

Annual Report

2022-2023



Tri-County
Head Start

READY FOR SCHOOL. READY FOR LIFE.

Letter from our Executive Director

Dear Friends & Supporters,

Thank you so much for your continued support of our Tri-County Head Start (TCHS) children and families. Community involvement from our partners and supporters is critical to the services provided to our families. We continue to rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic, reopening and staffing all classrooms in three counties. In addition, we have an eye toward continuous improvement in our programs and services.



Throughout 2023, we increased the number of children served and returned to normal operations. We worked more closely with community partners to provide much-needed resources. We continue to invest in our classrooms and facilities. We reinvested in our teachers through increased pay, bonuses, and professional development opportunities.

Our leadership, teachers, governing board, policy council, and community partners continue to rally together to support the changing needs of our children and their families. As a result, we see positive outcomes and promising growth and development toward school readiness.

I am pleased to share a few 2023 program highlights based on our five program goals:

Financially-Sound Management Systems: For the sixth year in a row, TCHS received the highest audit rating possible, exceeded budget performance, and increased teacher salaries. With assistance from the Buell Foundation, we offer affordable healthcare coverage. We are proud of the investments made in our children, families, and teachers.

Support and Resources for Families: We connected over 87% of our families with necessary resources, including research-based parenting curriculum and emergency/crisis intervention, meeting immediate needs for food, clothing, and shelter. We continue to support families through our Family Hardship Fund which is funded by our annual community campaign.

Preparing Children for School and Life: We expanded technology by providing computers with Ignite by Hatch software and continued use of TeachSmart Boards in preschool classrooms. This supports large group and small group play with trackable progress across many learning domains. We remain dedicated to preparing students for future success in school, celebrating 90 children transitioning to kindergarten. All students engage in activities to develop a strong social-emotional foundation and an early love for learning.

Qualified and Nurturing Educators Make All the Difference: Teachers play an important role in building a child's success in their first years of school. TCHS focuses on recruiting and retaining qualified teachers through annual pay increases, hiring bonuses, full coverage health benefits, and ongoing paid professional development. Finding qualified early childhood teachers in La Plata county continues to be a challenge due to the high cost of living in this area.

Together Everyone Achieves More: Community partnerships are instrumental in providing services and engaging families. Local family centers are a one-stop resource for families in need. Our community's programs, such as Manna Soup Kitchen, the Durango Food Bank, Healthy Archuleta, food pantries, and Good Samaritan Center, are essential resources, ensuring food security during challenging times.

In spite of the many challenges over the last several years, we are stronger, more resilient, and remain optimistic about the future. We rely on guidance from the families and communities we serve to fulfill our mission to support young children.

Best to you and your family,

Lisa Stone
Executive Director

ABOUT US

Head Start is a federally funded program developed to help low-income children prepare for school success. While enrolled in TCHS, children of all abilities are provided activities that help them grow mentally, emotionally, socially, and physically. We offer quality educational experiences in safe, well-equipped environments that promote literacy and school readiness.

MISSION

The mission of TCHS is to develop and provide quality, integrated, comprehensive early childhood development programs that offer a broad range of services and respond to the needs of eligible young children and their families for the purpose of preparing them for success in school and in life.

GOALS

TCHS developed five overarching program goals and incorporated objectives that recognized possible challenges, outlined activities to focus on, and identified expected outcomes and tools to measure the results. Through ongoing monitoring and data analysis, staff assess the progress made in reaching the goals and objectives throughout the program year.

FINANCIAL

TCHS will maintain structured, financially sound management systems to support safe, high-quality, early learning programs.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

TCHS will recruit, enroll, and serve families who are among the highest need, thus providing support, resources, and services to help families achieve their goals.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TCHS will effectively administer Head Start and Early Head Start programs with qualified and nurturing educators.

SCHOOL READINESS

TCHS will develop school readiness goals that are appropriate for the ages and development of all enrolled children to ensure optimal academic and social progress for culturally diverse children and their families.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

TCHS will develop collaborative relationships with local agencies to provide services and resources to engage and support families in their pursuit of health and well-being.

