

EARLY HEAD START

FAMILY DEVELOPMENT CENTER

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



An Illinois Public University

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends and Partners,

It is with pride and gratitude that I share our Early Head Start (EHS) Annual Report. Over the past year, our program and affiliated initiatives have continued to embody our mission: to provide accessible, exceptional education for children and families while encouraging lifelong learning and the development of the whole child.

This year we served 220 children and families through a dynamic team of 50 dedicated staff. Together, we expanded opportunities for growth and well-being in ways both large and small: from providing families with fresh produce through the Green Our Planet hydroponics grant, to upgrading classroom sinks to strengthen health and safety, to hosting community nutrition events in partnership with WIC. Each accomplishment reflects our commitment to building a model of early education that is both research-based and deeply responsive to community needs.

At the heart of our work are the families themselves. Their stories remind us why this investment matters. Parents have shared how Early Head Start has made it possible to pursue higher education, build stability, and watch their children thrive in safe, nurturing environments. These voices reflect the tangible impact of comprehensive early childhood education.

Our progress is made possible through strong community partnerships. From supplemental speech and occupational therapy provided by Governors State University departments, to the Angel Tree Project that brought joy to every child during the holiday season, to the dedicated service of our Health Advisory Committee, we are grateful for the shared vision and collaboration that sustain our work.

We remain steadfast in our pursuit of excellence. With 100% of enrolled children insured, 96% up to date on immunizations, and a record 30% qualifying for disability services this year, our data demonstrate not only accountability but also the power of early intervention. As we continue to build toward kindergarten readiness, we do so knowing that each child represents a unique story of potential, resilience, and promise.

On behalf of the Family Development Center, I thank our families, staff, community partners, and supporters for your trust and collaboration. Together, we are shaping a future where every child in the South Suburbs has access to high-quality education, health, and opportunity.

With gratitude,

Erin Gutiérrez

Erin Gutiérrez
Executive Director
Family Development Center
Governors State University

ABOUT THE FAMILY DEVELOPMENT CENTER

MISSION

The mission of the Family Development Center (FDC), a division of Governors State University's College of Education & Human Development, is to provide accessible and exceptional education for children, families and students and to encourage lifelong learning and the development of the whole child.

VISION

The Family Development Center will be the Model Early Education Center for the South Suburbs.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

We believe that children learn in many different ways and children's learning is impacted by a variety of forces. When children are actively engaged and construct their own knowledge through hands-on activities in a stimulating environment, their growth and development flourish. We use a research-based, reasoned eclectic approach with Creative Curriculum as our play-based foundation. We honor diversity, creativity and joy in every experience and strive to provide security and emotional support for our children and families.

FACILITY

The Family Development Center is a Division of the College of Education and Human Development at Governors State University and was originally established as a charter school in 2003.

The building, nested on campus among native prairie flowers and GovState's esteemed Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park, is a state-of-the-art facility whose architectural design earned it a position as a Merit Award Finalist from the Chicago Building Congress.

The FDC serves up to 162 children with a \$2.2M budget, ranking it in the top 15 in budget and size of programs in the country and one of the largest in the state of Illinois. Over this fiscal year, 220 children were served in our program by a total of 50 staff members.

PROGRAMS

The Family Development Center is designed to

serve the needs of the surrounding community as well as university constituents. The FDC offers full-time care for children up to age 12 years of age. In addition to center-based educational care, curriculum and support services are offered to pregnant women, and home-based services are provided to families with children up to age two.

Family Development Center programs are supported by grants, donations, and private tuition payments from parents. FDC is funded by three major grants: Early Head Start, Prevention Initiative, and Preschool Expansion.

Early Head Start is a year-round, federally funded program that provides comprehensive education and family support to low-income pregnant women and families with children age birth to three. This program provides center-based care in addition to home-based services with a focus on high-quality, comprehensive services to support the whole family. Funding serves 36 children in our center-based program, 18 in our home-based programs, and two in our pregnant women program.

At age three, our children may transition to our full-day 10-month Preschool for All Expansion classrooms. The goal of the Preschool for All program is to provide educational services to all 3- to 5-year-olds and focuses on providing high-quality educational programs for children who are determined to be at risk of academic failure. We are funded for 76 children in this program.

In addition, we provide wrap-around care and summer camp to offer 11 hours of high-quality programming year-round for families that are working or in school full time.

All center-based programs are licensed by the State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). We are an ExceleRate Gold Level program.

Proud to be in the
Gold Circle of Quality



MEET THE EARLY HEAD START TEAM

LEADERSHIP:

Executive Director: Erin Gutiérrez
Family Service Director: Jillian Roth
Health, Safety, and Nutrition Services: Claudia Nguyen
Education, Disabilities and Mental Health Services: Dorothy Bertram
Center Director: Barb Calibraro
Business Manager: Sharon Palmer

POLICY COUNCIL:

Chair: Ayana Nickerson
Vice Chair: Rebekah Johnson
Secretary: Laura Vazquez

GOVERNING GROUP:

Chair: Shannon Dermer PH.D
Vice Chair: Natalia Ermasova, PH.D
Secretary: Janet Brewer, J.D., Psy, D., Tracy Rocchietti
Administrator, Crete-Monee Early Learning Center, Candice Smith Ed.D.

