

Community Action Early Head Start/Head Start Annual Report



Grant Year
February 1, 2011
to January 31, 2012

Program Year
August 2010
to August 2011





About Us



Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders Counties (Community Action) is a private, non-profit agency that serves low-income individuals and families in Southeast Nebraska. Community Action responds to the needs of people struggling in poverty with over 20 programs that, although distinct in their makeup and services, share a common goal:

To empower those seeking assistance to reach their full potential and achieve self-reliance.

Community Action is the federal grantee for Early Head Start and Head Start programs in Lancaster and Saunders Counties. Both Early Head Start, serving pregnant women and children ages birth to 3 and their families, and Head Start, serving children ages 3 to 5 and their families, ensure that enrolled

children receive adequate nutrition, medical and dental care, social/emotional engagement interventions appropriate to their age, and a developmentally appropriate education. The programs also place substantial emphasis on the involvement of parents/guardians in the lives of their children through home visits, parent leadership councils, and social events. Through receiving strengths-based case management, parents of enrolled children simultaneously work on making strides toward achieving greater self-reliance.

Early Head Start and Head Start are dedicated to ensuring that our community's neediest children receive the care and education necessary to meet their developmental milestones, are ready to enter school, and are prepared for a lifetime of productive learning.

Key Program Staff

Vi See, *Executive Director*

Aaron Bowen, *Chief Operating Officer and
Director of Early Head Start and Head Start*

Jeri Winkelmann, *Chief Financial Officer*

Deanna Stevens, *Grants Administrator*

Azure Wall, *Deputy Director of Head Start
and Early Head Start*

Jill Bomberger, *Health Services Administrator*

Janelle Maybee, *Child Development
Center Administrator*

Jean Tesinsky, *Saunders County Head Start
Administrator*

Theresa Gerlach, *Early Head Start
Program Administrator*

Holly Delgado, *Education Administrator*

Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Todd Hall, *President*

Sergeant Don Scheinost, *Vice President*

Brent Grummett, *Treasurer*

Rhonda Medley, *Secretary*

Members

La'Shaundra Swift

Teena Gordon

Selena Neal

Deanna Friesen

John Hanigan

Jay Steinacher

Marj McKinty

Judy Halstead

B. Gail Steen

Kal Lausterer

Doug Emery

Building a future...

WHEN WE FIRST MET THE JOHNSON

family last fall, two-year old James had a minimal vocabulary consisting of only about 20 words, and struggled with word pronunciation. In the time that James has been involved with Early Head Start at Community Action he has increased his vocabulary to over 100 words, and is now using four-word sentences. His mother, Corinne, has played a huge role in his success by unfailingly working with him on the speech skills he needs to succeed in school. Corinne has been successful, too. She has earned her degree, has found full-time employment, successfully manages her household of busy children, and keeps up with her tight budget.

Building a future...

DONNA IS A SINGLE MOTHER OF FOUR

children struggling to make ends meet.

She has fled a dangerous domestic violence situation, and as a result, fell behind on her rent payments, facing eviction. Through Community Action, Donna received assistance with her past-due rent, which allowed her family to stay housed. Through Early Head Start, Donna was able to get the support she needed to get out of an abusive situation, help prepare her daughter for kindergarten, and find a job to support her family. Donna is a strong woman who has worked hard to achieve her goals.

Program Options

Home-based Early Head Start Program

The home-based Early Head Start program option provides 195 low-income pregnant women and children with family-centered services that facilitate child development, enhance parenting skills, and encourage self-sufficiency. Each family is assigned a Family Educator who makes weekly home visits devoted to making gains toward achieving the specific goals of the child and family. All home-based Early Head Start families are invited to two socializations each month, which offer them an opportunity to participate in educational and community learning activities with other Early Head Start families at no cost.

Center-based Early Head Start and Head Start Program

Community Action's center-based full-day, full-year Early Head Start and Head Start program option serves 52 Head Start children and 23 Early Head Start children and their families at the program's Head Start Child Development Center. The Center's hours of operation are Monday through Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., with core education hours for Early Head Start and Head Start from 9:00 a.m. to





Program Options (continued)

3:00 p.m. Teachers at the Center are in regular contact with families and work with parents and guardians on child development, parenting skills, becoming familiar with community resources, and working toward self-sufficiency. Additionally, Lead Teachers conduct home visits and conferences with the family of each child enrolled in their classroom, and both Lead Teachers and Teachers are in frequent communication with each other about child and family needs throughout the week.

