



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# DCPS HEAD START ANNUAL REPORT

2021 – 2022







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In July 2021, DC Public Schools was thrilled to be selected by the US Department of Health & Human Services as a Head Start grantee for Wards 7-8 in Washington DC. This provided DCPS with the opportunity to redesign the services that we provide to young children and their families in Wards 7 and 8 and to develop innovative ways to provide high-quality Head Start services to children and their families in these communities. DCPS has long been at the forefront of providing high-quality early childhood education programming to the children and families in DC who can most benefit from such services. DCPS was one of the first public school systems across the country to recognize the important role that early childhood education plays in student outcomes and has leveraged pre-kindergarten programming as a key tool for ensuring that all children, and especially those furthest from opportunity, have access to high-quality Pre-K programming, opening the system's first Pre-K classrooms for four-year-olds in 1972 and expanding Pre-K seats significantly in the ensuing years. As part of its bold commitment to early childhood education, DCPS has invested not only in Pre-K access but also Pre-K quality, with a large and accomplished team of instructional coaches with extensive expertise in early childhood development, instruction, and learning; a robust family services team focused on providing comprehensive services to families in our Title I schools; and welcoming and engaging classroom learning environments. Our new Head Start grant allows us to build on this foundation of quality early childhood programming and to provide even more targeted, robust, and comprehensive supports to Head Start-eligible children and families in DC.

The 2021-2022 school year brought unique challenges to early childhood programs across the nation, and DCPS was no exception. As we continued to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, DCPS successfully re-opened schools in September 2021 after a year of virtual learning. Amidst the context of the pandemic, DCPS launched its new Head Start program in 29 classrooms in six schools – CW Harris Elementary, Hendley Elementary, Kimball Elementary, ML King Elementary, Savoy Elementary, and Stanton Elementary. New Head Start staff were hired and trained, children were enrolled and served, and robust family services were provided.

This Head Start Annual Report highlights our successes in SY21-22, and we have much to celebrate. We look forward to continuing to develop our Head Start program in school year 2022-2023 and to building on our successes.

We look forward to partnering with families, staff, and our elementary school communities in the year ahead!

Cheryl Ohlson, Ed.D.  
Deputy Chief, Early Childhood Education Division  
Head Start Director





# MISSIONS & GOALS

## OF DCPS AND THE EARLYCHILDHOOD EDUCATION DIVISION

District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) is the largest local education agency in the District of Columbia.

### **DCPS Vision:**

Every student feels loved, challenged, and prepared to positively influence society and thrive in life.

### **DCPS Mission Statement:**

Ensure that every school guarantees students reach their full potential through rigorous and joyful learning experiences provided in a nurturing environment.

Within DCPS, the Office of Elementary Schools provides guidance and leadership to schools serving younger students and includes the Early Childhood Education Division (ECED), home to the DCPS Head Start program.

**ECED Vision:** Every child feels loved, safe, valued, engaged, and prepared to enter kindergarten and beyond with the social-emotional, language, academic, and thinking skills needed to thrive; Families are empowered to effectively support their children's growth and learning and to serve as powerful advocates and models for their children.

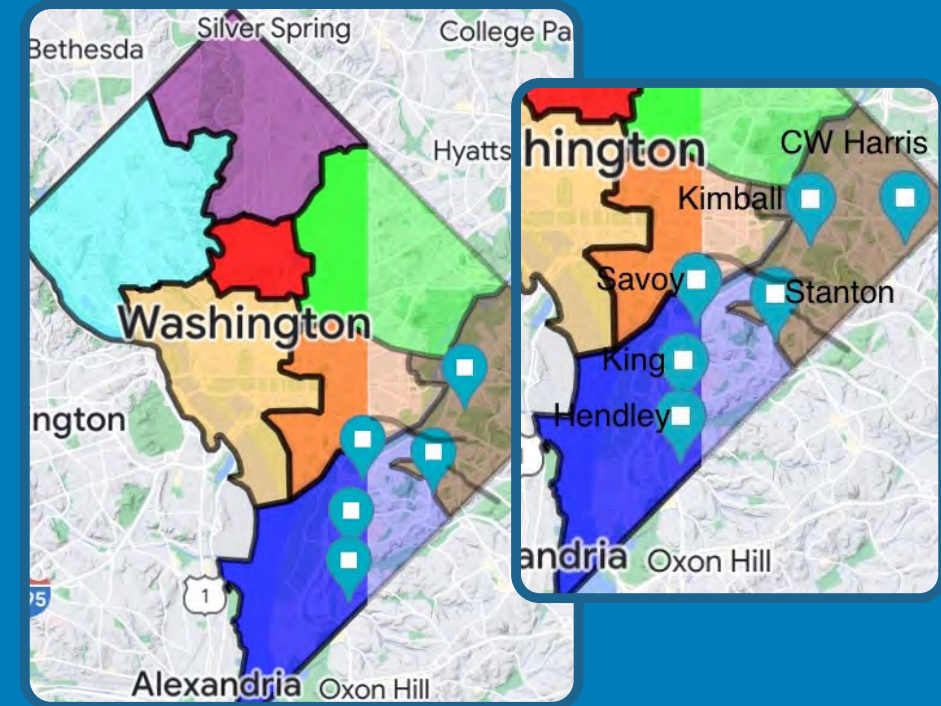
**ECED Mission Statement:** Our mission is to ensure that all DCPS Early Childhood programs guarantee that young children enter kindergarten fully prepared to thrive by providing nurturing, safe, equitable, and family-friendly learning environments. We view children as competent and capable learners, and value their voices and those of their families. We commit to engage, support, and challenge children through evidence-based, developmentally appropriate, anti-racist instructional practices, and to support family engagement and well-being for all families, and especially for those whose voices have historically been marginalized.





# PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

DCPS serves more than 5,000 three and four-year-old children in 80 DCPS elementary schools across the District of Columbia and has long been at the forefront of providing high-quality early childhood education programming to the children and families in DC who can most benefit from such services. As a result of the District's bold commitment to early childhood education, DC now leads the nation in access to Pre-K for both 3 and 4-year-olds and is a leader in many key quality indicators.



With the implementation of DCPS' new Head Start program in SY21-22, DCPS is able to provide Head Start services and supports to children and families in DC's Wards 7 and 8 while also leveraging the resources of the larger school system and creating seamless educational continuum for children and families. DCPS operates Head Start programming in 29 Pre-K classrooms located in six DCPS elementary schools: CW Harris, Hendley, Martin Luther King, Kimball, Savoy, and Stanton (See the maps above). DCPS serves both Head Start eligible and non-eligible children. A Cost Allocation plan outlines the sharing of resources between Head Start funding and local funding from the DC government. This report, unless noted, will include all the children served in the 29 classrooms and utilize the term Pre-K/Head Start.







Each classroom is staffed by a licensed teacher and a paraprofessional educator and all classrooms operate for 6.5 hours or more per day.

The Head Start grant also funds floater paraprofessionals in schools to assist with classroom staff ratios and staff breaks. The Head Start Central Services team includes seventeen staff in three teams: Instruction, Family Services, and Quality Assurance.

# OVERALL PROGRAM DATA

Funded Enrollment (slots funded by DCPS' Head Start Grant)	250
Head Start Children Served During 2021-2022	266
Percentage of Head Start Eligible Children Served in DCPS' Service Area (Wards 7-8, Washington DC)	16%
Non-Head Start Children Served	110
Average Monthly Enrollment – Head Start Enrolled Children (November – June only)	192 (77%)
Percentage of Head Start Enrolled Children Who Received Medical Services (73 of 266 Head Start children served were known to have received medical services. Due to COVID and an inability to access care and records, it is unclear whether the remaining 73% received care or not)	27%
Percentage of Head Start Enrolled Children Who Received Dental Services (79 of 266 Head Start children served were known to have received dental services. Due to COVID and an inability to access dental care and records, it is unclear whether the remaining 72% received care or not)	28%
Head Start Funding (includes Operating, Training/Technical Assistance, Start-Up & Cost of Living Adjustment)	\$2,323,846
Head Start Supplemental Funding (two-year time funding from CSSRA, CARES and ARA)	\$610,813
Local Funding from DC City Government	\$5,039,916



# COVID RESPONSE

DCPS developed and implemented extensive COVID protocols to keep schools open. As a result, our Head Start students were able to continue their education in safe, welcoming classrooms throughout the year. Masking, regular cleaning/disinfecting, the installation of state-of-the-art HVAC systems, and cot spacing are a few of the changes that DCPS put in place for Pre-K/Head Start classrooms in addition to the larger school protocols. Family Service Specialists worked closely with families to access COVID vaccines for adults and older children. Midway through the school year, DCPS instituted a 'test-to-attend' protocol for Pre-K/Head Start students. DCPS requested that parents test their children each Sunday evening before returning them to school on Monday and provided take-home test kits to all Head Start families. In addition, DC Mayor Muriel Bowser required all DCPS staff to be vaccinated. As a result of these COVID mitigation measures, COVID-related classroom closures were rare.





# EDUCATION & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

DCPS' Head Start program utilizes the Creative Curriculum as its core curriculum. Additional supplemental content-based curricula are also used to support the development of key kindergarten readiness skills.

DCPS uses the Ages & Stages Questionnaire 3 as our developmental screening tool. We use Teaching Strategies GOLD as our ongoing assessment tool.



# COACHING

DCPS implements an innovative, job-embedded professional development model that fundamentally shifts the way that teachers engage in professional learning opportunities throughout the school year. This model, LEAP, is designed to help teachers become expert practitioners by engaging them in cycles of professional inquiry and learning within school-based professional learning teams that are led by expert early childhood instructional coaches.

The LEAP professional learning cycle consists of three essential components, aligned with the HS Practice Based Coaching cycle: a weekly LEAP seminar, classroom observations, and a weekly or bi-weekly coaching touchpoint which can include observation debriefs, co-planning, and/or instructional modeling debriefs.



