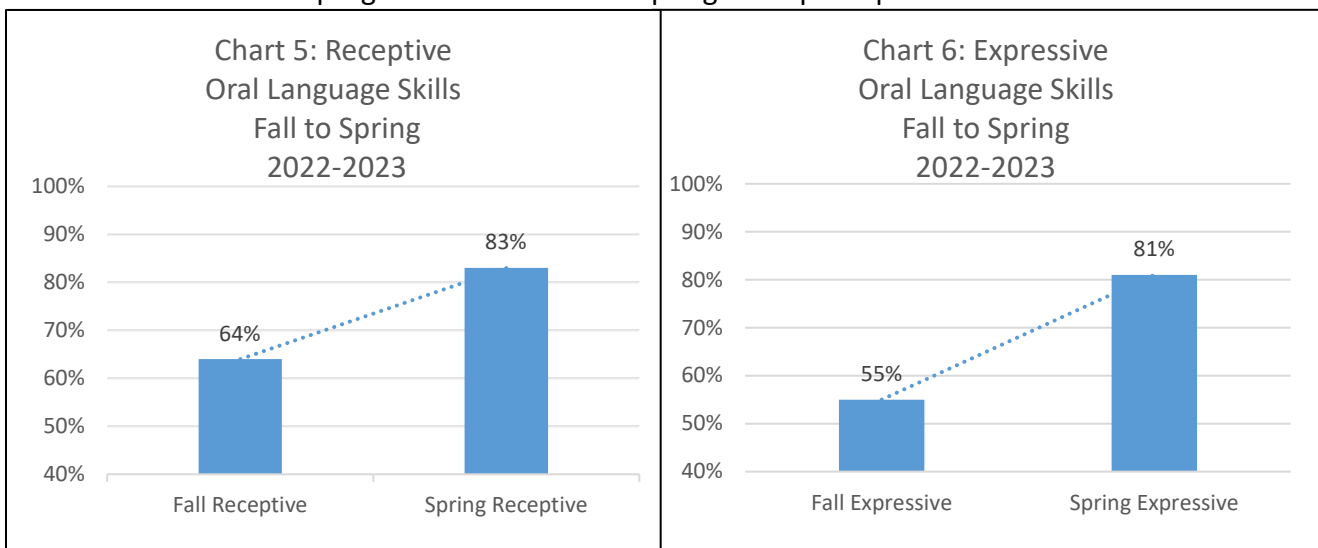
Table four shows that 100% of EHS children are in the discovering language phase of development.

Table 4: English Language Development (ELD)

	Discovering Language	Discovering English	Exploring English	Developing English	Building English	Integrating English
Spring 2023	100%					

WCCA Head Start uses the *Oral Language Proficiency Rubric/Matrix (OLPRM)* to assess two mandated outcomes for the non-English-speaking children: receptive language (listening to and understanding English), and expressive language (progress in speaking English). Research suggests children who are learning English and are gaining an understanding of vocabulary and semantics are often less sure about their abilities to speak and communicate with peers and adults. When children are shy or unsure about their English skills, it can take them longer to feel comfortable to take verbal risks in English to get their needs met or make connections with others. Teachers use strategies like modeling and repetition to support dual language learners. They encourage children to learn from each other. Adults with the children speak slowly and clearly and try again if the children do not respond right away. Head Start expected children to make gains in both areas as the program year progressed as they became comfortable as the charts below demonstrate.

Charts five and six illustrate the children who are Dual Language Learners and have been in the program consistently from the fall to spring checkpoint periods. These charts show the continual progress these children have made in understanding English and expressing themselves in English verbally. There were 12 children in our program at some point during this last program year who were a Dual Language Learner. However, only seven of these children attended the entire program from the fall to spring checkpoint period.



School Readiness Outcomes

The Head Start/Early Head Start's Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) represents the continuum of learning for infants, toddlers and preschoolers to prepare children for kindergarten. This information will help adults better understand what they should be doing to provide effective learning experiences that support important early learning outcomes. This framework is grounded in research for what young children should be able to do and know during these years.

