



**Orange County
Head Start, Inc.**

Brilliant Beginnings.
Bright Futures.



**Annual Report
2023-2024**

Empowering Children & Families

MISSION

We provide children and their families with quality childhood development programs and integrated support services.

VISION

Orange County Head Start is the catalyst that launches children and their families to a brighter future.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- We **advocate** on behalf of the children we serve by providing access to resources and protection of their rights and interests.
- We provide the tools and environment to **empower** children and their families.
- We are an organization dedicated to **learning** at all levels, especially for the early childhood years.
- We deliver services through **partnerships** and collaboration.
- We ensure the **quality** of our programs through continuous improvement and outcome-based practices.
- We **respect** diversity and acknowledge the value it brings to our community.
- We are committed to the emotional and physical **well being** of our children, families, and staff.

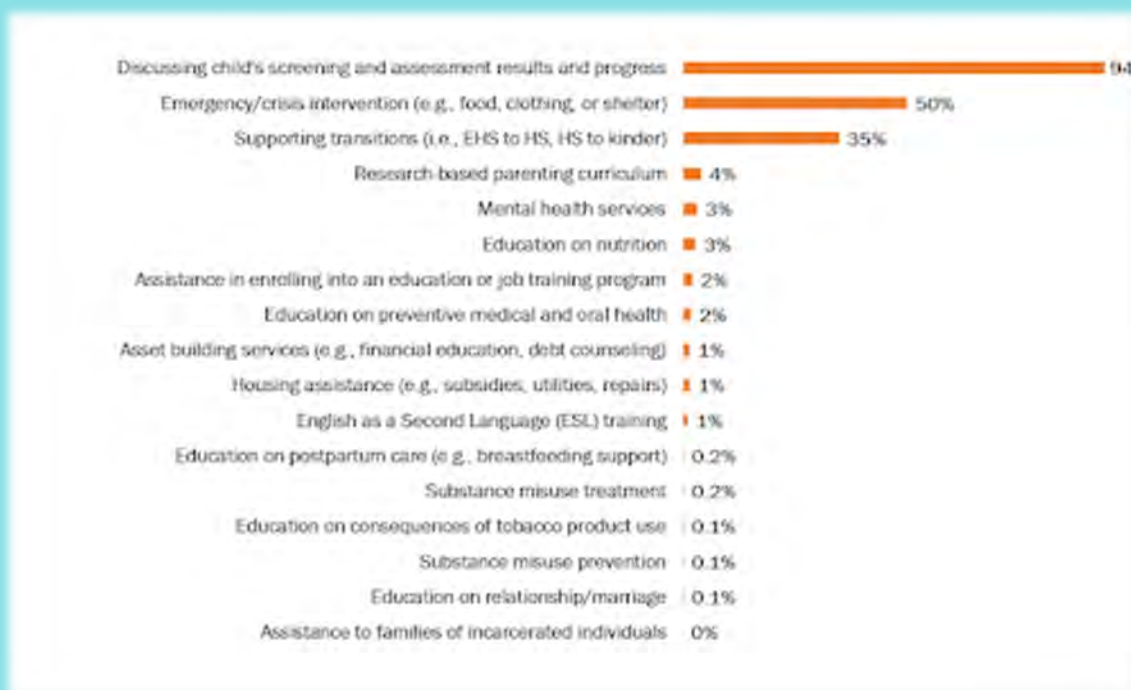
Families Receiving Services

Comprehensive child and family services are the cornerstone of Head Start and Early Head Start programs. At Orange County Head Start, Inc. (OCHS), these services are delivered directly by our dedicated staff or in partnership with trusted community agencies.

This collaborative approach is essential for creating a supportive environment that fosters positive outcomes for children and families. In 2023-2024, families with children enrolled in our program benefited from a wide range of services, which were accessed either directly through our staff or through referrals to community programs. By providing comprehensive support, OCHS is committed to helping children and families thrive and reach their full potential.