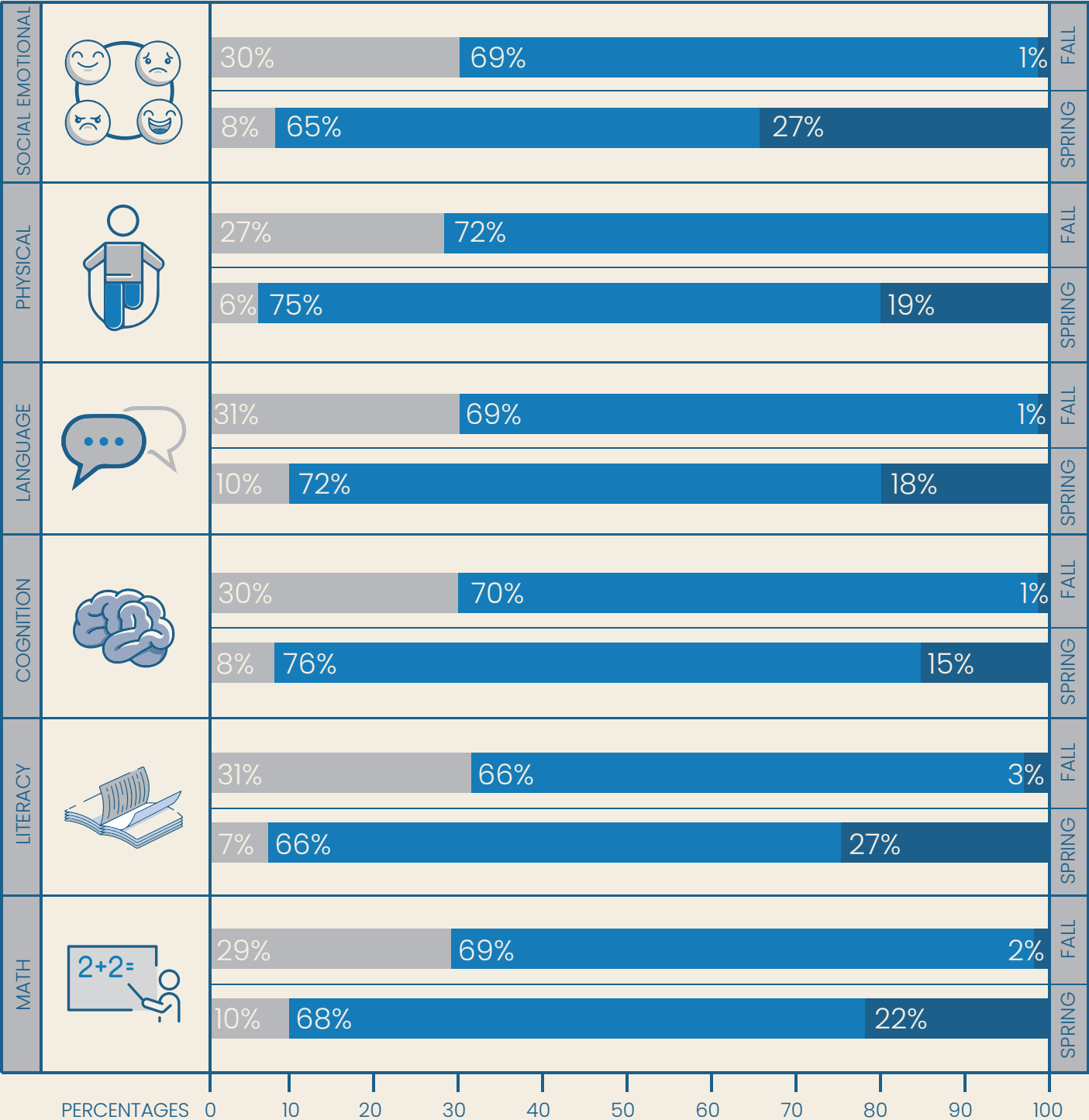


# SCHOOL READINESS GOALS



DCPS Head Start utilized Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) for ongoing assessment. DCPS Head Start School Readiness results are based on TSG and are shown below.

- EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS
- MEETS EXPECTATIONS
- BELOW EXPECTATIONS





EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

MEETS EXPECTATIONS

BELOW EXPECTATIONS

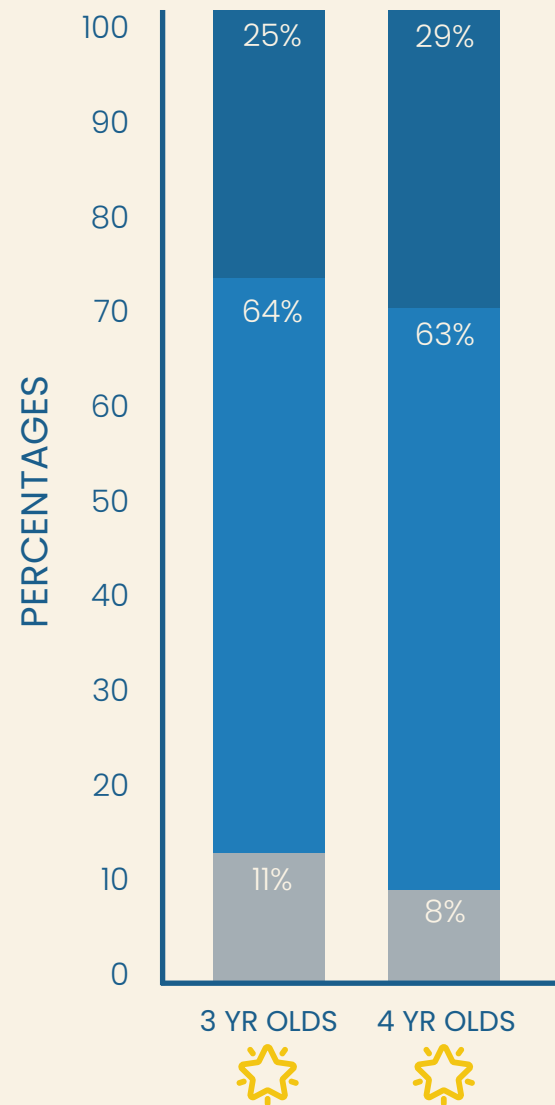
★ TARGET GOAL MET

EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

MEETS EXPECTATIONS

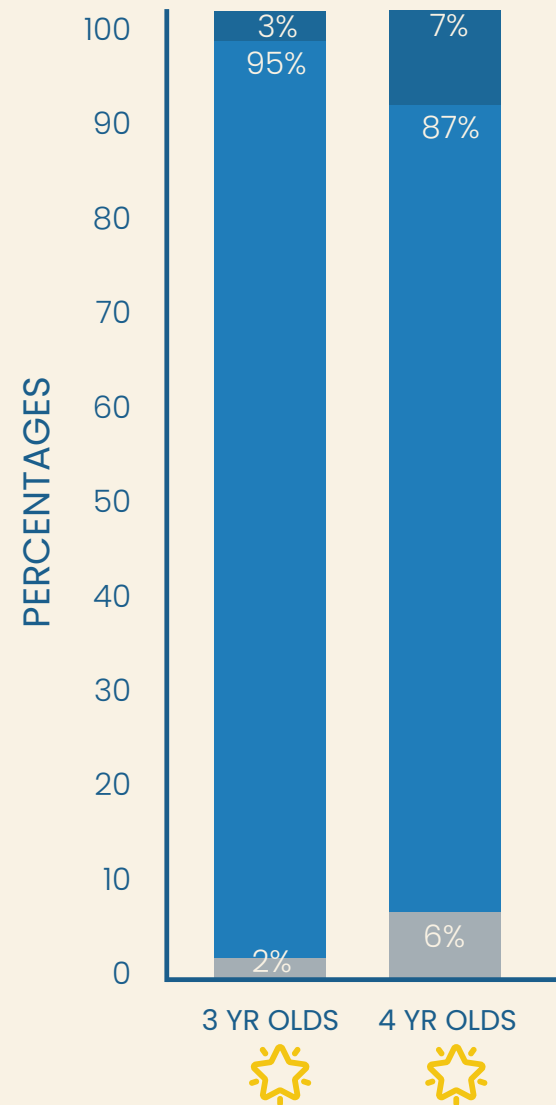
BELOW EXPECTATIONS

★ TARGET GOAL MET



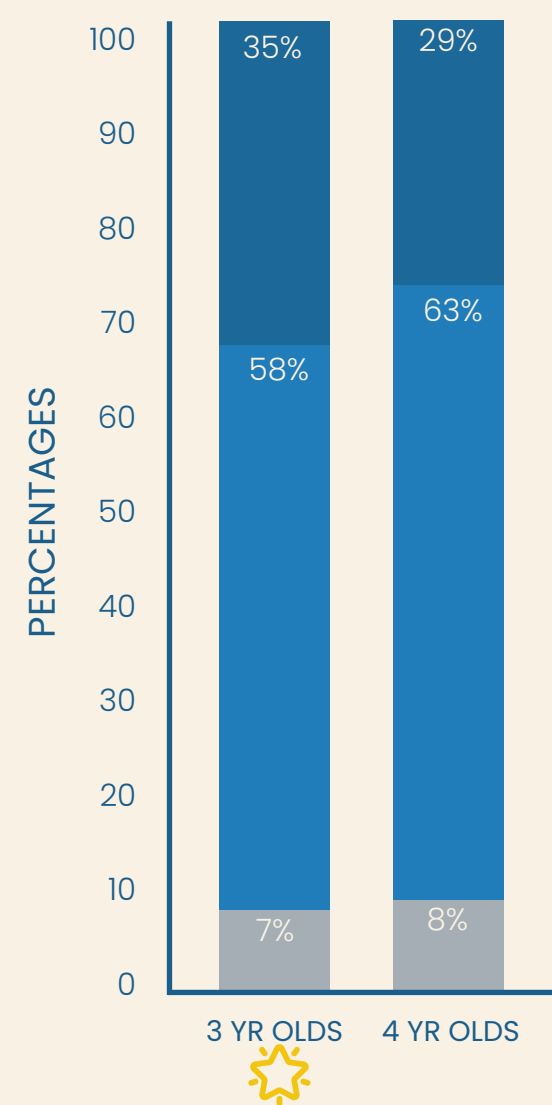
**Approaches to Learning Goal 1:**  
Children will manage actions, words, behaviors, and classroom materials with increasing independence.

