

Board of Supervisors
Health and Human Services Committee
September 22, 2020
Fairfax County Head Start Updates



- **Head Start Grants**

The County successfully applied for and was awarded \$10,523,148 in federal funding for the FY2021 program year (\$9,579,787 Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) and \$943,361 Early Head Start Child Care Partnership & Expansion). The total federal award includes \$627,468 of COVID-19 one-time funding, \$191,385 of supplemental one-time funding for the delegate agencies, and additional on-going funding of \$414,769 for COLA and quality improvements. Federal funding increased by \$1,233,622 for FY2021.

- **COVID Operating Updates**

Early Head Start Family Child Care

Twenty-five of 26 EHS Family Child Care (FCC) partners have remained open during the pandemic. EHS FCC partners continue to offer EHS program services with enhanced health and safety protocols. Partners provide virtual learning experiences for children whose parents choose to not have them attend during this time.

Head Start/Early Head Start

Gum Springs Children’s Center (GSCC) Head Start and Gum Springs Glen (GSG) Early Head Start opened for a four-week summer program from July 20 to August 14. The full curriculum was implemented, and enhanced health and safety protocols were followed. The programs will open for fall on September 20, offering onsite and virtual services.

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) and Higher Horizons continue to provide virtual programming.

- **Head Start/Early Head Start Friday Night Meals and Weekend Snacks**

While GSCC and GSG were closed due to the pandemic, HS/EHS staff continued to work to meet the basic needs of families, specifically food security. Center and FCC staff worked together to provide Friday night meals and weekend snack distributions from April 24 to July 10. On average, 110 families picked up meals and snacks each Friday at either the Pennino Building or Gum Springs Children's Center. Every week parents expressed their appreciation for this much needed resource.

- **Head Start/Early Head Start Health Screenings**

On Saturday, August 29, the Early Head Start Family Child Care option held a Health Screening event at the Pennino Building. The HS Public Health Nurse coordinated the event to conduct screenings for hearing and vision. Hemoglobin and lead testing were done if age appropriate. Screening events are continuing through the month of September at Gum Springs Children's Center. Supporting children's health and wellness is a priority of HS and EHS and plays a vital role in supporting children's school readiness.

- **First Lady of VA Back to School Tour**

Mrs. Northam visited Early Head Start family child care partner educator Leticia Flores-Ortiz in Herndon on September 16th as part of her annual Back to School Tour highlighting the importance of early childhood educators in the Commonwealth. Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton and State Delegate Ibraheem Samirah attended the event as well.

- **HS/EHS Enrollment**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, center-based and home-based programs are still working to enroll Head Start and Early Head Start children. Currently, 351 of 434 federally-funded Head Start slots are filled; 192 of 224 federally-funded Early Head Start slots are filled; and 45 of 56 federally-funded EHS-CCP slots are filled. Head Start is under-enrolled by 83 children and EHS is under-enrolled by 43 children.