Percentage of Families that Received Program Services by Type to Promote Successful Family Outcomes



The Total Number of Children and Families Served

In 2023-2024, OCHS served 1,621 children and pregnant women throughout Orange County, California. This included 904 children aged three to five in the Head Start program, as well as 717 children from birth to age three and pregnant women in the Early Head Start program.

Average Monthly Enrollment

The average monthly enrollment (as a percentage of funded enrollment) was 57% for the Head Start program and 68% for the Early Head Start program.

County's Eligible Children Served

Head Start: 13% (904 of 6,866)

Early Head Start: 7% (717 of 10,161)

Preparing our Children for Kindergarten:

Orange County Head Start, Inc. (OCHS) provides high quality early childhood programming for children birth to five years old in several program options to meet the needs of children and families. Center-based services offer full-day options for Head Start and Early Head Start. Both Head Start and Early Head Start offer home-based services, which include weekly home visits and two group socialization experiences per month.

OCHS facilities are licensed and staffed by qualified early childhood education professionals. Over 300 child development staff were employed by OCHS this year, including center directors and education managers, teachers, teacher assistants and home visitors. All child development staff participates in a comprehensive system of professional development to support the delivery of high quality teaching practices, including effective teacher-child interactions.

The professional development system includes the OCHS Teacher Coaching Academy, a peer coaching program which provides one-on-one support for new teaching staff and existing staff needing more intensive coaching. Education Development Coaches provide additional coaching to improve and refine teaching practices to implement the High Scope curriculum with fidelity with a focus on high quality adult to child interactions throughout the day. In response to the effects of the pandemic on social and emotional wellness for children OCHS ramped up training on the Pyramid Model strategies for education staff and coaches to enhance strategies to support children's social and emotional wellbeing.



School Readiness Goals—To ensure that children who participate in OCHS programs are successful in kindergarten and future education, OCHS has adopted School Readiness Goals for Head Start and Early Head Start.

Overall Head Start Goal: It is expected that 95% of children transitioning to kindergarten will be Near, At, or Above age expectations in all Domains and in the specific School Readiness Goal Measures.

Approaches to Learning – Impulse Control, Symbolic Play

Social and Emotional Development – Social Interactions with Peers

Language and Literacy – Language and Communication – Expressive Language

Language and Literacy – Literacy - Phonological Awareness, Letter and Word Knowledge

Cognition – Scientific Reasoning – Cause and Effect, Knowledge of the Natural World

Cognition – Mathematics - Math Operations, Measurement

Perceptual Motor and Physical Development – Self Care - Dressing

Overall Early Head Start Goal: It is expected that at least 95% of the children transitioning to pre-school at 36 months old will be Near, At, or Above age expectations on the DRDP-IT in all Domains and specific School Readiness Goal Measures.

Approaches to Learning – Self Comforting and Attention Maintenance

Social Emotional Development – Interactions with Peers, Symbolic Play

Cognition - Classification

Language and Communication - Expressive Language, Interest in Literacy

Perceptual Motor and Physical Development – Eye-Hand Coordination, Self Care/Healthy Behaviors



Children's Progress

OCHS has selected the Desired Results Developmental Profile 2015 (DRDP) to measure child progress as it is aligned with the California Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations, California Preschool Learning Foundations, Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five (ELOF), and the research-based curriculum utilized by OCHS.