**Goal:**  
85% of 3-year-olds and 90% of 4-year-olds.



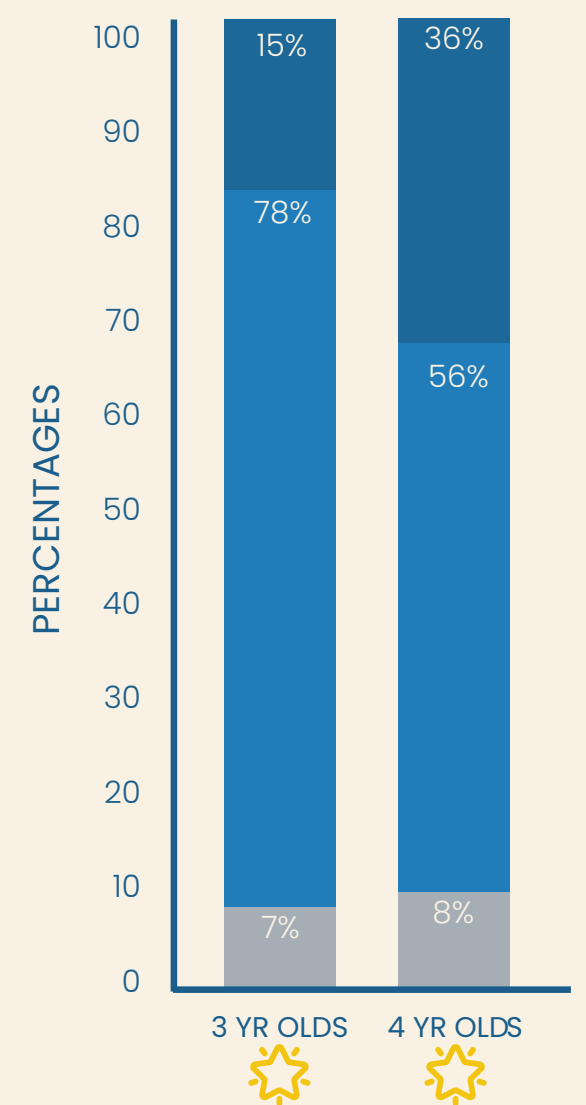
**Approaches to Learning Goal 2:**  
Children will express creativity in thinking and communication.

**Goal:**  
80% of 3-year-olds and 80% of 4-year-olds.



**Social Emotional Development Goal 1:**  
Children will understand and use a wide variety of words for a variety of purposes and show understanding of word categories and relationships among words.

