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The Annual Report

Skagit/Islands Head Start & ECEAP, a Skagit Valley College program, provides high quality, happy, early-learning environments for children aged birth to five. We also provide culturally responsive services to the entire family, including home-based services to pregnant women. We understand that each child’s first and most important learning happens in the home, so we strive to work in partnership with families to ensure we are reaching the best possible outcomes for each individual child and family.

The following report highlights select aspects of our work for the school year 2019/2020.

The annual report looks different this year as during this time period (starting around March 2020), the world began to realize that we were in the midst of a serious pandemic that would go on to result in more than 9 million cases worldwide, over 473,000 deaths and shutdown over 188 countries as of this writing. As it became clear that COVID-19 was unlike any other illness we had seen in recent times, Washington State implemented a stay-at-home order and closed down workplaces to reduce the spread of the illness. These stay-at-home orders meant children could not go to school, and we worked to implement remote operations as quickly as possible. Due to this, our data looks different to other years as our program was interrupted mid-stream and so was unlike any other program year we have experienced so far.

Director:
• Mary Ellen Lykins

Policy Council:
• Kaila Roberts, Chair
• Originally Tyler Ginez was Vice Chair. Mid-year he had to step down due to other obligations. Cethanie Massingale was voted in and completed the year as interim Vice-Chair
• Amanda Boucher - Secretary

Governing Board:
• Ms. Megan Scott O’Bryan
• Ms. Lindsay Fiker
• Ms. Kathryn Bennett
• Ms. Flora Perez-Lucatero
• Mr. Christon Skinner
• Dr. Thomas A. Keegan

Donors
• San Juan Community Foundation
• Skagit Valley College Foundation
Mission
Building strong foundations for lifelong learning through family-centered, child-focused partnerships.

Vision
We support children, families and each other to build resilience, strength and a sense of belonging to grow into their true potential and flourish. We join with families to make a positive difference in all of our lives and in the communities where we live, work, and learn.

Values
STRONG, POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS: Connecting children, families, communities, and each other; honored through open-honest communication, and taking time to understand and build mutual regard.

OPEN, ENGAGING COLLABORATION: Cooperation, open-minded give and take, shared decision making, engaging diverse talents and resources with a focus on common goals and passions.

PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRITY: Consistency, honesty, sharing thoughts, confidentiality and professionalism.

RESPECT AND ACCEPTANCE FOR ALL: Recognizing, valuing encouraging and supporting community and individual differences and perspectives.

HIGH STANDARDS OF QUALITY: Best practice at the core of decisions, professional development and personal growth, high expectations, personal responsibility.
Covid-19/Novel Coronavirus Outbreak

This report covers the time period from September 2019 - August 2020. This first case of Covid-19 was detected in the continental United States in February of 2020. While virus levels have stabilized in some countries, they continue to climb in others. The full social and economic impacts have yet to be fully realized.

Our Response to Covid-19

As it became clear that COVID-19 was unlike any other illness we had seen in recent times to impact the nation and world in this manner, many states implemented stay-at-home orders and closed down workplaces to reduce the spread of the illness. These stay-at-home orders meant children could not go to school, and some adults were not able to work, thus losing income. Washington State offered some additional social supports, such as extended unemployment benefits, eviction moratoriums, and additional WIC and SNAP benefits, and local social organizations worked hard to ensure that needy families received food and other assistance. Schools worked to continue their lunch programs using social distancing to ensure that vulnerable families were still able to provide their children with lunches. In Washington State, a stay-at-home order was mandated until May 30th. After May 30th the Governor - Jay Inslee presented a phased approach to opening the state that stretched out into longer-term restrictions on gatherings, in-person schooling and other higher risk activities. As of June 26th, Washington State had also implemented mandatory cloth face mask wearing in all public spaces.

During the stay-at-home order, programs were unable to hold classes, provide day-to-day care or meet individually with their families from March - August 2020 (the rest of the 2019/2020 program year). This meant that programs stepped up to the challenge of finding creative ways to deliver programming and services. Adjustments to programming to address the pandemic during the program year will be noted throughout the report. We found by conducting a staff and family survey that access to technology for both staff and families is more of a barrier to success than initially anticipated, as access is not equitable making alternative program delivery and supervision more challenging to provide the same access to resources universally.
Our Program

The Skagit/Islands Head Start Program (SIHS) provides a variety of options that have been developed based on community needs, to provide a range of services to low income families including part-day and full-day center-based care, locally designed options and home-based care.