Locations & Centers

Archuleta County:

Pagosa Springs Head Start - Pagosa Springs

La Plata County:

Durango North Head Start - Durango

Florida Mesa Head Start - Durango

Needham Head Start - Durango

Park Head Start - Durango

Ignacio Early Learning Program - Ignacio

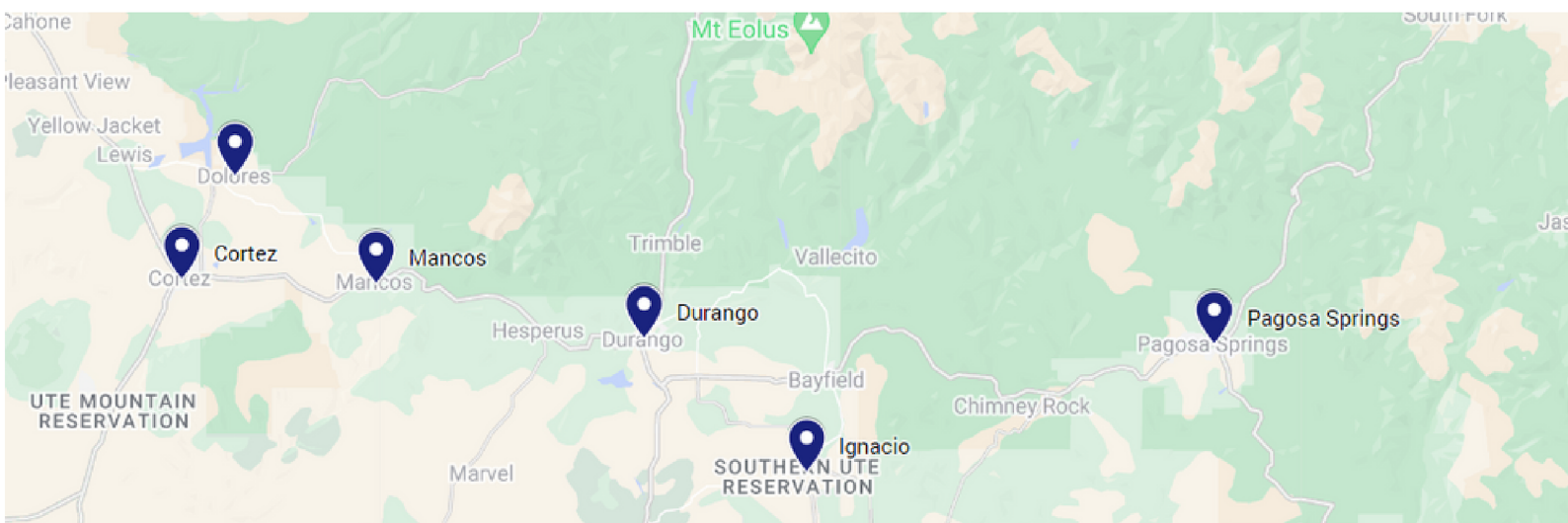
Montezuma County:

Mesa View Head Start - Cortez

Teddy Bear Preschool - Dolores

Mancos Early Learning Center - Mancos

The Nest Preschool- Mancos



Enrollment & Family Services

237

CHILDREN SERVED

186 Head Start
51 Early Head Start



73%

AVERAGE MONTHLY ENROLLMENT



The estimated percentage (%) of eligible children in our service area that we serve:

77% for Head Start

17% for Early Head Start

TCHS was under-enrolled due to staff shortages that limited the number of classrooms in operation in the Durango area.

Over 87% of our families received a resource or referral. The most in-demand services included:

- 93% Discussing Screening and Assessment Results and Child's Progress
- 80% Research-Based Parenting Curriculum
- 70% Education on Preventative Medical and Oral Health
- 54% Support with Transitions Between Programs
- 7% Emergency/Crisis Intervention*

*Includes immediate needs for food, clothing, or shelter

Ready Rosie

TCHS entered a third year of using Ready Rosie, a research-based parenting curriculum offered online. Ready Rosie reaches families in their native language, at home, with tools such as video modeling, family workshops, professional development opportunities, and mobile technology - building powerful partnerships between families and educators. **We had 166 Ready Rosie users and over 634 video views by our families, which resulted in 1,594 learning opportunities.** This surpasses the number of families that typically attend parenting classes offered in the community.