**Goal:**  
90% of 3-year-olds and 95% of 4-year-olds.

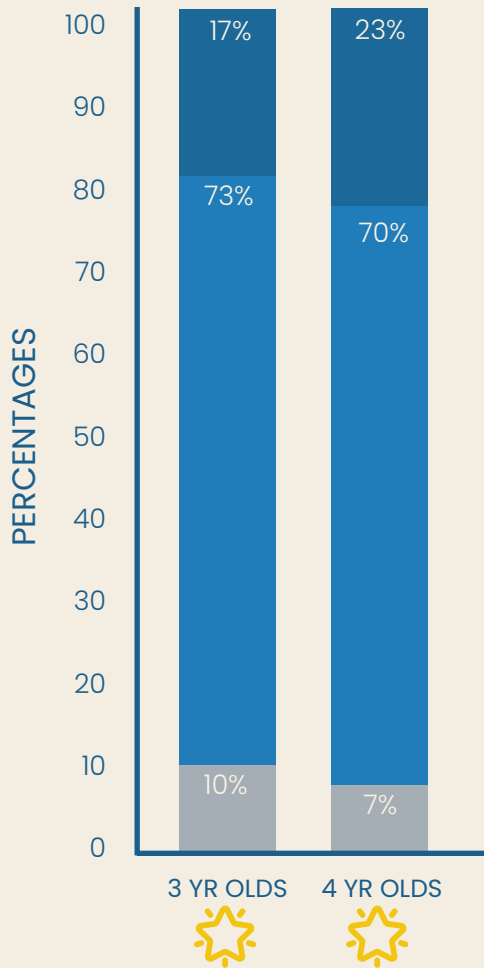


**Social Emotional Development Goal 2:**  
Children will manage emotions with increasing independence.

**Goal:**  
80% of 3-year-olds and 85% of 4-year-olds.

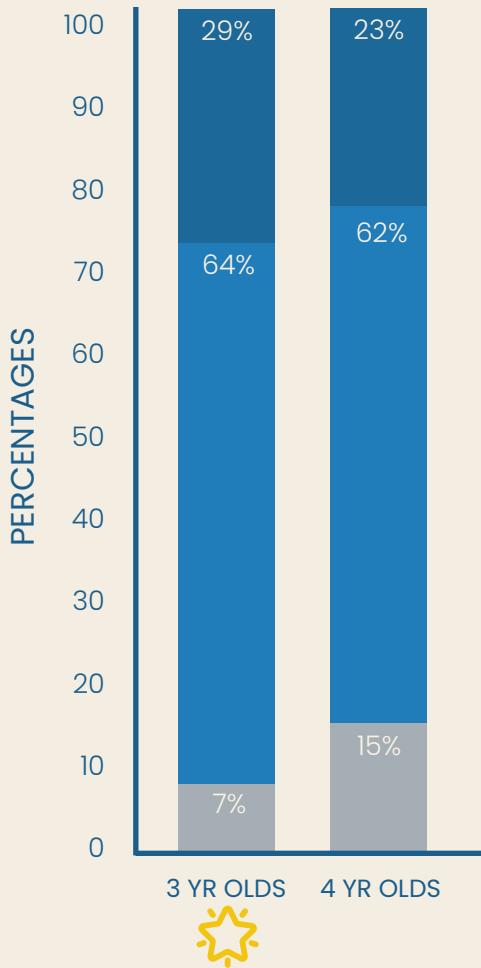


- EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS
- MEETS EXPECTATIONS
- BELOW EXPECTATIONS
- TARGET GOAL MET



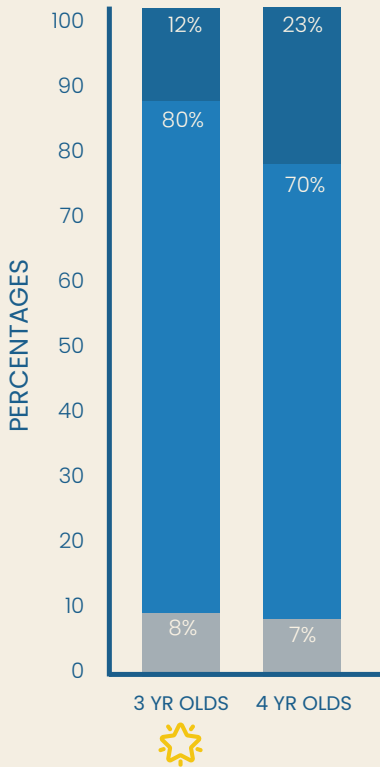
**Language and Literacy Goal 1:**  
Children will engage in and maintain positive interactions and relationships with other children.

**Goal:**  
80% of 3-year-olds and 80% of 4-year-olds.



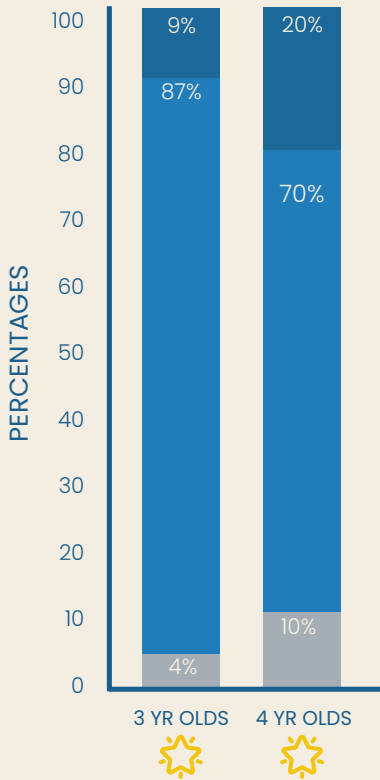
**Literacy Goal 1:**  
Children will understand that spoken language is composed of smaller segments of sound.

**Goal:**  
85% of 3-year-olds and 90% of 4-year-olds.



**Math Goal 1:**  
Children will understand and use a wide variety of words for a variety of purposes and show understanding of word categories and relationships among words.

**Goal:**  
90% of 3-year-olds and 95% of 4-year-olds.



**Science Goal 1:**  
Children will ask questions, gather information, make predictions, and plan and conduct investigations and experiments.

**Goal:**  
85% of 3-year-olds and 90% of 4-year-olds.

**Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development Goal 1:**  
Children will demonstrate increasing control, strength, and coordination of small muscles.

