

Fund 40045: Early Childhood Birth to 5

Mission

The mission of the Early Childhood Birth to 5 Fund is to build capacity and support the expansion of the County's Equitable Early Childhood System. The fund supports a comprehensive approach to advancing and expanding the County's early childhood system by providing full and equitable access to high quality, affordable, early care and education for young children. This advances the goal of the Board of Supervisors to ensure that every child in Fairfax County has equitable opportunities to thrive.

Focus

The Early Childhood Birth to 5 Fund was established to serve as a dedicated funding source to build capacity and support the expansion of the County's Equitable Early Childhood System. Funding which supports existing early childhood programs is included in the fund. The Early Childhood Birth to 5 Fund is administered by the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS), Office for Children.

Young children who begin kindergarten with a strong social, emotional, and cognitive foundation are more likely to reach high levels of academic achievement and earn higher incomes, less likely to drop out of school and experience negative health factors. These positive outcomes benefit not only individual children and families but also contribute to the enduring well-being of the community. However, not all children have access to the high-quality early childhood education supports and services they need to develop a strong foundation for school success. In Fairfax County, approximately 21 percent of children below age five living in households with income below 300 percent of the federal poverty level have access to early childhood programs supported with public funds such as child care subsidies and Head Start/Early Head Start. Lack of access to resources is pronounced in neighborhoods throughout the County in which family income is low, a contributing factor to inequity of opportunity.

Providing access to affordable, quality early childhood education is a two-generational strategy which supports parents' workforce participation while also preparing young children for lifelong and future workforce success. The Fairfax County Equitable School Readiness Strategic Plan (ESRSP) lays out a vision and roadmap for ensuring that all young children in Fairfax County have the supports they need to be successful in school and beyond. Reflecting the goals of One Fairfax, which lifts up equity as a core policy principle, the ESRSP identifies goals and strategies to expand and enhance the County's Equitable Early Childhood System in order to ensure that all children enter kindergarten at their optimal developmental level with equitable opportunity for success. The plan seeks to advance racial and social equity so that every family has access to high quality and affordable early childhood programs in the setting that best meet their family's needs.

In May 2019, the Board of Supervisors requested that the County Executive convene a School Readiness Resources Panel (SRRP) to identify innovative and bold expansion goals and long-term funding strategies for school readiness supports and services. In September 2019, the SRRP presented to the Board of Supervisors their recommended goal of ensuring that all children ages birth to five living in households with income below 300 percent of the federal poverty level have access to publicly funded early childhood programs in the public and private sectors. A primary strategy for reaching this goal is to pursue local revenue and funding options in order to create a sustainable dedicated funding stream for early childhood education.

Pandemic Response and Impact

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in programmatic changes for programs within the fund, including Child Care Subsidy, Head Start/Early Head Start, School Readiness, and the County's permitting of family child care homes. Technology and alternate programming have allowed programs to continue to serve children and families during the pandemic, including virtual programming for children participating in Early Head Start and Head Start and virtual home visits to maintain and issue County family child care provider permits.

In addition to virtual experiences, there have also been a number of offerings that have been adapted to or specifically related to the pandemic. In July 2020, Head Start began a four-week summer program, serving 95 children from birth to age five two days per week and following CDC guidelines for social distancing and health and safety requirements. Head Start and Early Head Start subsequently continued offering programming in the two centers, at family child care home partners, as well as virtual programming for families who chose that option. The program also distributed food on Fridays to families in Head Start to augment meals received through the school's food program and to ensure that they had meals through the weekends.