90

Children transitioned to kindergarten

The continued use of Ignite by Hatch computers allows children to progress in their personal profile by playing educational games that support developmental milestones. Since 2022, all preschool classrooms within our agency have utilized Hatch TeachSmart Boards. These TeachSmart Boards have helped support large and small group play with trackable progress across our School Readiness Learning Domains. As each child engages in an educational activity through the Hatch software, it provides teachers with documentation for tracking their progress in Teaching Strategies GOLD. This platform has been a great addition to help introduce technology in the classroom.

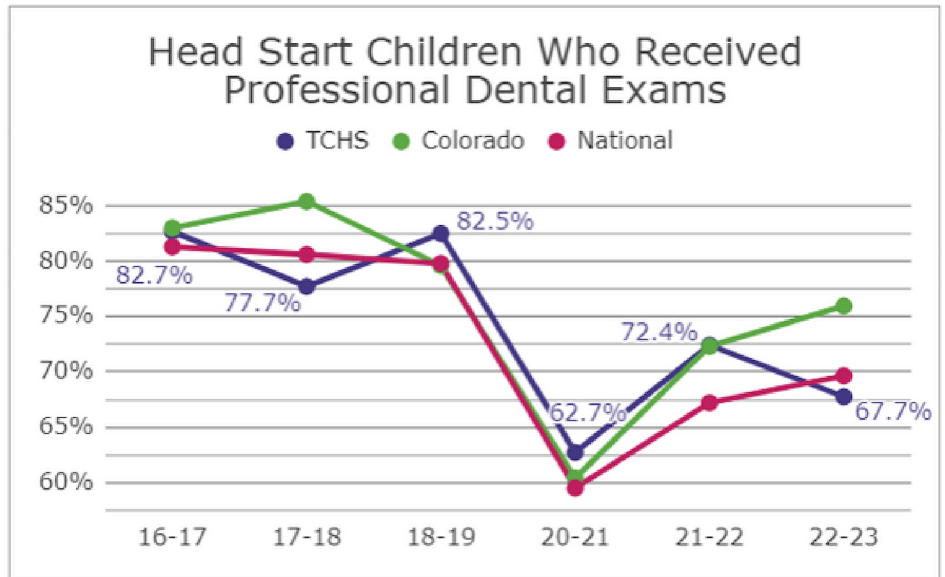
TCHS School Readiness Goals help prepare each child for future success in school. Head Start and Early Head Start school readiness goals focus on the following objectives: Social and Emotional Development; Approaches to Learning; Language; Literacy; Cognition; Perceptual; and Motor and Physical Development. We have seen significant growth in these areas from Fall to Spring checkpoints in the program year 2022-23.

Incredible Years Dinosaur School is a social-emotional program that our organization implements in each Head Start classroom. This program is in place to support social and emotional interactions and regulation. Across the organization we have worked on new strategies to support children's communication and self-regulation skills. Since implementing Dinosaur School, we've seen steady improvement in social-emotional development, communication skills, building healthy relationships with their peers, and how children engage with their learning environment.