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

GARDEN GRANT:

GovState EHS received a \$1500 NHA and Scotts Miracle Gro Gro More Good Garden Grant to install a vegetable garden in the Community Garden. We were able to raise over 1,500lbs of fresh produce that we used in school lunches and distributed to enrolled families. GovState EHS is located in a food desert, and our garden helped our families gain access to fresh, organic food.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Special thanks to the following members of the Health Advisory Committee for their time and input on health data, self-assessment, under-enrollment and recruitment efforts:

- **Kathleen Lynch-Hale** – Early Learning Center
- **Caren Schranz** – GovState Occupational Therapy Dept.
- **Gia Washington** – Sertoma
- **Pat Krause** – Will County WIC
- **Rebecca Deang** – Will County Health Department Community Health Educator AOK Network
- **Patrick McCarthy** – Will County Immunizations
- **Elaine Reyna** – GovState Communication Disorders Dept.

GovState EHS has Memorandum of Agreements with the following agencies:

Social Service:

- Anew: Building Beyond Violence and Abuse (formerly South Suburban Family Shelter)
- Catholic Charities of Joliet
- Grand Prairie Services
- Howard Intervention Services

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Green our Planet Hydroponics Grant continues to allow us to send fresh produce home with families, mitigating the effects of being located in a food desert.

EHS Supplemental Grant & Will County Childcare Provider grants allowed us to replace worn classroom sinks to improve health and safety.

We held a WIC "Pop-up" session that allowed families to connect with nutritional services, allowing twenty additional families to gain more access to fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

PARENT SUCCESS STORY

"Because of Early Head Start, I have been able to send my son to get an education. While he goes to school, I can finish my degree. This is an important milestone for my family. This helps me be able to educate myself so I can get my teaching degree in early elementary."

– EHS parent

Without Early Head Start me or my family would not be able to find the resources for my kid's education. This is important coming from a low-income family. This program has helped us. I see my kid's growth every day since they have been enrolled in the program. Watching them grow and learning has made me happy.

– EHS center-based parent

Without this program, my kids would not have a safe and loving place to go and learn and grow. It is a huge part of our village and its invaluable to us!

– EHS center-based parent

- Illinois Action for Children
- Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies
- Morning Star Mission
- Park Forest Public Library
- Prairie State Legal Services
- Respond Now
- University Park Library
- Village of University Park
- Workforce Services Division of Will County

Health:

- Sertoma Centre, Inc.
- The Heart That Smiles Dental Clinic and Mobile Unit
- Will County Community Health Center
- Will County Health Department
- Will County- WIC

Education/Disabilities:

- Child and Family Connections #12
- Child and Family Connections #15
- Crete-Monee Early Learning Center
- Crete-Monee High School
- Steger School District 194



COMMUNITY PARTNER SUCCESS STORY

Angel Tree Project: The National Student Speech, Language, and Hearing Association organized an Angel Tree Project that provided gifts for all the children in the program.

Oral Health Services: The Heart that Smiles Mobile Unit visited the Family Development Center in April 2024. During the visits, 18 FDC children were seen by the dental hygienist. Of those 18 children, 12 were from our Early Head Start program.

Supplemental Speech Therapy: The Family Development Center has continued its partnership with GovState’s Communication Disorders Department. In 2024, FDC children received supplemental intervention to support their speech and language. Of those 13, four were Early Head Start children.

Supplemental Occupational Therapy: GovState’s Occupational Therapy department provided free supplemental occupational therapy intervention to four FDC children, one from the Early Head Start program.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Orientation Meetings
- Transition Meetings
- Parent Partnership Agreements
- Self-Assessment Surveys
- Home educational activities
- Monthly Policy Council Meetings
- Parent Committee
- Open House
- Classroom Volunteers
- Teacher Appreciation
- Conscious Discipline Parent Curriculum Workshops
- Literacy Activity Night
- Math Activity Night
- Home Visits
- Parent Teacher Conferences

DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

SINGLE PARENT	FOSTER PARENT	HOMELESS	TWO-PARENT	# RECEIVING TANF	# RECEIVING SNAP
52	4	1	16	4	57
BI-RACIAL	AFRICAN AMERICAN	WHITE	ASIAN	HISPANIC	OTHER
9	60	10	0	18	0

ENROLLMENT

FUNDED ENROLLMENT- EHS	# ENROLLED	% ENROLLMENT
Total Funded Enrollment	56	N/A
Total Cumulative Enrollment	99	100%
Average Monthly Enrollment	56	100%
Total Children	82	82%
Total Pregnant Women	17	17%

ENROLLMENT BY ELIGIBILITY

Income Below 100% FPL	20	20%
Income 100%-130% FPL	6	6%
Public Assistance	61	62%
Foster Care	5	5%
Homeless	1	1%
Over-Income	6	6%

ATTENDANCE

Average Monthly Attendance	56	85%
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MEDICAL INFORMATION ON EHS CHILDREN ENROLLED FOR MORE THAN 45 DAYS.