Funding for enrollment remained the same for 2019/2020 as the prior year. Cumulative and average monthly enrollment however, dropped slightly due to the pandemic.

**Average Monthly Enrollment**

97.1%
AVERAGE MONTHLY ENROLLMENT
Early Head Start

99.4%
AVERAGE MONTHLY ENROLLMENT
Preschool Head Start

**Total Funded Enrollment**

Our funding enabled us to enroll 396 children at one time - 105 in Early and 291 in Preschool Head Start.

**Total Cumulative Enrollment**

We enrolled 421 children and 4 pregnant woman cumulatively over the program year.
Eligibility

Our program is funded to accommodate 396 children. Each year, more eligible families apply for the program than we can enroll.

Percentage New Eligible Applicants Enrolled

In the 2019/2020 program year we were able to serve:

- **92%** of eligible Early Head Start applicants (91 eligible families applied and 84 were enrolled)
- **90%** of eligible Preschool Head Start applicants (213 eligible families applied and 192 were enrolled)

Type of Eligibility & Number of Children

![Type of Eligibility & Number of Children Chart]

- Below Income - 244
- Homeless - 61
- TANF/SSI - 46
- Above Income - 34
- Over Income - 23
- Foster Care - 17

Attendance

Our average monthly attendance was calculated from September 2019 through March 2020. Due to the pandemic, we stopped in-person services mid-way through March 2020 and so spent the remainder of the 2019/2020 program year in transition to a remote learning plan. We therefore made the decision to pause attendance tracking to allow us to adjust our processes to accommodate our new circumstances.

- **83.0%** Average monthly attendance
  - Preschool Head Start
  - 279 children per month

- **81.5%** Average monthly attendance
  - Early Head Start
  - 66 children per month
Center & Staff Highlights

Our teaching staff are highly qualified! Our staff possess:

- 3 Advanced degrees
- 16 Bachelor degrees
- 19 Associate degrees
- 12 Child Development Associate Credentials (CDA)
- We also have 24 bilingual staff

40 staff working for us were former Head Start parents (15 with Early Head Start and 25 with Preschool Head Start.)

We had 274 volunteers, (36 with Early Head Start and 238 with Preschool Head Start.)

201 of which were current or former Head Start parents.
In the last few years we have seen an uptick in challenging behaviors across our services areas that deserve a highly-focused and quick responses from teachers and increasingly, data shows a link between trauma and these challenging behaviors. Easing the burden on staff, and ensuring adequate supports for impacted children requires staffing ratios that are robust, and staff who are well-supported and trained. To do this we are adding a total of five full-time classroom aides who will be deployed across specifically identified centers and additional targeted staff training. We believe that by adding staff, this approach will promote resilience for staff in a variety of ways including increased opportunities to engage in thoughtful planning and coaching time, and will promote resilience for children in the classrooms by offering more consistency in well-trained, committed and happy adults in their classrooms. Relationship building between children and staff will also be enhanced.

Changes to our programs in 2019/2020

In 2019/2020 we continued with the implementation of programming from our new grant funding. We increased full day options from just one location to San Juan, Concrete, Sedro Woolley, Mount Vernon, and Oak Harbor. We hired an additional 30 full time classroom employees to support these changes. The fall was spent hiring, orientating and training many in our programs. This was a big bold move that created many challenges and opportunities. One of the challenges was acquiring enough facilities to offer full day classrooms as space in our current buildings was limited. This year we received funding to enable us to purchase new and pre-existing buildings to accommodate our expansion. The purchase of one building in Oak Harbor is complete and we are continuing to work towards the purchase of another building in Mount Vernon/Burlington area and replacement of a modular building in San Juan.
Changes to Teaching Delivery & Parent Contact Due to COVID

During the shut-down in 2019/2020, both Head Start and Early Head Start teachers served the children and families remotely by remaining in contact with families and each other through email, phone and Zoom video conferencing. This provided children and caregivers/parents an opportunity to connect and engage with the teachers and each other. Families who could not participate in Zoom school were reached by phone, email and distance friendly visits to provide support and connection.