School Readiness Outcomes: Children's Progress

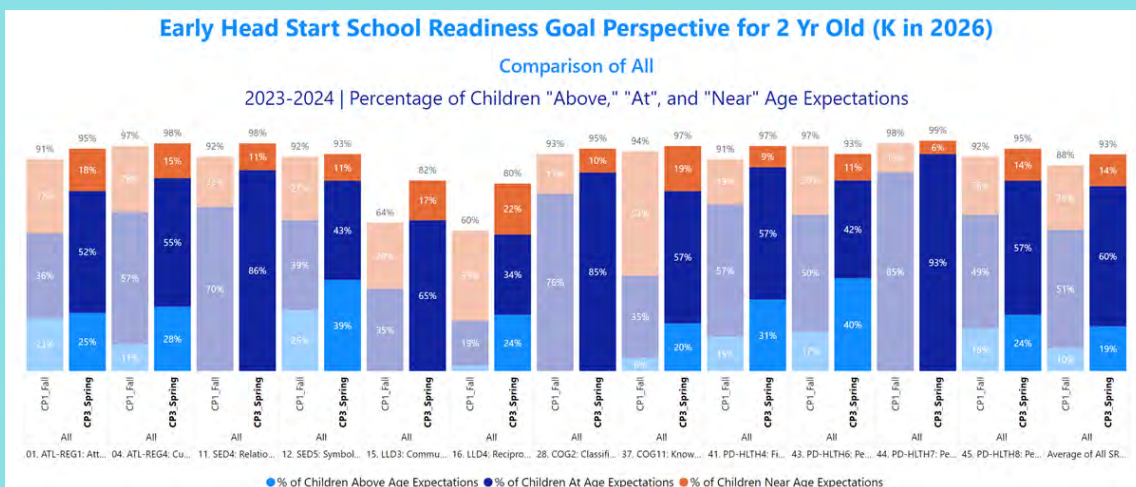
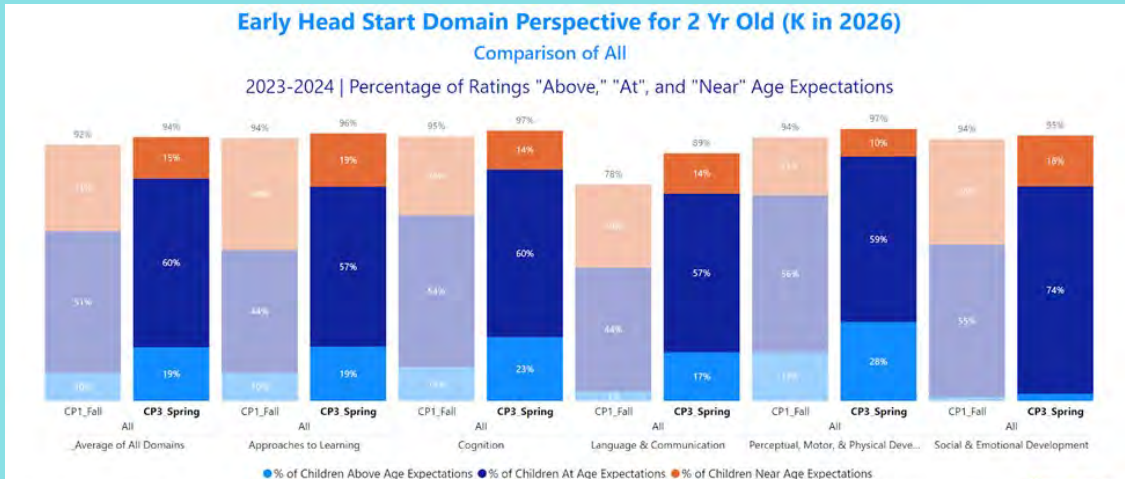
Early Head Start (Birth – 3 years)

The Spring assessments revealed exciting progress for our Early Head Start children. On average, 97% of children met, exceeded, or were close to meeting expectations across all developmental domains. At the School Readiness Goal Measure level, the results were just as strong, with 96% of children performing near, at, or above age expectations. Every School Readiness Goal area showed improvement, and overall, more than 90% of children demonstrated performance at or above expected levels.



While the data is overwhelmingly positive, it also highlights opportunities for growth—particularly in the areas of Expressive Language and Reciprocal Communication, where additional support and targeted strategies can help children continue to thrive.