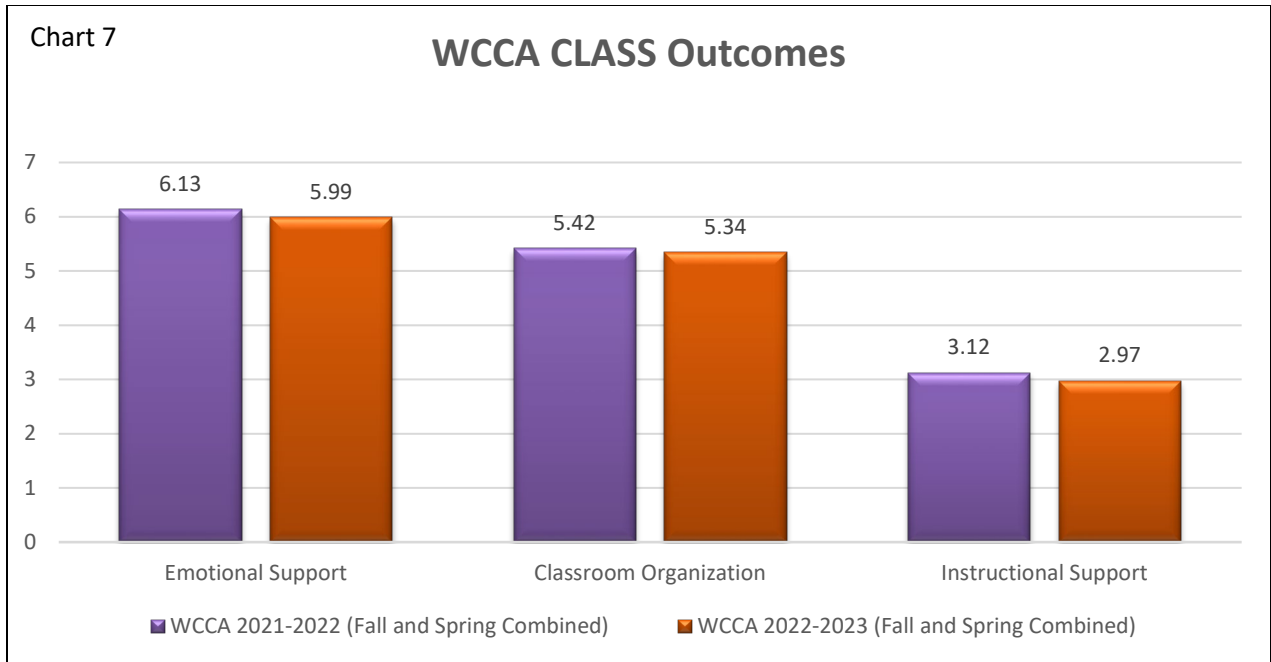
WCCA updated the School Readiness Goals in 2019 to broad aspirational goals with measurable outcomes using the Head Start/EHS Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF), information from the schools in our districts, the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress, and input from WCCA parents and staff. The goals continue to be reviewed and updated annually.

WCCA is secure knowing the activities provided give children opportunities to learn and practice important skills, which gives them a strong foundation for kindergarten, which will carry them all through school and beyond.

WCCA Head Start is a member of the *Minnesota Head Start Association* (MHSA). One of the Association's goals is to improve Head Start programs and policies by identifying common concerns, and sharing strategies to analyze and improve children's outcomes. Based on an earlier report for the Minnesota Department of Education*, it was recommended by *Teaching Strategies Gold* and the MHSA, that an overall proficiency rate of 75% (based on total points) in each domain, is an appropriate measure of skills required for children to be successful in kindergarten.

CLASS Outcomes

WCCA Head Start uses the *Classroom Assessment System* (CLASS) to assess the quality of teacher-child relationships in each classroom. The CLASS is a valid and reliable measure of effective teacher-child interaction. Research verifies the vital links between how teachers present information, facilitate and extend children's understanding, promote children's higher thinking, and encourage children's language development and vocabulary. WCCA uses data collected from the CLASS assessment to help improve teaching through mentoring, focus professional development, and make programmatic decisions. Teachers and other staff working directly with children in the classroom are assessed in the fall and again in the spring. Reliable raters observed teachers for twenty (20) minutes, and then scored results, in three continuous cycles. The cycles are averaged to determine the overall scores. The CLASS tool assesses the domains of Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support.