Other means of supporting families with school readiness focused content included YouTube videos created by the teachers. Zoom meetings were organized for the adults so that family members could ask questions about behavior supports and other ways to provide school readiness activities in the home. We used the SIHS Facebook page to upload family activities and other family support information.

Kindergarten Preparation

SIHS works as a team with parents, staff and community members to establish school readiness goals (skills and knowledge children should have when they enter kindergarten), taking into consideration the Head Start Early Learning and Outcomes Framework (HSELOF), state guidelines and Kindergarten Readiness goals, program data, community and self-assessment data, and specific needs of the population we serve, including dual language learners.

We use GOLD, an assessment tool developed by Teaching Strategies to help teachers measure children’s progress (outcomes) toward their individual school readiness goals and to plan for continued learning that meets the needs of both the individual and the entire class. Creative Curriculum is the foundational curriculum and promotes learning through structured and unstructured play opportunities. Due to the abrupt closure of school and the need to change delivery modes, we were unable to collect valid observational data during the spring to complete our ongoing assessment of children’s developmental progress. Teachers visited frequently with parents to provide individual developmental support for each child.

SIHS Birth-to-Five Programming Domains

1. Language & Literacy
2. Mathematics & Science
3. Physical Development
4. Social & Emotional Development
5. Creative Arts & Approaches to Learning
Kindergarten Readiness

Usually SIHS evaluates how our outcomes compare to children in our service area entering kindergarten, by looking at Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) data collected via WaKIDS. This year due to the pandemic, we were unable to collect valid data during the Spring checkpoint and OSPI was also unable to collect/provide data for comparison purposes.

We were able however, to collect data for children entering our program in the fall of 2019 and compare it to the winter checkpoint data collected in February of 2020. Winter checkpoint data collected by our program is used for internal monitoring of child progress and so is not collected in such a formalized manner as Fall and spring checkpoint data. We can however, use it to provide us with a gauge of how much progress our children made between the Fall and Winter checkpoints.

These charts represent:

1) SIHS outcome data for four year olds,
2) The average number of children that meet or exceed widely held expectations for that dimension or fall below that threshold for a child getting ready to enter kindergarten at the Fall and Winter checkpoints.
Inclusion Services

All our classrooms continue to be fully inclusive offering a variety of services to children of all abilities. In the 2019/2020 program year under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 21% of our children had an Individual Education or Individual Family Services Plan. Supporting that work means committed and collaborative relationships with the providers of specialized services.

Changes to Inclusion Services Due to COVID

Families were able to access support and resources provided by our three mental health consultants who were available either by phone or tele-therapy. Teachers focused on how to support families with their new situation, family concerns, child and family stress and worked on routines and self-help skills.

Coordination was essential with so many different supports being offered. For children receiving early intervention or special services, the providers were careful to coordinate so families were contacted in an appropriate time-frame as well as using each others skills to meet the needs of the family. In the beginning, the Program Manager was in weekly contact with our partners to make sure we were on target in meeting the needs of the programs.

Collaboration with families on their children’s transitions was also essential in order to make them successful. The families of children transitioning to Kindergarten were kept informed about important district enrollment activities. Family advocates and teachers worked together to make sure families had turned in their paperwork and information was still being given to the district.

Even with COVID we still wanted to celebrate our children. Many centers had drive thru goodbye graduation, ‘YOU MADE IT’ celebrations. Teachers provided summer activity bags and year end certificates for all.
Our Families

Our children and families are the center of our program. We have a unique, diverse and vibrant family community.

Family Training/Education/Employment

Of 391 families:

- 23% are taking some kind of job training/school
- 73% of our parents are employed full or part time or on active military duty
- 12 completed training during the year
- 271 have completed high school/GED
- 33 have an associate degree
- 17 have a bachelor’s degree or higher

Primary Language Spoken at Home

- English - 281
- Spanish - 127
- Native American/East Asian/Pacific Island/European/Slavic Languages - 9
- Unspecified - 10

Family Composition

- 169 (43.2%) One Parent
- 213 (54.5%) Two Parents

52% of our families identify as Hispanic or Latino origin

Length of Time Enrolled

- 1 Year - 228: 54.2%
- 2 Years - 141: 33.5%
- 3 Years or More - 52: 12.4%

Our Children’s Ages:

- >1 Yr old: 17 (4%)
- 1 Yr Old: 35 (8.3%)
- 2 Yrs Old: 66 (15.7%)
- 3 Yrs Old: 126 (30%)
- 4 Yrs Old: 177 (42%)
Family Services & Activities

We provide or link whole families to services. Families can request this assistance at any point during the program term.