The figures below represent DRDP results for all Early Head Start children who will be three years old by September 1, 2024.



Head Start (3 – 5 years)

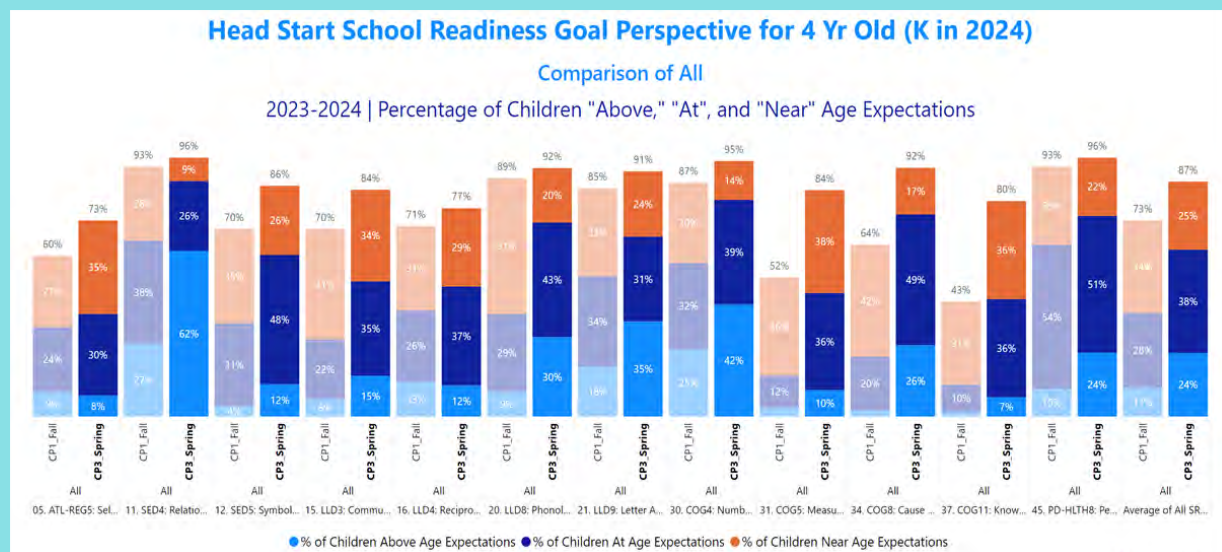
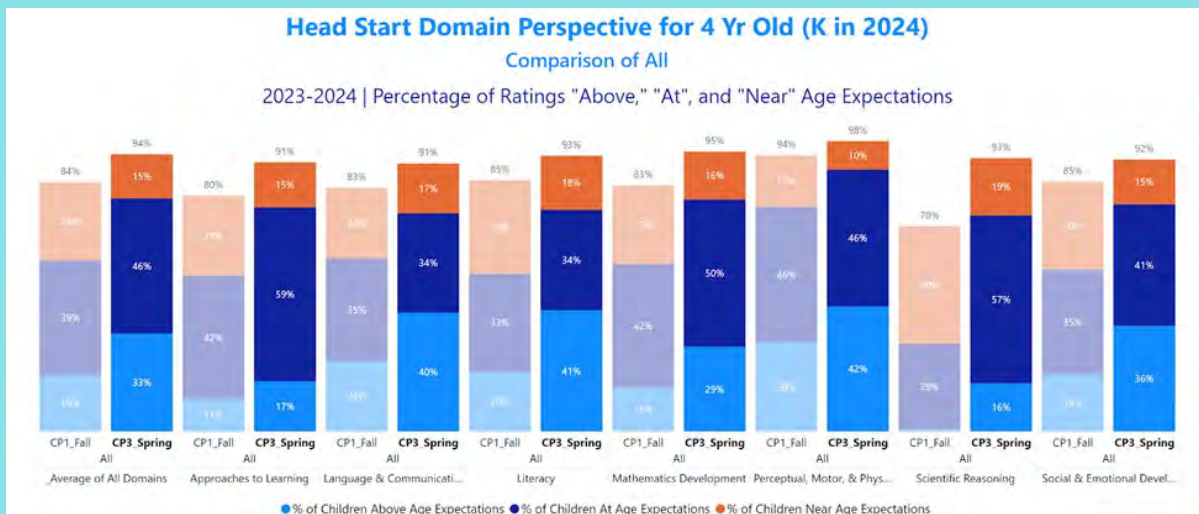
The Spring DRDP results paint a strong picture of progress for our Head Start children. Across all developmental domains, 94% of children performed near, at, or above age expectations, demonstrating consistent growth. At the School Readiness Goal Measure level, the results remain encouraging, with 87% of children meeting or approaching expectations across all measures.