Over the last two program years, we have seen a decrease in scores in all 3 domains. This may be due to turnover, burnout, and training being completed online.

The Office of Head Start has two types of thresholds that align with the three Pre-K CLASS domains. Programs scoring below the quality thresholds on their federal CLASS monitoring observations receive support from the regional Training and Technical Assistant network on the domain(s) below the threshold. Programs scoring below the competitive thresholds on their federal CLASS monitoring observations must re-compete for their funding.

	Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
National Quality Threshold	6	6	3
National Competitive Threshold	5	5	2.3

Our averaged scores are .01 away from meeting the quality threshold for emotional support, .66 away from meeting the threshold for classroom organization, and .03 away from meeting the instructional support threshold. We feel additional training and support for our new teachers will significantly bring up our organization's average and meet these standards.

Family Engagement

Parent and family engagement in Head Start and Early Head Start is about building relationships with families that support family well-being; supporting strong relationships between parents and their children; and nurturing ongoing learning and development for both parent and children. This results in children who are healthy and ready for school. WCCA Head Start uses a locally-designed assessment to help parent identify strengths and needs at the beginning of the program year. Twice during the program year, WCCA uses a tool called Parent Gauge™, which allows us to take parents' own words and concretely measure whether our efforts meet the needs of the families we serve. We offer opportunities for parents to attend our Parent Connect parenting group. We use a curriculum titled Parenting Now! which looks at the challenges of parenting and how parents can build on their strengths in order to have positive, enjoyable and healthy relationships with their children. We offer parent meetings and family engagement events at least 5 times a year for Head Start and Early Head Start families. These events give families the opportunity to connect with local resources. WCCA has a Policy Council made up of elected Head Start and Early Head Start parents. The Policy Council meets once a month to review program reports, receive updates on individual classrooms and programs, and make decisions that impact the Head Start and Early Head Start programs. This is a great chance for parents to develop leadership skills, network with other parents, advocate for children, and represent the voice of the children and parents in the program. During the 2022-23 program year, 147 Head Start and Early Head Start parents and guardians volunteered in our program in some capacity. This could include as a member of the Policy Council, attending classroom parent meetings, volunteering in the classroom, or participating in specific at-home activities with their child.

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Outcomes

At the beginning of the program year, parents fill out a Strengths and Needs Assessment. Parents self-report on questions from each of the seven areas of the Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework to determine their strengths and needs. For the 2022-2023 program year, we gathered information from 155 Head Start and Early Head Start families.

WCCA Head Start uses Parent Gauge™, a web-based tool that measures parent experience and impact of our program's engagement efforts. Parent Gauge™ consists of an interview with both closed-ended questions and open-ended questions with the ability to upload audio files to transcribe what is discussed in the interview. For the 2022-2023 program year, we completed interviews in October 2022 and May 2023, gathering results from 114 Head Start and Early Head Start families who completed both interviews.

Outcome 1: Family Well Being -Parents and families are safe, healthy, and have increased financial security.

Housing

The number of families who reported living in safe, adequate housing (both subsidized and unsubsidized) was 87%. At the beginning of the program year, four families reported living in transitional or substandard housing and five families reported being homeless, throughout the course of the year 11 total families reported being homeless and one family acquired housing during the year.

Food

59% of families reported using food support or other assistance to meet their basic food needs.

Financial Stability

At the beginning of the program year, 9% of families reported that they were not able to consistently meet their basic financial needs, while another 37% reported they could meet their basic needs with a subsidy.

Health

The number of enrolled children and pregnant women had some type of medical and dental insurance in place remained at 97% throughout the program term.