**Family Service Provided**

88% of families received at least one support service

Service and Number of Families Assisted

- Parent Education - 268
- Health Education - 225
- Emergency Intervention Services - 204
- Mental Health Services - 71
- Asset Building Services - 49
- Adult Education - 40
- English as a Second Language - 33
- Housing Assistance - 30
- Child Abuse & Neglect Services - 21
- Domestic Violence Services - 21

**Transportation**

73 children received transportation services (we paused in-person services in March due to the pandemic and so this number reflects that.)

**Continuing Education**

We enrolled 199 parents at Skagit Valley College to obtain elective family life credits, and 10% of parents reported taking other classes at the college.

**Parent Curriculum**

We use Ready4K as our parent curriculum. It is a research-based text messaging program for parents that sends fun facts and tips for activities to boost their child’s learning. Parents can opt in or out and participation has grown over time. As of August 2020, we had 294 users.
Changes to Family Services Due to COVID

Family advocate staff contacted all of our families to voice our support and communicate we would continue to provide services. We targeted our most vulnerable families and helped them with gift cards for food and gas staying current on emerging resources and connecting families to them as necessary. We also purchased and distributed diapers to families who were struggling to find these supplies.

Our Health lead partnered with Food Services of America and we purchased healthy staple food items to distribute to families in need on a regular basis. We connected families to food banks, school distribution points and the Pandemic EBT emergency schools meal program to ensure families had basic food needs met. We also connected families to the unemployment insurance benefits program and other community resources and partnered with Catholic Community Services Farm Worker Program to connect our farm worker families to additional resources.

Spotlight: Financial People Project

The Skagit Financial PEOPLE Project began in 2017, a brainchild of the Skagit Asset Building Coalition. Through the PEOPLE Project, volunteer Peer Leaders are trained to work together as a team to offer financial education sessions in English and Spanish to groups in the community. Peer Leaders facilitate guest speakers from financial institutions who present the FDIC Money Smart curriculum to participants. Lessons focus on 1) budgeting, 2) debt reduction, 3) bank services and checking accounts, 4) credit, 5) loans and 6) savings. In total, 118 participants and 15 peer leaders have graduated from the Skagit Financial PEOPLE Project.

In 2019-2020, two six-week sessions were offered in the community. Twelve individuals graduated and received a Skagit Asset Building Coalition Certificate. In March, when COVID-19 struck, a new group of peer leaders were being recruited.

As part of this project we also partnered with the United Way of Skagit county to offer a series of 6-week financial literacy classes at Skagit Valley College. Unfortunately, the series was not completed due to the pandemic.
Family Engagement

In order to evaluate our success in meeting parent needs, we administer a fall strength, needs, and interest survey to learn about parent and family status as they enter the program. We then administer a spring family outcome survey to determine how well the families feel their needs have been met.

Due to the pandemic, our response rate was lower than normal, about half the number of families completed the spring survey compared to a standard year. Data collected is valuable to the program. We discovered that:

- Helping keep up family routines relates to more child growth in the social emotional domain
- Supporting parents in reading to their children relates to more child growth in the language domain
- Helping children deal with stress relates to more child growth in the social emotional domain
- Helping parents deal with stress relates to more child growth in the cognitive domain

Areas of Program Strength by Family Engagement Effort and Child Development Domain

We also linked the parent spring survey outcome data to their children’s outcomes (assessment data), allowing us to evaluate how specific family engagement efforts that parents found very helpful, related to the growth of their children. The strongest areas included:

- 95% of parents/guardians found the program very helpful to their child
- 90% said overall the program was very helpful to the family
- 90% of families found the program very helpful in learning to value their child’s strengths
- 81% of families learned the skills their child needs for Kindergarten and to speak up for their child
- 84% of families learned to encourage creative play at home

Out of the families that indicated they needed help:

- 90% of families found the program very helpful in learning to value their child’s strengths
- 84% of families learned to encourage creative play at home
- 81% of families learned the skills their child needs for Kindergarten and to speak up for their child
- 95% of parents/guardians found the program very helpful to their child
- 90% said overall the program was very helpful to the family
Comprehensive Health Services