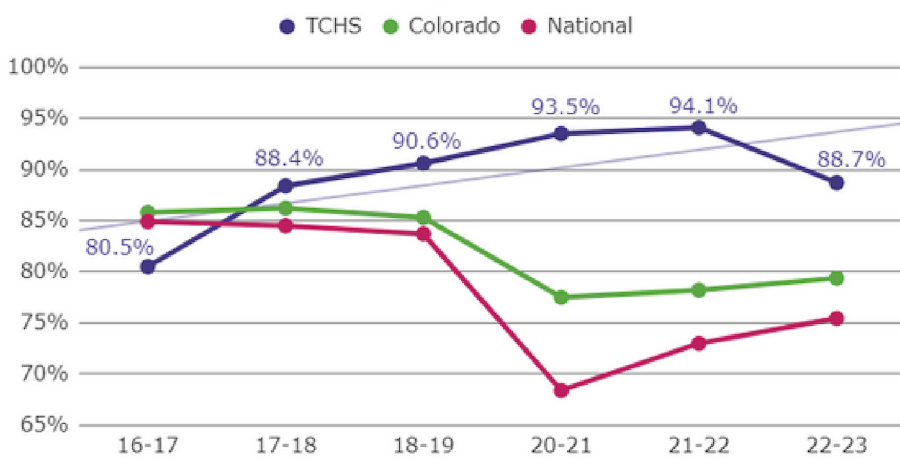
Child Health Services

Success in school is dependent on the overall wellbeing of the student. With this in mind, Head Start not only provides high quality early childhood education to prepare children for school, the program also cares for each child holistically. TCHS provides this care through nutritious meals; hearing, vision, and dental screenings; and daily toothbrushing in the classroom.

TCHS continues to surpass Colorado and National numbers of children who are up-to-date on preventive and primary health care. And despite some dips in program year 2022-23, TCHS is still on an upward trajectory, ensuring our kids get the care they need.

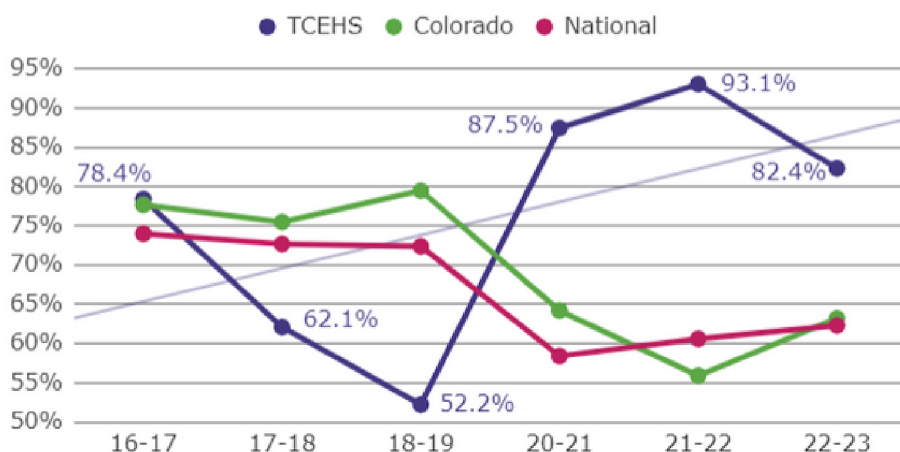


Head Start Children Up-to-Date on Preventive and Primary Health Care



Like other Head Start programs across Colorado and the U.S., TCHS struggled to get families to prioritize dental exams, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic. There are a limited number of pediatric dentists in our counties and even fewer who take Medicaid. To help fill that gap, all TCHS children participate in daily toothbrushing in the classroom, and we partner with the local health department to offer free dental screenings in our centers each year. We are also working more closely with local dentists to educate and encourage families to keep up on preventive oral health care, both through targeted outreach and dentist participation at Head Start family events.

EHS Children Up-To-Date on Preventive and Primary Health Care



Human Resources



100% of the teaching staff participated in professional development. TCHS prioritizes continuing education by supporting Child Development Associate (CDA) completion and higher education degrees.