While gains were evident in every domain and school readiness area, the data also highlights key opportunities for focused support. The greatest challenges continue to appear in the areas of Self-Control of Feelings and Behavior, Reciprocal Communication, and Knowledge of the Natural World—pointing to important targets for future instruction and intervention.

A review of results comparing Dual Language Learners (ELL) and English-only learners (Non-ELL) shows no significant difference in performance between the two groups, underscoring the effectiveness of supports provided to children learning more than one language.

The figures below represent DRDP results for Fall, Winter and Spring assessment periods for all Head Start children who will be five years old by September 1, 2024.



Budget Overview



2023-2024 Budget vs. Actual

	Budget	Actual
Revenue - Budget vs. Actual	\$48,533,704	\$47,356,865
Expenses - Budget vs. Actual	\$48,533,704	\$47,620,937

2023 - 2024 Actual

Revenue		Expenses	
Early Head Start/Head Start	\$42,211,645	Personnel	\$20,743,607
CACFP	\$1,261,183	Benefits	\$6,789,440
In-Kind Contributions	\$3,869,937	Contractual	\$4,595,905
Other	\$14,100	Supplies	\$2,709,620
		Other HS/EHS	\$7,400,800
		CACFP	\$1,261,183
		In-Kind/Non-Federal Shar	\$3,869,937
		Other	\$250,445
Total Revenue	\$47,356,865	Total Expenses	\$47,620,937

Decrease in Net Assets (\$264,072)

It was determined that in the auditors opinion, Orange County Head Start, Inc. (OCHS) complied, in all material respects, with the compliance requirements that could have a direct and material effect on each of its major federal programs for the year. The OCHS full 2023-2024 Financial Audit Report is available upon request.



Executive Summary: Community Needs Assessment Results

Orange County Head Start, Inc. (OCHS) conducted a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment, which incorporated document research, surveys of staff, families, and key community members, as well as data analysis to gather qualitative and quantitative information from various sources. This process was used to identify community strengths, needs, and resources within the service area.

The assessment's key findings highlight five major areas of need:

- 1** • **Child Care Accessibility and Affordability:** Families report significant barriers related to child care affordability and operating hours that do not align with their work schedules. This mismatch forces parents to choose between stable employment and reliable care, contributing to job instability and reinforcing cycles of poverty.
- 2** • **Mental and Physical Health:** The community is experiencing an increasing demand for mental and behavioral health services, especially for young children, which current resources struggle to meet. Parents specifically noted a need for support in managing children's behavioral issues at home, and access to available providers remains a significant hurdle.
- 3** • **Cost of Living Challenges:** Despite high rates of labor force participation, a large number of families are struggling to keep pace with the increasing cost of living. Household income levels often fall short of what is necessary to cover basic necessities, preventing families from earning a living wage that ensures a satisfactory standard of living.
- 4** • **Safe and Affordable Housing:** Housing insecurity remains a critical concern, with a substantial portion of the target population residing in housing that is either cost-burdened or substandard. Elevated housing costs have largely eliminated the possibility of homeownership for low-income families, contributing to issues such as overcrowding, where multiple families often share a single unit.
- 5** • **Coordination of Services:** The assessment identified a strong opportunity to maximize the agency's impact through better coordination and stronger partnerships with other community organizations. Enhanced inter-agency collaboration is necessary to streamline families' access to broader community resources, particularly for essentials such as housing, food, and employment assistance.



Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE)

Each family served by Orange County Head Start, Inc. (OCHS) is assigned a Family Engagement Advocate who collaborates closely with the family to develop a Family Success Plan (FSP) using the Transition to Success Map of My Dreams Workbook. This plan includes individualized goals tailored to the family's needs and interests.

The Family Engagement Advocates build strong relationships with families, helping parents articulate their strengths and needs, identify their interests, and set and achieve goals. Through this process, Family Engagement Advocates assist families in acquiring skills and education, and connect them to community resources and support systems, empowering them to succeed beyond their time with the agency.

OCHS uses a Family Outcomes Rating Scale to measure each family's progress in six domains: Family Well-Being, Positive Parent-Child Relationships, Families as Lifelong Educators, Families as Learners, Family Connections to Peers and Community, and Families as Advocates. Families are encouraged to set goals in areas where they may be vulnerable, with the objective of supporting progress toward stability. Family Engagement Advocates encourage parents to become actively involved in their child's education, both in the classroom and at home.

Volunteer Opportunities

Families are encouraged to participate in various activities, programs, and volunteer opportunities that promote and strengthen parenting, advocacy, and leadership skills. Opportunities include participation in Parent Committee meetings, serving on the Policy Council and Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC), engaging in OCHS's parent educational and volunteer programs such as Safety Assistant Monitor (SAM), Parent Nutrition Assistant (PNA), Resilient Families Program (RFP), and parenting classes like Dads Matter, Moms Motivate, and Positive Parenting Series.

Parent Committee Meetings

Comprised exclusively of parents of children currently enrolled at the center level, Parent Committees advise staff in developing and implementing local activities and services. Parents decide how to utilize the Parent Education Funds, which provide opportunities to develop activities that address their interests and needs. Meetings are held monthly.

Policy Council

The Policy Council is responsible for the direction of the Head Start program, including program design and operation, and planning long- and short-term goals and objectives based on annual community-wide strategic planning and self-assessment. The Policy Council approves and submits decisions about specific topics to the Board of Directors. It is comprised of one current parent representative from each center and three community representatives, who may include parents of formerly enrolled children. The Policy Council meets monthly, with annual terms extending from November through October.

Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC)

The HSAC brings together parents, staff, and local health care providers to discuss the planning, operation, and evaluation of health services in each Head Start program. It helps OCHS establish ongoing collaborative partnerships with community organizations. The HSAC determines how to best meet the needs of children and families by identifying and accessing health services and resources that are responsive to families' interests and goals.

Safety Assistant Monitor (SAM)

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the SAM program made adjustments that continued into the 2023-2024 program year. To minimize COVID-19 exposure risks, policies limited center visitors, allowing parents to learn about safety practices at home instead of in the classroom. Parents attended monthly meetings, where they received support and suggestions from OCHS staff and the SAM team.

Parent Nutrition Assistant (PNA)

Parent volunteers in this program are trained to provide education on healthy eating and physical activity for both children in classrooms and parents through workshops and food demonstrations. PNAs are enrolled in a college course, "Nutrition for the Young Child," and receive one college unit upon completion.

Resilient Families Program (RFP)

The RFP offers family support and engagement, aiming to improve the social-emotional abilities of participating children. Families learn the same approaches teachers use in the classroom during this eight-week program, supporting consistency and resilience for the children.

Moms Motivate

Moms Motivate is a four-week educational workshop series that combines community knowledge and best practices in parent training to strengthen families. Parents and caregivers learn to maintain and improve their family's mental and emotional well-being through therapeutic play, positive communication, positive discipline strategies, and coping mechanisms for anger management.

