

OLHSA HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START 2015

- OLHSA’s Head Start Program has helped over 85,000 children and their families enter Kindergarten healthy and ready to learn since it was brought to Oakland County in 1965.
- The number of children in Michigan at or below poverty level has increased to 24% percent and in Oakland County the rate is 14.1 percent, a 70 percent increase over a six year period. Nearly 20 percent of Oakland County children 0-5 are eligible for SNAP benefits, an 84 percent increase in the same time period. Early Head Start and Head Start services are needed now more than ever.
- OLHSA serves 1,711 children, 1,537 Head Start children in 19 communities, 20 of which have a parent in a correction facility and 174 Early Head Start families in Berkley, Pontiac, Lake Orion and Oxford. This number represents the reinstatement of slots cut due to sequester and the conversion of 64 Head Start slots to 47 Early Head Start slots.
- 154 Head Start 4-year-old children are enrolled in Head Start/Great Start Readiness full day blend classrooms.
- Children’s health status is a crucial aspect of school readiness. OLHSA has a comprehensive system of health screenings in place to make sure that health related issues are caught quickly and addressed prior to children entering kindergarten. In the current year:
 - OLHSA has completed 11,245 health screenings to date. These screenings include hearing, vision, hemoglobin, lead, growth, and dental.
 - Of that number 723 issues needing follow-up were identified. Follow-up issues range from helping families obtain glasses or tubes in the ears to making sure dental cavities are filled.
 - In Oakland County, only 73 percent of children 19-35 months of age are fully immunized, of our children 94.5 percent are fully immunized.
 - In Oakland County, 28.1 percent of children ages 1-2 years are lead tested, but at OLHSA HS/EHS 82.5 percent of our children have completed their lead testing. Of that number, we currently have 1 percent with identified high lead levels who we are working with to obtain appropriate treatment.
- No less important are children’s education related outcomes. OLHSA uses the Child Observation Record (COR) to monitor child outcomes. This year, through March 1, reports indicate that children in our programs have gained an average of 20-25 percent in all areas of development including language, literacy, math, physical, social/emotional, logic/reasoning, science, social studies and English language.
- Our average, Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) scores continue to be above the national average in all three areas:

CLASS Domain	National Average	OLHSA Average
Emotional Support	6.1	6.4
Classroom Organization	5.8	6.0
Instructional Support	2.9	3.4

*Scores range from 1-7 with 7 being the ideal score.

Recommendations

- The strong emphasis on a family engagement approach and a two generation approach to education as well as a focus on health and nutrition screenings are what separate Head Start from current standard preschool programming. These aspects of the program need to remain key components of the program.
- OLHSA wishes to thank Congress for restoring the cuts due to sequestration. We recommend addressing the sequestration issue and stabilizing funding for Head Start and Early Head Start. Sequestration, when it occurred, had an immediate negative effect on 84 children in our community.
- OLHSA believes more flexibility is necessary within Head Start to provide a variety of program options including full-day and full school year where demand exists. We do see demand for full-day, full school year options however at the same time there are still families who believe a part-day option is best for their child. We believe our programs should be able to adapt more easily to local program demand. Currently, it is very difficult to do this within the Head Start system.
- OLHSA also recommends that attention be paid to the impact of federal restrictions on quality in Head Start Reauthorization. We hope that the Reauthorization would improve on Head Start's 50 year legacy of success. One key is providing opportunities that encourage local innovation so that our programs can address the demands of the local community in the area of Early Childhood education and child care and work better with schools and local child care providers. We encourage continued analysis of the amount of non-federal share required currently. With the increase in competition for early childhood, particularly space, in the country, especially in Michigan, this match is becoming unattainable. We urge you to consider reducing or eliminating this requirement for Head Start grantees.