All staff received a pay increase at an average of 9.6%

Turnover for program year 2022-23: 25%

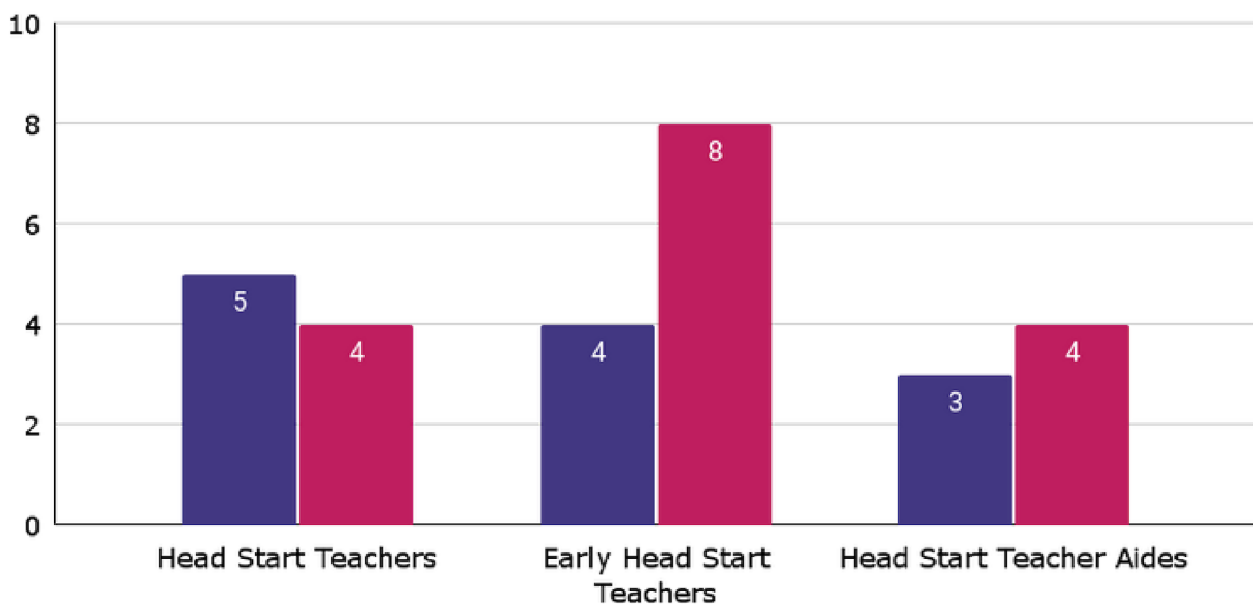
While child care and early childhood education centers have historically experienced high turnover rates of about 30% per year, nationally Early Head Start programs saw a significant increase from 38% to 57% in 2023.

Reasons for turnover:

- 28% Personal
- 23% Moved out of the area
- 12% No longer available
- 12% Contract ended
- 12% Terminated for cause
- 12% Pay/Promotion
- 1% Childcare