Changes to Health Services Due to COVID

Note: The onset of the pandemic significantly impacted our ability to provide preventative comprehensive health services to our children and families during the 2019/2020 program year. Washington State implemented a strict stay-at-home mandate that closed medical facilities to all non-urgent procedures for an extended period and we had to rework our program to implement services from a distance. Our comprehensive health services numbers reflect this. We worked directly with the health department to guide practices and create resources. We also used online resources from the Center of Disease and Control and other online resources to create flyers that supported dental health, continued well child care, and array of resources regarding the Coronavirus. We supported the area of nutrition by providing monthly food distribution that included fresh fruits and vegetables such as broccoli, potatoes, cauliflower, apples, bananas, and oranges. Their bags also contained beans, bread, pasta, peanut butter, granola bars, and tortillas. Lastly, we included recipes from our Harvest for Healthy Kids nutrition curriculum and recipes we found online that supported the items in the bag with instructions on how to cook dry beans, rice, and pasta.

By the end of the program year:

- **97.4%** of CHILDREN had health insurance and a medical home (provider)
- **73.4%** of CHILDREN were up-to-date with medical exams and age appropriate preventative and primary health care
- **95.2%** of CHILDREN had a dental home (provider)
- **54.2%** of CHILDREN were up-to-date with dental exams
Comprehensive Health Services

We conducted:

409 hearing screenings
408 vision screenings
93.1% of CHILDREN were up-to-date with immunizations

Nutrition

Staff screen all children for nutritional risk within 90 days of enrollment. Staff offer nutrition referrals to the family for individualized support for children who are in the bottom or top percentiles (at risk for obesity or underweight).

293 CHILDREN received growth assessments
5 CHILDREN had a BMI below the 5th percentile
46 CHILDREN had a BMI over the 85th percentile
65 CHILDREN had a BMI at or above the 95th percentile

Health Advisory Committee

Licensed mental health consultants, local nutritionists, Community Action, Sea Mar Dental, Island County dentists, Skagit Public Health Department, Island County Health Department, Skagit Valley Pediatrics, Skagit Preschool and Resource Center, Skagit Valley College Nursing Department, and Head Start staff supported the SIHS Health Advisory Committee in 2019/20. The committee was able to meet regularly until March 2020. The meetings were then paused for the rest of the program year due to the pandemic.
Fiscal Information

**Funding 2019/2020**

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<td>ACF - Head Start/Early Head Start Grant</td>
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<td>Start-up, One-time funding - Facilities</td>
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<td>Non-Federal Share</td>
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<td>Mini-Grants/Donations</td>
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<td>USDA Reimbursement</td>
<td>$119,731</td>
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**Explanation of expenditures and proposed budget for 2020/2021 fiscal year:**

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<td>PHS Training &amp; Technical Assistance</td>
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<td>Total ACF Grants</td>
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<td>COVID Supplemental Funding</td>
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<td>USDA Reimbursement</td>
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<td>Total Funding for 2020/2021</td>
<td>$8,738,030</td>
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Review by Secretary and Financial Audit

The Washington State Auditor’s Office fiscal audit of Head Start conducted in September of 2014 reported no fiscal findings for Skagit/Islands Head Start. A random Washington State Auditor’s fiscal audit sampling was also conducted in 2015 with no fiscal findings.

The Administration for children and Families (ACF) conducted a Fiscal/ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance) review February 2, 2015 to February 6, 2015. No areas of noncompliance were found during the course of the review.

The ACF conducted a review of Environmental Health and Safety during the week of March 23, 2015. There were no areas of non-compliance.

A Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) review was conducted by ACF during the week of April 27, 2015. The program exceeded all threshold expectations set by the Head Start Act and scored above the bottom 10% of all national programs cutoff criteria established by the Head Start Act. On a 1 to 7 scale, the Emotional Support Domain scored 6.1607; Classroom organization scored 5.9206; and Instructional Support scored 2.8889.

During the week of March 28, 2016, the ACF review of Comprehensive Services and School Readiness was conducted with no areas of noncompliance identified.

During the week of May 30, 2016 an ACF review of Governance and Leadership was conducted with no areas of noncompliance identified.