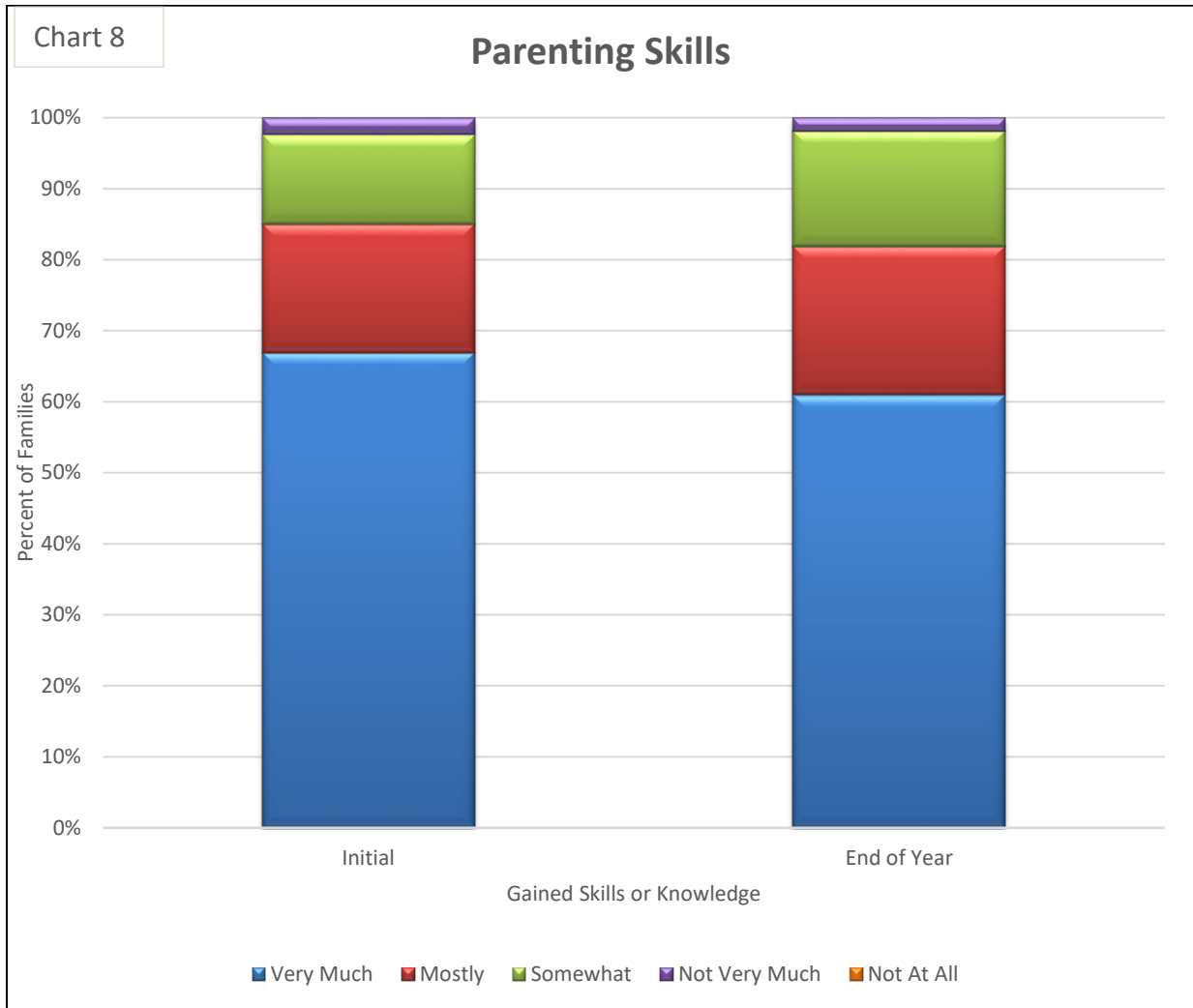
Mental Wellness

The amount of families rating themselves as having a high level of mental wellness was 73%. Another 18% reported they are able to function normally with medication, coping skills, and a support system.

Outcome 2: Positive Parent-Child Relationships - *Beginning with transitions to parenthood, parents and families develop warm relationships that nurture their child’s learning and development.*

Parenting Skills

The number of families who felt they had very strong parenting skills or gained knowledge and skills about parenting by the end of the program year decreased by 20%, as shown in Chart 8 below. However, 75% of families felt the program helped them gain new knowledge and skills about parenting.