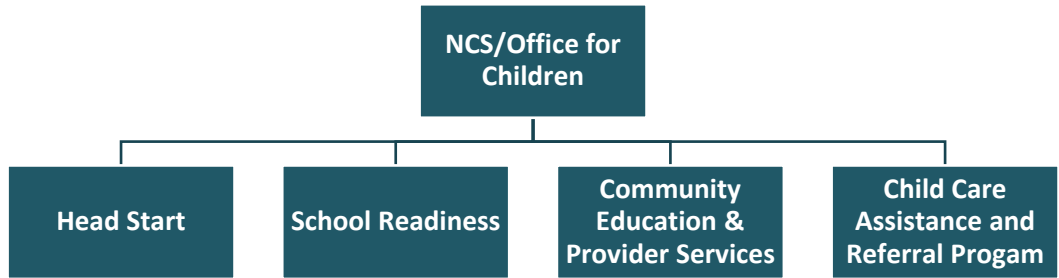
As the County economy recovers, access to affordable, quality child care is key to ensuring the workforce required to support all industries and sectors is available. Income eligibility for the County's Child Care Assistance and Referral (CCAR) program has been increased from 275 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) to 350 percent of the FPL in order to provide child care financial assistance to additional working families with children birth to age 12 and to also support the ongoing virtual school year. This action is in alignment with recommendations made by the Fairfax County School Readiness Resources Panel, which identified increasing income eligibility in CCAR as a strategy to increase access to child care for additional families and better reflect the cost of living in the County. The increase in income eligibility can be accommodated this year within existing local funding for CCAR.

The Office for Children has also worked to support child care professionals by working closely with the Fairfax County Health Department as child care professionals receive vaccinations as part of Virginia's 1B group of essential workers. Staff have also worked to communicate grant information, such as the CARES grants and the County's RISE grant program, to programs that may benefit from the support during the pandemic. Professional learning has been provided for family child care providers to support these small business owners during the pandemic. OFC has also created a COVID-19 Resources web page to support child care programs.

Webinar series developed by OFC have shared information and resources for early childhood educators serving children and families during COVID-19. In addition, OFC has distributed personal protective equipment (PPE) to programs, partnering with Volunteer Fairfax for the donation of supplies for child care programs as they continue to provide essential services to children and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. Donated supplies support healthy hygiene practices and help child care programs maintain a clean and healthy environment.

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Organizational Chart



Budget and Staff Resources

Category	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Adopted	FY 2021 Revised	FY 2022 Advertised
FUNDING				
Expenditures:				
Personnel Services	\$0	\$5,997,269	\$5,997,269	\$5,997,269
Operating Expenses	0	26,783,091	26,783,091	26,783,091
Total Expenditures	\$0	\$32,780,360	\$32,780,360	\$32,780,360
AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)				
Regular	0 / 0	48 / 48	48 / 48	48 / 48

FY 2022 Funding Adjustments

The following funding adjustments from the FY 2021 Adopted Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2022 program:

FY 2022 funding remains at the same level as the FY 2021 Adopted Budget Plan.

Changes to FY 2021 Adopted Budget Plan

The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2021 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2021 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2020 Carryover Review, FY 2021 Mid-Year Review, and all other approved changes through December 31, 2020:

There have been no adjustments to this fund since approval of the FY 2021 Adopted Budget Plan.

Position Detail

The FY 2022 Advertised Budget Plan includes the following positions:

EARLY CHILDHOOD BIRTH TO 5 FUND - 48 Positions			
HEAD START - 13 Positions			
1	Child Care Program Administrator II	3	Day Care Center Teachers II
1	Child Care Specialist III	4	Day Care Center Teachers I
1	Child Care Specialist II	1	Business Analyst II
2	Human Service Workers II		
SCHOOL READINESS - 5 Positions			
1	Child Care Program Administrator I	3	Child Care Specialists II
1	Child Care Specialist III		
COMMUNITY EDUCATION & PROVIDER SERVICES - 30 Positions			
1	Child Care Program Administrator II	3	Child Care Specialists III
2	Child Care Program Administrators I	4	Child Care Specialists II
1	Management Analyst II	7	Child Care Specialists I
1	Management Analyst I	6	Administrative Assistants IV
1	Business Analyst I	3	Administrative Assistants II
1	Human Service Worker I		

Performance Measurement Results

The performance measures for the Child Care Assistance and Referral program, Head Start, and Community Education and Provider Services were moved from Agency 79, Department of Neighborhood and Community Services beginning in FY 2021 and are reflected below. Performance measures for School Readiness are currently being developed. It is anticipated that these new measures will be included in the FY 2023 Advertised Budget Plan.