Qualified Teachers

■ Qualified ■ Working to be Qualified



Financial Standing

2022-2023 PROPOSED BUDGET

Total Revenue
\$3,667,212

Total Expense
\$3,664,657

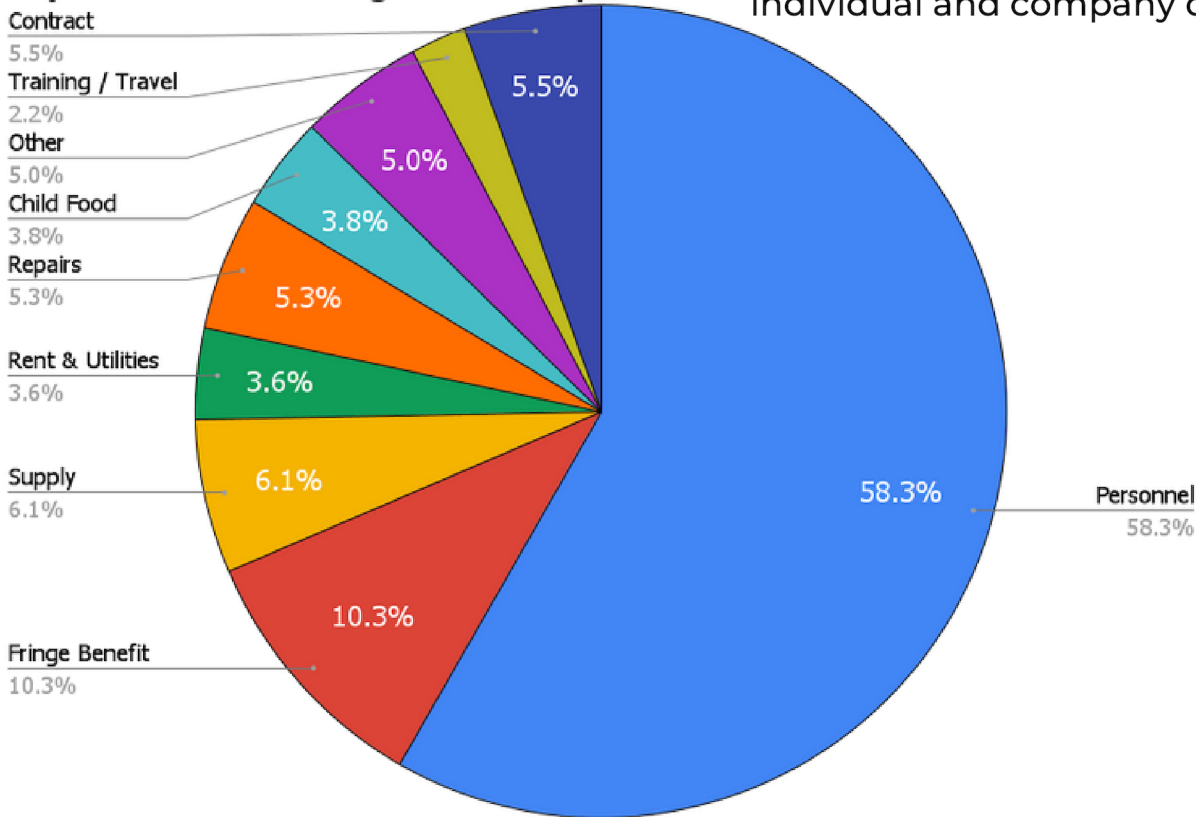
Total Bottom Line
\$2,555

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INCOME

Head Start Grant - \$2,978,730
 American Rescue Plan funds - \$205,904
 Colorado Preschool Program - \$279,265.32
 CACFP Food Program - \$82,058.44
 Child Care Assistance Program - \$12,216.64
 Parent Tuition - \$4,235.30
 Buell Foundation - \$35,000
 *In-Kind - \$975,279.76

*In-Kind sources include parent and community volunteers: state revenue: and individual and company donations.

Expenditures: Percentage of total expenses



FINANCIAL AUDIT RESULTS

TCHS financial records are reviewed annually by McPherson, Breyfogle, Daveline, and Goodrich (MBDG), an independent auditor. The program year spans September 1, 2022 through August 31, 2023; MBDG completed the audit report in October 2023. TCHS received an unmodified opinion, the highest rating possible.

A Federal Review was not conducted during the program year.



1315 Main Ave Ste. 124
Durango, CO 81301
(970) 247-5960
info@tchs4c.org
tchs4c.org

Governing Board Members

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Policy Council Members

Krista Milburn
Pagosa Springs

Skyla Vasi
Mesa View

Lisa Shaw
Durango North / Needham

Lisa Stone
Executive Director
(970) 828-5902
lisam@tchs4c.org

Governing Board

The TCHS Board of Directors handles the overall agency's fiscal and legal functions. The Board is comprised of 6-12 members equally divided between 3 sectors: Agency Representatives, Private Sector, and Parents. We achieve governance of TCHS through a shared decision-making process described in the Head Start Performance Standards. The Board of Directors functions as the Grantee Board and Governing Body.

Policy Council

We establish the Policy Council annually with elected parent representatives from each program classroom or center. The Policy Council must partner with key management staff and the Board of Directors to develop, review, and approve or reject policies and procedures, including how the Governing Body and the Policy Council will implement shared decision-making.

Annual Campaign Donors

Tri-County Head Start is grateful to all the individuals, organizations, and businesses for their contributions each year. We thank all of them for their continued support and trust in our organization. Their contributions make it possible for us to keep serving children and families across the tri-county area in Southwest Colorado.

Family Hardship Fund

In its fifth year, the Family Hardship Fund has helped numerous TCHS families by awarding assistance with transportation, health, nutrition, and tuition assistance.