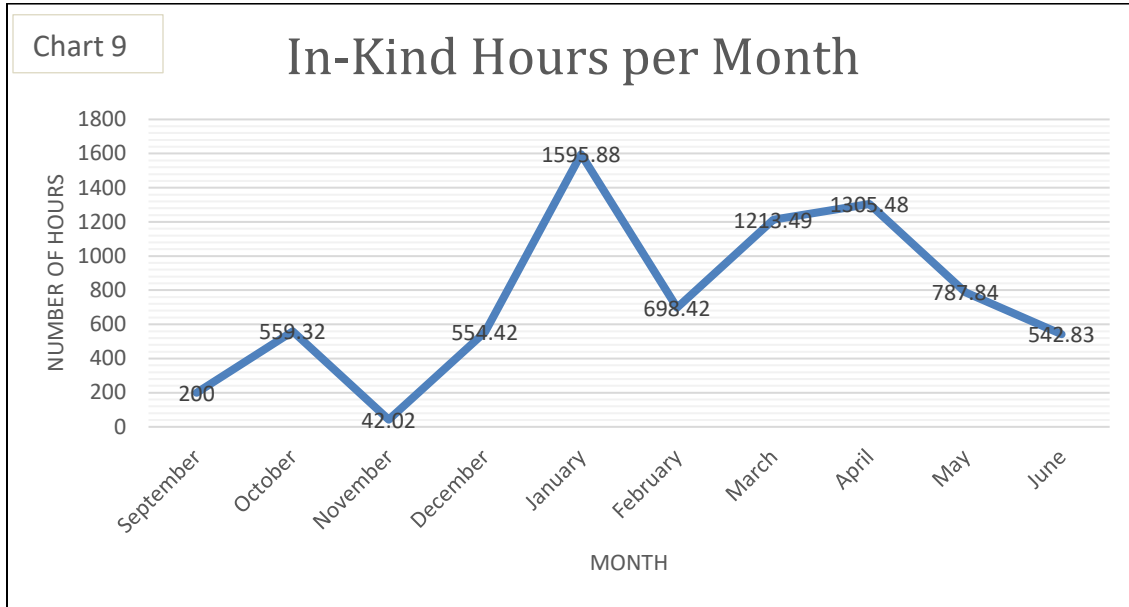
Childcare

68% of families reported having access to reliable, affordable childcare without the need for a subsidy, or they were not in need of childcare at all. Another 19% of families reported having unaffordable or unreliable childcare, or no childcare available or accessible when needed.

Outcome 3: Families as Lifelong Educators - Parents and families observe, guide, promote, and participate in the everyday learning of their children at home, school, and in their communities.