In FY 2020 the CCAR program continued to see a decrease in the number of children enrolled, similar to the trend that continues statewide. Efforts continue to be directed to maximizing state subsidy funding. No customer satisfaction survey was conducted in FY 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In FY 2021, it is estimated that while the number of children may remain the same, the cost of care will likely increase due to child-care providers serving school age children for full days to support virtual learning.

The number of County permitted homes decreased 12 percent in FY 2020. This decrease is more than the decrease in FY 2019. It should be noted that during the last four months of FY 2020, new child-care permits were not processed due to the COVID-19 pandemic because staff were not able to go into provider homes to conduct health and safety visits.

When examining the reasons that providers reported for not renewing their permit, FY 2020 saw a marked increase in providers moving out of the County (a 29 percent increase from FY 2019), and providers who closed their business citing that they had no children in care (a 38 percent increase from FY 2019, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic). However, a heightened emphasis on retention efforts in FY 2020 helped mitigate a potentially larger decrease in providers. Continued efforts in retention and renewed efforts to bring in new providers will be the focus moving forward to help mitigate turnover and support availability of child care for families in the County.

The Head Start/Early Head Start Program collects and analyzes data at three intervals each year – Fall, Winter and Spring checkpoints – to determine children’s progress across all areas of development throughout the program year. The survey of parents on service quality is completed in the Spring. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in mid-March 2020 interrupted that schedule of data collection. The program is subsequently unable to report child outcomes, gains, and service quality data for program year 2019-2020.

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Indicator	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Estimate	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Estimate	FY 2022 Estimate
Child Care Assistance and Referral Program						
Percent change in number of children served in CCAR	(15%)	(11%)	0%	(14%)	0%	0%
Community Education & Provider Services						
Percent change in number of permitted child care slots	(27%)	(7%)	(3%)	(12%)	(3%)	0%
Head Start						
Percent of 4-year-old children reaching benchmarks in socioemotional skills ¹	81%	80%	80%	NA	80%	80%
Percent of 4-year-old children reaching benchmarks in literacy and language skills ¹	76%	73%	73%	NA	73%	73%
Percent of 4-year-old children reaching benchmarks in math skills ¹	76%	75%	75%	NA	75%	75%

¹ The Head Start/Early Head Start Program collects and analyzes data at three intervals each year – Fall, Winter and Spring checkpoints – to determine children’s progress across all areas of development throughout the program year. The survey of parents on service quality is completed in the Spring. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in mid-March 2020 interrupted that schedule of data collection. The program is subsequently unable to report child outcomes, gains, and service quality data for the program year 2019-2020.

A complete list of performance measures can be viewed at
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/fy-2022-advertised-performance-measures-pm>

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FUND STATEMENT

Category	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2021 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2022 Advertised Budget Plan
Beginning Balance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Revenue:				
Child Care Services for Other Jurisdictions	\$0	\$155,918	\$155,918	\$155,918
USDA Grant-Gum Springs Head Start	0	44,689	44,689	44,689
Home Child Care Permits	0	15,353	15,353	15,353
Total Revenue	\$0	\$215,960	\$215,960	\$215,960
Transfers In:				
General Fund (10001)	\$0	\$32,564,400	\$32,564,400	\$32,564,400
Total Transfers In	\$0	\$32,564,400	\$32,564,400	\$32,564,400
Total Available	\$0	\$32,780,360	\$32,780,360	\$32,780,360
Expenditures:				
Personnel Services	\$0	\$5,997,269	\$5,997,269	\$5,997,269
Operating Expenses	0	26,783,091	26,783,091	26,783,091
Total Expenditures	\$0	\$32,780,360	\$32,780,360	\$32,780,360
Total Disbursements	\$0	\$32,780,360	\$32,780,360	\$32,780,360
Ending Balance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0