

Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency Head Start
PY 23-24
Annual Report to the Public



NICAA Head Start Mission Statement

NICAA Head Start will enhance the lives of pre-school children and their families by providing a high-quality program, which includes academics, health, nutrition, parent involvement, and social emotional related services. We will collaborate with families as they work to set and attain their goals. Head Start provides service to the Stephenson and Jo Daviess areas. We are a grant funded program with 190 pre-school slots. While we provide a print rich environment that enables the children to explore and learn academics as well as emotions, the program is actually a social service program aimed at helping children by providing access to the following services: on-site dentals exams, nutritious food, transportation to medical appointments (if needed), family goal setting, referrals to help with housing, food and clothing needs as well as providing resources to help with household expenses.



NICAA Head Start Annual Budget

A. NICAA Head Start Grant year is July 1 – June 30 of each year. Public and private funds received during this time period are as follows:

1. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)	
Continuation grant:	\$1,516,759.00
2. USDA Child Care Food Program	87,549.76
3. <u>In-kind donations:</u>	<u>461,847.53</u>
Total	\$2,066,156.29

B. Budget Expenditures

Program Operation:	Continuation
1. Personnel	\$ 996,518.00
2. Fringe	235,827.00
3. Supplies	62,793.00
4. Contractual	104,025.00
5. Other Costs	111,391.00
6. USDA Food Costs	87,549.76
7. <u>USDA Commodity Costs</u>	<u>3,842.10</u>
8. Total	\$ 1,601,945.86

In-Kind

a. Supplies (donations of toothbrushes, paint, paper, etc.)	23,090.00
b. Contractual	\$16,360.00
c. <u>Other</u>	<u>416,720.00</u>
Total	\$456,170.00

***In-kind contributions are contributions that our program is required to get in order to prove that our community supports our program. In-kind must be allowable, reasonable, verifiable, and necessary for the operation of our Head Start Program.

C. Performance Standards

The Head Start Performance Standards were first published in 1975 and are in place to ensure that all programs provide high quality services. In November of 2016, the Department of Human and Health released the new Performance Standards. To ensure that programs are complying with the Performance Standards programs must go through Federal Review during their 5-year grant cycle they are the FA1, FA2, and CLASS. Office of Head Start uses the information collected during reviews to understand the grantee's approach to program design and services. The information is also used to evaluate their performance and continuous program improvement.

D. Results of the most recent Head Start Federal Reviews

NICAA Head Start is in the first year of their new 5-year grant cycle which was awarded in July of 2023. We received our first Federal Review in March of 2024. The results have not been released as of this date.

Results of the most recent financial audit

NICAA's annual financial audit for 2022 reported that there no financial findings. which was required to be reported in accordance with CFR Section 200.51(a) of Uniform Guidance. No instances of noncompliance related to the financial statements and no material weaknesses in internal control were disclosed during the audit. Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency was determined to be a high-risk auditee.

E. Funded Enrollment

NICAA is funded to serve 190 children and families. In the past 4 years we have seen a decline in the number of families needing pre-school placement due to the need of infant/toddler option being greatly needed in our community. After doing a community assessment and surveying our parents, and much discussion with our staff, NICAA Board and Policy Council Parent Board, Head Start has made the decision to add Early Head Start to its program. Early Head Start will be able to enroll 24 pregnant woman and children ages 6 weeks to 2 years of ages. Once they reach three, they will transition into our Head Start program which serves children ages 3 – 5 years old. We are working on a conversion/reduction grant and writing for Early Head Start grant.

Attendance percentage chart for school year 2022 - 2023

Attendance Percentage 22-23 School year	
September	85
October	83
November	81
December	76
January	82
February	77
March	83
April	86
May	85

Our goal is to maintain no less than 85% student attendance. With influenza and other childhood illness, during the winter months we were below the 85% mark. Even though COVID, as we knew it when it first began, is nothing like it was, we are still seeing the effects from it. COVID called for us to shelter in place, which meant that children were not around other children or many other people so they were not able to build up their immunity system. Now that we are all back “living a normal life”, they are more susceptible catching childhood illnesses. When the attendance falls below 85%, we look for the causes through our data. We contact parents and do home visits to emphasize the importance of student attendance and to ask if there is anything that we can do to help.