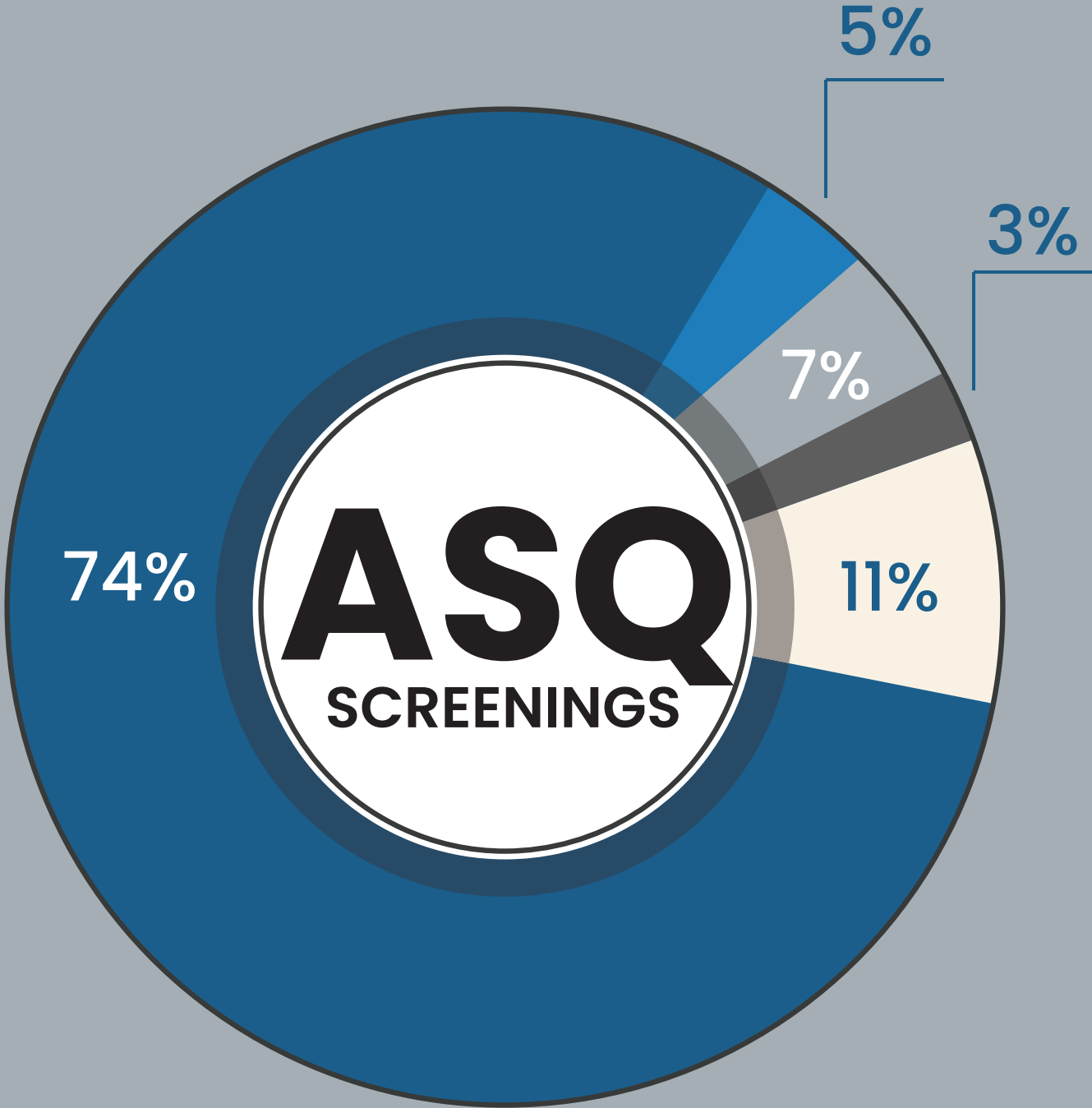
**Goal:**  
85% of 3-year-olds and 90% of 4-year-olds.



# SCREENING, EVALUTION & DISABILITIES SERVICES

DCPS Head Start teachers conducted a total of 279 ASQs during the school year. An additional 30 children were screened or evaluated the previous school year.

As an LEA, DCPS is responsible for evaluating all enrolled 3 and 4-year-old students for whom a developmental delay or disability is suspected. DCPS Head Start served a total of 81 children with active IEPs. Some were placed by the LEA in 3 of DCPS’ self-contained Pre- K/ Head Start classrooms for Early Learning Support (ELS). These rooms are staffed by a full-time teacher certified in special education. In self-contained and inclusion Pre-K/Head Start classrooms, IEP service hours are also delivered via related service providers who push into the classrooms or pull children out for therapy.



- SCREENED SY21-22 (279)
- ACTIVE IEP PRIOR TO SY21-22 (40)
- SCREENED SY20-21 (13)
- SCREENED & EVALUATED SY20-21 (27) \*NO SCREENING REQUIRED
- NOT SCREENED (17) \*DUE TO REASONS SUCH AS ABSENCE, WITHDRAWAL, ENROLLMENT DATE



# FINANCIAL



DCPS funds the Head Start services to all children in the 29 classrooms through a combination of approximately \$3 million in federal funds from DHHS/ACF/Office of Head Start, awarded in 12-month budget periods, and approximately \$5 million in local funds allocated to DCPS from DC government.