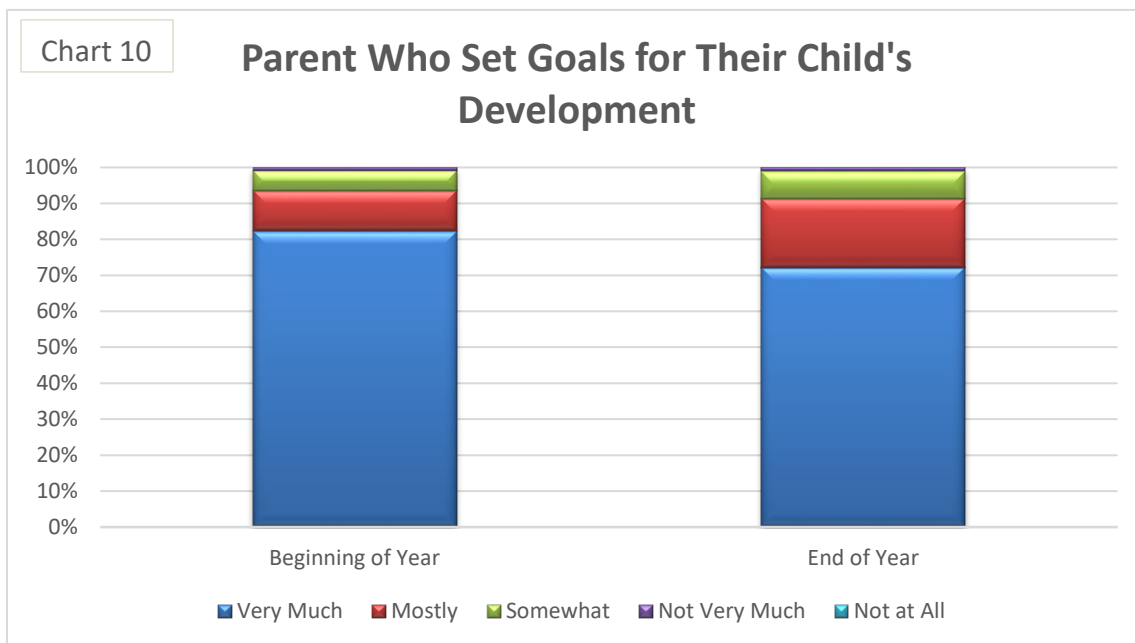
Parent Involvement

We tracked the number of hours of in-kind contributions from parents/guardians, specifically parent/child at-home activities, volunteering in the classroom and attending monthly parent meetings. Total in-kind hours from parents/guardians fluctuated throughout the year, with a large increase in January, as shown in Chart 9 below.



School Readiness

The number of families who set goals for their child’s development and learning dropped from 94% at the beginning of the program year to 89% by the end of the program year, as shown in Chart 10 below. Overall, 85% of parents felt strongly that WCCA Head Start helped them set goals for their child’s development and learning.



Outcome 4: Families as Learners- *Parents and Families advance their own learning interests through education, training and other experiences that support their parenting, careers and life goals.*