D. The percentage of enrolled children that received medical and dental and vision exams.

92% of enrolled children received dental exams. 100% of enrolled children have up-to-date physicals and 96% of enrolled children passed their vision screening. Those who did not, were referred to an eye doctor for further screening. The Stephenson County Health Department / Park City Dental did the dental exams in Stephenson County along with follow-up treatment.





E. Parent Involvement Activities include:

Head Start has a board made up of Head Start parents who assist in the decision-making process of program operations. These positions that they have to run for and be voted in by the other Head Start parents. They are the voice of all Head Start parents.

- Parent Committee Meetings
- Parent Child Literacy Activity Nights

- Participation on Policy Council
- Participation on NICAA Board
- Classroom Volunteers
- Volunteering in home preparing classroom materials.
- Field Trip Volunteers
- Completing Parent Partnership Agreements

- Participating in Home Visits and Parent Teacher Conferences
- Participating in the self-assessment.
- Parent Café
- Activities sent home to do with children
- PAD and PEN activities with their children and family



G. NICAA's Head Start's efforts to prepare children for Kindergarten

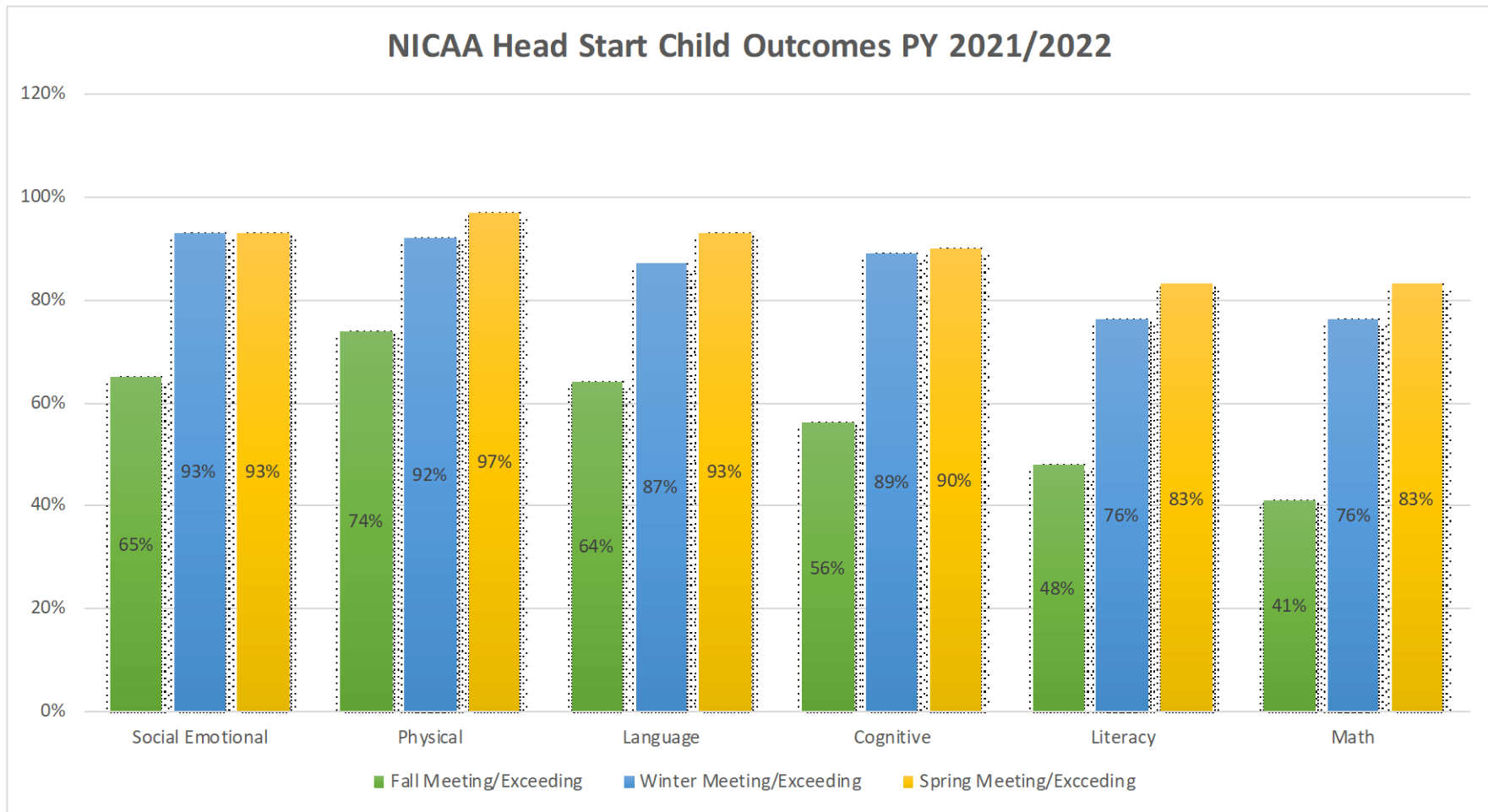
NICAA Head Start uses Creative Curriculum in the classroom and Teaching Strategies Gold assessment tool to show the children's growth throughout the year. Data is collected three times per year, in the fall, winter, and spring. After each collection period, the data is reviewed and program adjustments are made based on areas of need.