Part-day, Part-year Head Start Program

In partnership with delegate agencies Lincoln Public Schools and Wahoo Public Schools, Community Action offers a part-day, part-year Head Start program option that serves 444 children in Lincoln, and 44 children in Saunders County. Head Start classrooms are fully inclusive, so both typically developing children and children with verified disabilities can be served at the participating school nearest their home. All Head Start families are assigned a Family Advocate who provides support as families work to improve parenting skills and increase self-sufficiency. Family Advocates make regular home and classroom visits and participate in periodic formal debriefings with their partnering staff.





Key Program Data

Enrollment

	<i>Total Families Served</i>	<i>Total Children Served</i>
Head Start	572	601
Early Head Start	293*	281
Program Wide	865	882

*Includes enrolled pregnant women

(Source: Head Start and Early Head Start Program Information Reports)

Funded Enrollment versus Average Monthly Enrollment

	<i>Funded Enrollment</i>	<i>Average Monthly Enrollment</i>
Head Start	540	100%
Early Head Start	218	100%
Program Wide	758	100%

(Source: Head Start and Early Head Start Program Information Reports)

Percentage of Eligible Children Served

<i>Number of Children Served through Head Start/Early Head Start</i>	<i>Number of Income Eligible Children In Lancaster and Saunders Counties Nebraska</i>	<i>% Income-Eligible Children Served through Head Start/Early Head Start</i>
882	5,442	16.2

(Source: Head Start and Early Head Start Program Information Reports; 2010 US Census, American Community Survey 3-year estimates)

Health and Wellness

The overall physical and mental health of children is a key determinant of school readiness. Community Action Early Head Start and Head Start promotes healthy physical development of enrolled children through health and mental health screenings and services, monitoring of immunizations and well child care, nutritional assessments, and assisting families as they identify a medical home. Services are provided to promote growth within normal ranges of cognitive, language, social/emotional, and motor development through developmental screenings, identification of developmental delays and suspected disabilities, and parent/child participation in program curricula.

The following table lists the percentage of enrolled children who received dental and medical services and immunizations from the last program year, August 2010 to August 2011:

	<i>Head Start: Part-day, Part-year</i>	<i>Head Start: Full-day, Full-year</i>	<i>Head Start: Saunders County</i>	<i>Early Head Start</i>
Dental	94%	75%	96%	75%
Medical	74%	82%	96%	79%
Immunizations	99%	92%	100%	93%

(Source: Head Start and Early Head Start Program Information Reports)

School Readiness/Preparing for Kindergarten:

Parent Involvement

Community Action's Early Head Start and Head Start programs firmly believe that learning begins at birth, and that parents play a critical role in helping their children be successful in Kindergarten and beyond. Beginning in Early Head Start and continuing through the preschool years, we focus all activities on building relationships between children and their parents or guardians. Though parenting education opportunities have traditionally been geared toward the mother, our program advocates the importance of the father in the day-to-day



lives and development of their children. A Male Leadership Team, consisting of fathers and male guardians of enrolled children and program staff, collaborates to plan activities designed to engage men with their children.

School Readiness Committee

To ensure that our program is taking the steps necessary to prepare children for success in Kindergarten and beyond, our School Readiness Committee, made up of program staff, parents of enrolled children, and community members, has adopted five fundamental principles:

- > Positive interactions and relationships with adults provide a critical foundation for successful learning.
- > Social-emotional competence is a significant factor for school success.

(continued on page 8)

Building a future...

CHRISTIAN AND KAREN SMITH ARE THE parents of three young daughters. In search of employment, the Smith's relocated to Lincoln, but found themselves homeless. Fortunately, Christian's sister had children enrolled in Community Action's Head Start program and encouraged the Smith's to enroll their younger two daughters who were eligible. After successfully enrolling their daughters and working with their Family Advocate they realized two main goals for their family. The first goal was to "get ahead," as they did not have a vehicle, jobs, health insurance, or a place to live. The second goal was to get their daughter ready for kindergarten.

Within a couple of months, Christian was able to get a couple of side jobs, and soon the Smith's were able to move into their own apartment. The Smith girls continue to see success in the Head Start program, and the Smith family keeps working hard every day.



School Readiness/Preparing for Kindergarten: (continued)

- > Constructive, purposeful play supports essential learning.
- > Physical environment affects the type and quality of learning interactions.
- > Teacher-family partnerships promote development and learning.

These five principles inform program goals, and ensure that all activities within Early Head Start and Head Start are geared toward preparing children for future success.

Assessment

Assessment is a critical component in ensuring that our programming is effective. Using Teaching Strategies GOLD, an on-going, authentic, observational assessment system designed to evaluate children's development and

learning from birth through kindergarten, Teachers and Family Educators document a child's growth in nine distinct areas of development: Social-Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies, and The Arts.

Using Teaching Strategies GOLD as a guide, Teachers and Family Educators are able to quantitatively measure and track children's skill levels within these areas, and alter their teaching methods accordingly.