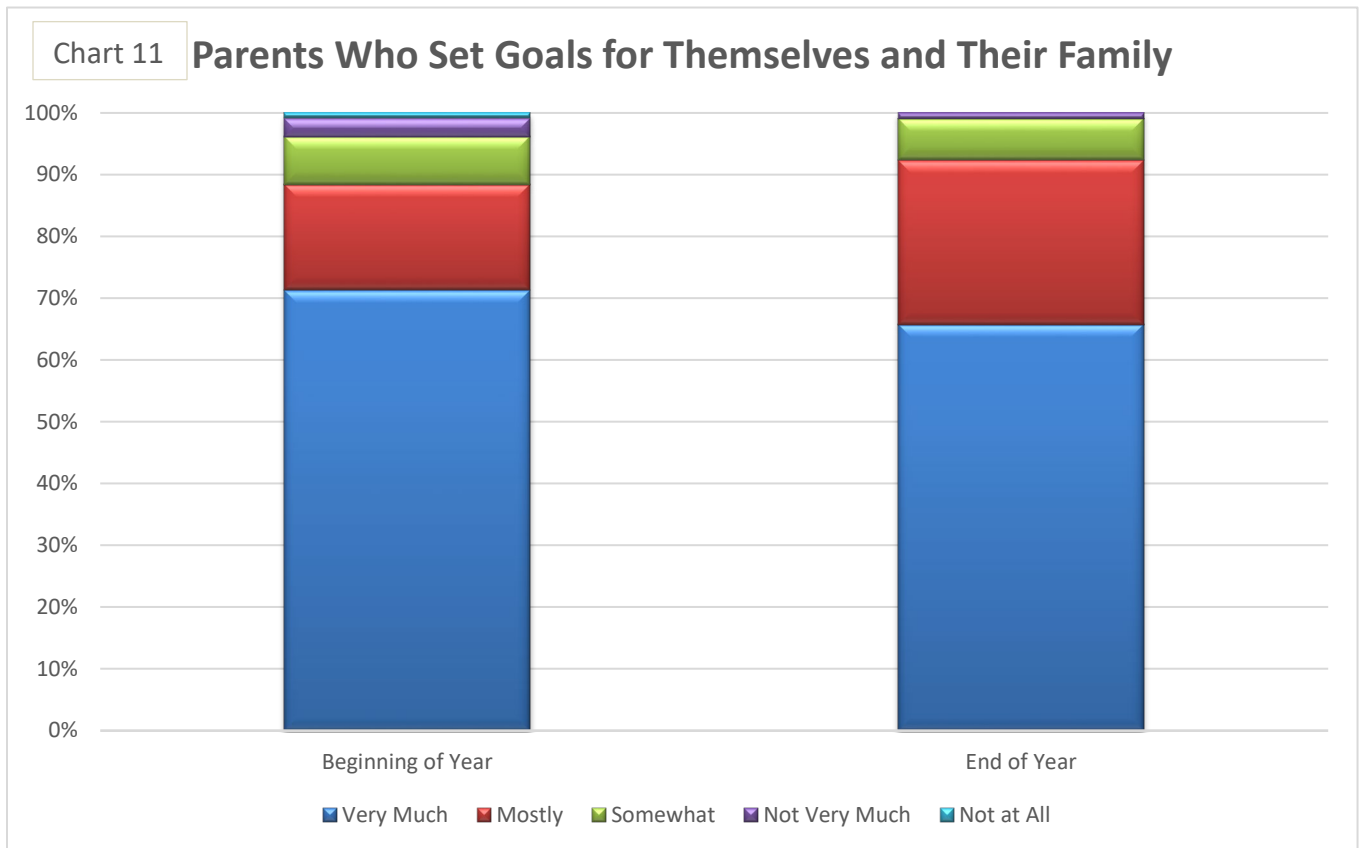
Education & Training

We track employment and training at the beginning of the program year, and again at the end of the program year. Table 6 below shows the percent of families who were in each category at the end of the program year.

	Percent of Families
Employed, in training or attending school	76%
Maintained employment from beginning to end of program year	57%
Were unemployed and are now employed	10%
Consistently unemployed	12%
Were employed and are now unemployed	1%

Family Growth and Stability

The number of parents who stated they consistently set goals for themselves and their family increased from 88% to 90%, as shown in Chart 11 below. Overall, 79% of families felt strongly that WCCA Head Start affects the goals they set for themselves and their family.