Dads Matter

The Dads Matter program promotes and supports the importance of fathers in families and communities. Dads share feelings and experiences, encouraging greater involvement in their children's lives. The curriculum includes workforce development, effective parenting strategies, young fathers, co-parenting, individual asset development, and various health and human services.

Positive Parenting Classes

The Positive Parenting Series takes place in the span of 4 weeks, offering families techniques and approaches for supporting children with challenging behaviors. OCHS's Mental Health Consultant offers this workshop, sharing her knowledge and expertise with parents.

Health and Dental Services

Significant advances in health and dental services were achieved during the 2023-2024 program year. Orange County Head Start, Inc. (OCHS) continued to strengthen its commitment to ensuring children have access to comprehensive healthcare, with a focus on vision and dental care in collaboration with our community partners.

OCHS's partnerships with the **University of California, Irvine (UCI) Pediatric Vision Project** and **Healthy Smiles for Kids of Orange County (HSKOC) by AltaMed** provided crucial health screenings directly in classrooms. UCI's mobile unit offered vision examinations and free glasses to children in need, with a total of **84 children receiving free glasses** this year. HSKOC delivered dental screenings at all OCHS locations, ensuring children received oral health education, treatment referrals, and follow-up care, helping to maintain healthy smiles across our community.

With ongoing support from our **Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC)**, OCHS continued to implement best practices in health services delivery and care coordination. These collaborative efforts strengthen our ability to support families in accessing medical, dental, and vision care.

To effectively monitor and improve health services, OCHS reviews annual Program Information Report (PIR) data. End-of-enrollment percentages for key health indicators for the 2023-2024 school year include:

- 100% of children had health insurance
- 100% of children had an established medical home
- 76% of children were up-to-date on the State of California's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) exam schedule
- 85% of children needing medical treatment received medical treatment
- 98% of preschool children had a dental home
- 83% of preschool children were up-to-date on routine dental exams
- 69% of preschool children needing dental treatment received dental treatment
- 98% of children were up-to-date on immunizations

These outcomes reflect OCHS's ongoing dedication to the health and well-being of the children and families we serve, highlighting the important role of our community partnerships in providing high-quality, accessible care.



Nutrition and Food Services

Orange County Head Start, Inc. (OCHS) has seen an increase in the overall childhood obesity rate from 15.1% in 2022-2023 to 17.7% in 2023-2024. This is a 2.6% increase in the overall obesity rate among preschool children (Body Mass Index equal to or greater than the 95th percentile).

OCHS has continued its partnership with the **Community Action Partnership of Orange County**, increasing food distribution services from serving 1,352 families in 2022-2023 to 1,510 families in 2023-2024. This is an increase of 11.69% in the number of families receiving food assistance. The Family Engagement Advocates collecting food for families, and distributing it during child pick-up times, has further boosted the number of families receiving support through this partnership.

The Nutrition Educator conducted consultations to support families with nutrition concerns such as picky eating, bottle use, underweight, and childhood obesity. The Nutrition Educator was able to host an increased number of nutrition workshops at the centers, building stronger relationships with families.

The OCHS central kitchen continues to serve healthy meals and introduced several new foods this year, such as bean and cheese pupusas, orange chicken, and yogurt parfaits. Children enjoyed healthy meals, that included whole grain rich items, healthy proteins, and fresh fruits, in addition to a variety of meals.

The number of children with food allergies increased from 40 in 2022-2023 to 57 in 2023-2024. In addition, we saw an increase in children needing milk substitutions from 125 to 170.



For more information on our Head Start & Early Head Start programs, please visit us at www.ochsinc.org, call us at (714) 241-8920, or use the QR code below.



Orange County Head Start, Inc. was established in 1979 as a non-profit 501 (c)(3) agency. Orange County Head Start, Inc. is funded by the United States Department of Health and Human Services to provide Head Start and Early Head Start services throughout all of Orange County, CA.



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