Since these classrooms operate within DCPS elementary school facilities, DCPS pays for the costs of many of the services that Head Start students benefit from, including facilities costs (rent, utilities, maintenance, etc.), some administrative costs (human services, legal, payroll, etc.), and some staffing costs (teacher salaries, most aide salaries, school leader salaries). In 2021, DCPS Head Start also received a supplemental, two-year grant from DHHS/ACF/Office of Head Start to support COVID recovery and remediation.

## Head Start Funding (250 slots) 7/1/21 – 6/30/22

Base Operating Grant	\$2,157,499
Training & Technical Assistance	\$10,246
Start-up	\$105,099
Cost of Living Increase	\$26,321

## Head Start Funding Supplemental 7/1/21 – 6/30/23

American Rescue Act	\$323,798
CARES Act	\$219,520
CRSSA Act	\$78,089

## DC Government 10/1/2021 – 9/30/22

Local funds to DCPS (approximate)	\$5,000,000
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# EDUCATION STAFF



DCPS hires Pre-K/Head Start teachers with bachelor's degrees or higher. The average salary for a DCPS Pre-K/Head Start teacher is \$96,917 per year. DCPS Pre-K/Head Start educational aides must have an associate's degree or higher and their average salary is \$36,633. DCPS educational staff closely mirror the children served in terms of race. 99% of the Pre-K/Head Start children served this school year were Black or African American and 91% of the Teachers and Educational Aides also identify as Black or African American.







# FAMILY SERVICES

SY 21-22 was challenging for all families, particularly those experiencing poverty and systemic racism amidst a global pandemic. Each Head Start school had a dedicated Head Start Family Service Specialist to lead parent education and engagement activities and to provide direct supports to families. FSS got to know school staff and developed relationships with parents, Social Workers, and classroom staff. They conducted Head Start eligibility determinations, identified critical needs, made referrals, and supported teachers in the classroom. Highlights of Family Service work include:

- **Assisting with Basic Needs.** FSS supported families to access school uniforms, diapers, toiletries, and food. They partnered with organizations like Martha's Table to access groceries for families.
- **Attendance Support:** FSS participated in school-based attendance teams to identify chronic absenteeism and support families with attendance barriers.
- **Transportation Access.** FSS issued families Metro cards so they could ride the train or bus to health care, job interviews, and public assistance appointments.
- **Kindergarten Transition.** FSS led transition events, talked with families about what to expect, and visited kindergarten classrooms with students.
- **Planning School Events.** FSS planned and implemented school-based events for families, including back-to-school nights, a math night, end-of-year picnics, and holiday parties.
- **Individualized Case Management.** Many families experienced losses (e.g., COVID, home fires), trauma and community violence. FSS supported families to access resources.





ACTIVITIES	TOTAL
Individual meetings with families	1611
Family Goals and Partnership Agreements	206
Referrals made to community services	330
Head Start families attending or participating in parent activities	148
Kindergarten transition activities for families	12

# MENTAL HEALTH

DCPS Head Start is fortunate to have three full-time licensed clinicians to provide individualized clinical services to Head Start children and families. Each clinician is assigned to two schools to conduct classroom observations, coach and guide teachers, provide clinical services to children, and refer families to community providers.

During the Summer of 2022, the Mental Health Specialists were trained on both Parent Child-Centered Play Therapy and Parent-Child Intervention Therapy as clinical modalities for the next school year.



ACTIVITIES	
Individual child observations by mental health staff	35
Students identified (by parent, teacher, or Mental Health Specialist) as needing services	35
Students receiving individual mental health services from Head Start Mental Health Specialist	8



# SPECIAL INITIATIVES

COVID made it almost impossible for staff to take Pre-K/Head Start students on field trips this year safely. Those extended learning opportunities are significant for children experiencing poverty. Instead, DCPS partnered with the Wolftrap National Park for the Performing Arts to bring artists into the classrooms. Actors, singers, and musicians visited classrooms to perform, interact with children, and support curriculum implementation.

As an agency of the District of Columbia, DCPS has a data-sharing agreement with the **DC Department of Human Services**. After receiving the Head Start grant, DCPS modified the agreement to receive monthly data on homeless children and those receiving TANF or SSI. DCPS uses the data to determine Head Start categorical eligibility. DCPS and DHS will update the agreement in the fall of 2022 to include children on SNAP. This arrangement has allowed DCPS to avoid invasive income verification conversations with families who are eligible for Head Start.

With unspent salary funds in the Head Start grant, DCPS applied for and received a budget modification to build **a new early childhood playground at Savoy Elementary, a Head Start school**. \$500,000 was transferred from DCPS' Head Start grant to the District's Department of General Services (DGS), serving as the general contractor for the new playground. Teachers, school staff, and DCPS Head Start staff were involved in designing the playground and selecting equipment. The playground will be complete by August 2022, in time for the new school year.







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