Head Start Transition to Kindergarten

NICAA helps families during the transition to kindergarten by sending home flyers about when and where to register their child and providing the parents with the necessary documents needed when registering their child(ren). We also collaborate with the school district to host several on-site kindergartens sign-up days at one of our Head Start sites. Books about kindergarten are read to the children at school and sent home for the parents to read to them to keep and read at home. We also partner with the school district to provide on-site kindergarten sign-up for the parents at our KCC site.

As you can see on the chart below, by the end of the school year, there are a great percentage of children meeting or exceeding the program goals. Children entering Kindergarten from NICAA Head Start are very prepared.



Child Assessment

Children are assessed in many areas, below are the results of the number of children who fall in each area during the course of the year. The following areas are Social emotional, Physical – Gross Motor, Physical – Fine motor, Language, Cognitive, Literacy and Math.

Children enter our program with different skill levels. Our goal is to prepare all of our Head Start children for Kindergarten. This means working with children as a group and as individuals. If they are already ready for Kindergarten, we work on skills beyond Kindergarten. If they need are not at Kindergarten level, we work with them to bring them to that level. We want all of our children to be successful when they go to Kindergarten. Assessing children throughout the year allows us to track on-going progress in the mentioned areas.



Note: At the beginning of the year, it is appropriate for student’s skills and abilities to fall below widely held expectations because the child may not have been exposed to some of the experiences that enhance the child’s ability to do that skill

To provide a smooth transition to Kindergarten, Head Start teachers begin the school year following our programs School Readiness Plan as well as our Kindergarten Transition Plan. This ensures that our program is preparing our children for success. Parents are invited to attend parent meetings with guest speakers from our school district. These meetings are very helpful as they let everyone know the expectations of new students entering into the school system as well as informing them of the different experiences they will encounter. Each child moving to Kindergarten will get a book about going to kindergarten and they will be able to tour an actual kindergarten classroom in one of the school district facilities.



H. NICAA Head Start Staff

NICAA Head Start had 31 full time employees

- 10 Administration staff members
- 5 Lead Teachers
- 10 Teachers Assistants
- 2 one on one's
- 3 Custodial staff
- Teacher Qualifications include BA's or AA's in Early Childhood Education
- Teacher Assistant qualifications include BA, AA's, in Early Childhood Education and or a Child Development Associate (CDA)
- 43% of our teaching staff are currently either taking classes to complete a degree in a higher learner institute, or obtaining their Child Development Associate through NICAA Head Start.

NICAA Head Start staff have done an extremely awesome job working during the past two years that we have been dealing with COVID. They have posted videos of themselves reading so that the students' parents can go on Facebook and the child can see their teacher reading, doing science experiments, art projects, sing-alongs and much more. They have delivered learning packets, and art supplies so that the kids have the proper items to complete the art project the teacher is doing. They also do ZOOM meeting with the children, one on one so that the child can still see their classmates, they will do an all class zoom! They have even delivered breakfast, lunch and snacks to all of our parents who requested them. Thank you and great job!!

Head Start provides resource and referrals to parents, as well as providing transportation to and from school, educational field trips, a quality education, breakfast, lunch and snack, on-site dentals, regular student assessments, parent activity days and parent enrichment nights, and great staff, all at no charge to our families.

*The Head Start program contracts consultants to assist us with mental health, nutrition, and speech issues.