Educare of Lincoln

Community Action has entered into a partnership with Lincoln Public Schools and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to develop an Educare School in Lincoln. Originating from collaboration between the Buffet Early Childhood Fund and the Ounce of Prevention Fund, Educare Schools provide high-quality education and health care and services to the neediest children ages birth to 5 in cities across the country based on the following identifying principles:

- 1) Educare is a program based on early education practices that ensure the school readiness of children most at risk for academic failure;
- 2) Educare is a place of early learning that sends a clear message that we must invest in early childhood education because children are born learning;

- 3) Educare is a partnership of philanthropists, Early Head Start and Head Start providers, and school officials dedicated to narrowing the achievement gap for children in their communities; and
- 4) Educare is a platform for raising awareness of the value and vital importance of learning during a child's first five years of life.

City of Lincoln's Belmont neighborhood, which has one of the highest rates of children in poverty in Lincoln (19.3% in 2011), and will open in 2013. Educare of Lincoln will give more low-income children and families in Lincoln the opportunity for high-quality full-day, full-year child development services



Building a future...

LIZ STRUGGLED FOR YEARS WITH A

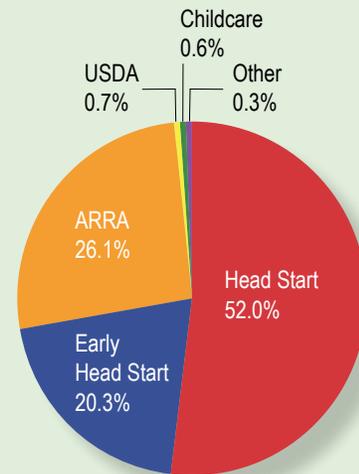
severe drug and alcohol addiction. It was when she became pregnant with her first child that she decided to make a better life for her and her soon-to-be family. Liz enrolled in Early Head Start while pregnant. With the help of Early Head Start Family Educators, Liz devised a plan for how she was going to face motherhood, and take steps to improve her life. Liz entered a drug treatment program while she was still pregnant, attended every single session, and finished the program after giving birth to her daughter Brittany. Liz has set a goal to begin taking GED classes in the near future and to seek quality employment. Liz's new daughter has done very well in Early Head Start: she is already beyond the developmental benchmarks for children her age. Liz is feeling better about her future every day, and continues to take the steps necessary to improve her life.

Financial Data February 1, 2010- January 31, 2011

Funding

REVENUES	
Head Start	3,703,682
Early Head Start	1,444,359
ARRA	1,856,501
USDA	50,795
Childcare	39,408
Other	23,169
Total Revenues	7,117,915

EXPENDITURES	
Head Start	3,703,682
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ARRA	1,856,501
USDA	50,795
Childcare	39,408
Other	23,169
Total Revenues	7,117,915





Family and Community Engagement

Parent Involvement

Parents are the first and most important educators in their child's development. Through home visits and socialization events, parents take the center stage in helping their children to learn and grow. There are many opportunities for parents to get involved within the program. Monthly, all parents of enrolled children are able to participate in Parent Committees through Community Action, or in Policy Committees at delegates Lincoln Public Schools and Wahoo Public Schools. To ensure their involvement, parents have opportunities throughout the year to plan and participate in parent events, develop new training opportunities, and provide input to their respective program option. Parents also play a critical role in informing the direction of the program through their participation in Policy Council, Head Start's decision-making Board.

Community Partnerships

Well-established community partnerships are a critical component to the success of Community Action's Early Head Start and Head Start programs. Contracted partnerships are maintained with agencies and entities in the community including Lincoln Public Schools, Wahoo Public Schools, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Psychological Consultation Center, the Early Development Network, a Registered Dietician, Language-Linc, and the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department. The program also partners with human services agencies across Lincoln and in Wahoo including the Bryan LGH College of Nursing, Three Rivers Health Department, the Friendship Home, Sewing for Babies, Project Linus, Diaper Depot, and Aging Partners. Most recently, Community Action has entered into a partnership with Lincoln

Public Schools, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the Buffet Early Childhood Fund, and the Lincoln Community Foundation to bring an Educare School to Lincoln. The Educare Center will open in 2013.

Volunteerism

The Office of Head Start mandates that all Head Start programs across the nation raise non-federal match funds in the form of donated funding, time, goods, and services equal to 25 percent of each program's total funding. Volunteers are the single most important contributors to this goal. During the last grant year (February 1, 2011 to January 31, 2012), 198 volunteers contributed 6,963 hours of service to Early Head Start and Head Start programs. Without the dedication of our volunteers, we would not be able to do what we do.

www.communityactionnetwork.org



210 O Street
Lincoln, NE 68508
(402) 471-4515
(402) 471-4844



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