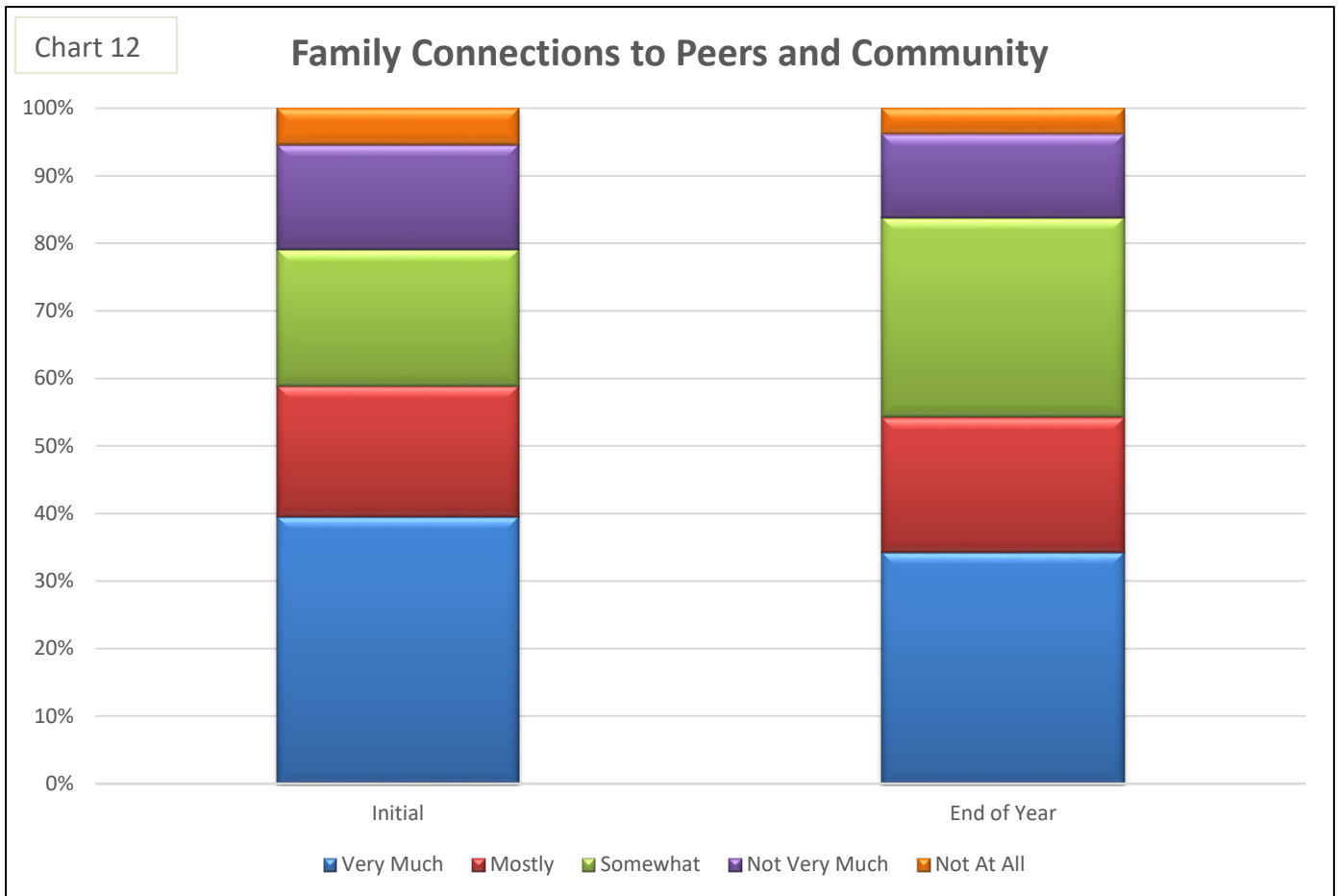


Outcome 5: Family Engagement in Transitions - *Parents and families support and advocate for their child’s learning and development as they transition to new learning environments.*

At the beginning of the year, 87% of families felt confident about advocating for their child and were comfortable with the process of transitioning to new learning environments.

Outcome 6: Family Connections to Peers and Community- *Parents and families form connections with peers and mentors in formal and informal social networks that are supportive and/or educational and that enhance social well-being and community life.*

Chart 12 shows a decrease in the number of families who felt they had connections to other parents and adults after participating in Head Start. Even though parents felt less connection with others, 78% of parents felt the program gave them opportunities to connect with other parents and adults “mostly” or “very much”.



Outcome 7: Families as Advocates and Leaders – *Parents and families participate in leadership development, decision-making, program policy development, or in community and state organizing activities to improve children’s development and learning experiences.*

Leadership and Advocacy

The percent of families who felt comfortable speaking up for their child’s educational needs decreased from 97% to 95% throughout the program year. At the end of the program year, 90% of families felt the WCCA Head Start program has helped them learn how to speak up for their child’s educational needs. This was a huge increase over last year, where 69% of families reported feeling the same way.

Volunteering

84% families felt they were “mostly” or “very much” encouraged to become involved in helping to improve the WCCA Head Start program. 64% said they participate in family events, activities or classes at their child’s center “very much” or “most of the time”.

Community Needs Assessment

WCCA’s most recent Community Needs Assessment was completed in October 2022.

Survey respondents indicated the strengths of the communities in our service area were:

- Friendly communities, a feeling of family, family-oriented, close-knit community
- Peaceful, quiet, safe
- Small-town, small-town feel, close to the cities (Twin Cities metro area)
- Good school systems
- Community involvement, community events, available resources

Using the assessed information, our team identified 30 things that area residents need. The 30 needs range from how our **communities need more affordable housing** all the way to **individuals need more physical activity**. While others state that **communities need jobs that fit the qualifications of the local work force** and another says that **individuals need more childcare openings for children under the age of three**. Each one of these 30 statements are supported by data from focus groups, census information, assessments and other statistics.

In addition, WCCA participates in the Wright County Community Health Collaborative, who recently completed their Community Health Need Assessment. This data identified priorities of mental health and well-being, dental care, and substance misuse.

WCCA Head Start and Early Head Start are committed to working with families to ensure they are provided with the resources they need. As part of a Community Action Partnership, we are able to refer families to many services within our agency including energy assistance, WIC, insurance, housing programs, and tax assistance. We continue to work closely with our local county financial assistance program to assist families in applying for SNAP, TANF and childcare assistance.