INDICATOR	2024 PIR DATA
Percentage of children with health insurance at the end of the year	100%
Percentage of children with an ongoing source of health care at the end of the year	98%
Percentage of children who are up to date on a schedule of age-appropriate preventive and well-baby care according to the Illinois EPSDT schedule	82%
Percentage of children who are up to date on all immunizations/all possible immunizations	96%
Percentage of children who received oral health preventative care during the program year	82%
Percentage of children with disabilities	20%

PREPARATION FOR KINDERGARTEN READINESS

2023-2024 Early Head Start School Readiness Outcomes Data

FDC uses Teaching Strategies Gold as its formal child assessment system. Observations are recorded into the system, and children’s levels of development are assessed and compared to widely held expectations for their age group. Assessments are held three times a year in the Fall, Winter and Spring, called checkpoints. The following data represents children who attended for all three checkpoints. A goal for EHS is that 80% of children enrolled will meet or exceed widely held expectations by the end of the program year. For children ages 0-1 this generally means that they are meeting their developmental milestones. At age two, more emphasis is placed on literacy and mathematical skills. This report includes home-based children, center-based children, and children with disabilities. This year, we had a record-breaking 30% of children qualify for disability services.



FUNDING TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET

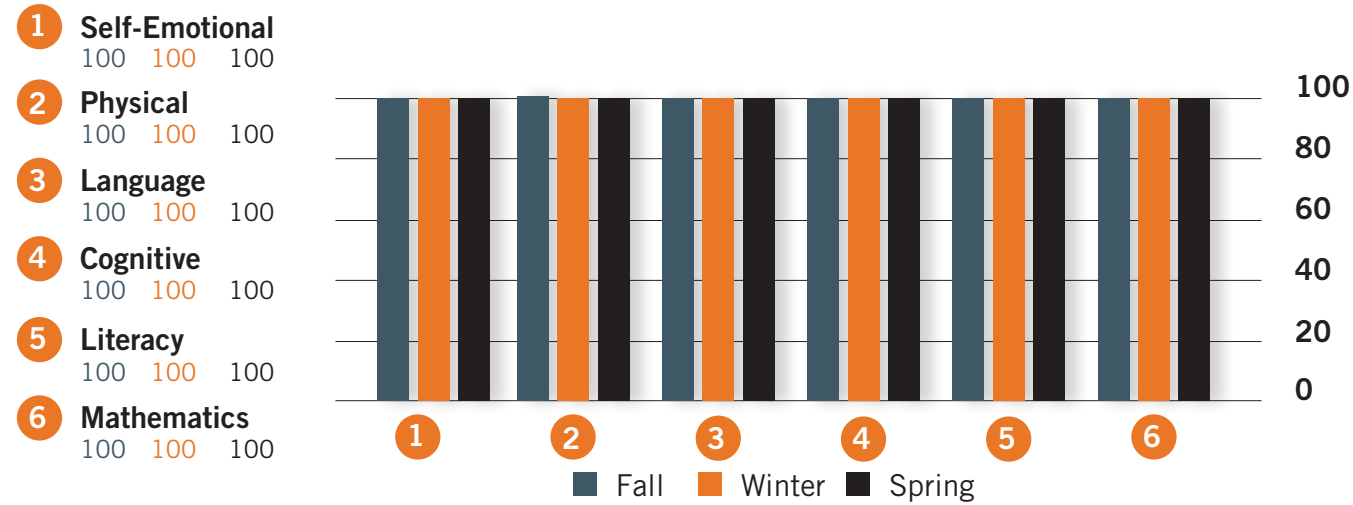
FY24 FUNDING	
PROGRAM	TOTAL FUNDING
Early Head Start (January-December)	\$1,251,768
Non-Federal Share	\$0
U.S. Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program Reimbursement (July-June)	\$113,298
INCCRRA	\$212,000
Illinois Department of Human Services Child Care Subsidies (July-June)	\$723,656
ISBE Preschool for All (July-June)	\$74,300
ISBE Preschool Expansion (July-June)	\$369,880
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET	\$2,744,903

EHS BUDGET		
EARLY HEAD START	BUDGETED	ACTUAL
Personnel Salaries	\$747,759	\$696,230
Fringe Benefits	\$369,917	\$356,930
Travel	\$9,025	\$7,733
Equipment	\$0	\$0
Supplies	\$15,217	\$14,259
Other	\$61,364	\$130,928
Indirect Costs	\$48,486	\$45,687
Total	\$1,251,768	\$1,251,768
Food Program income	\$0	\$17,141.18

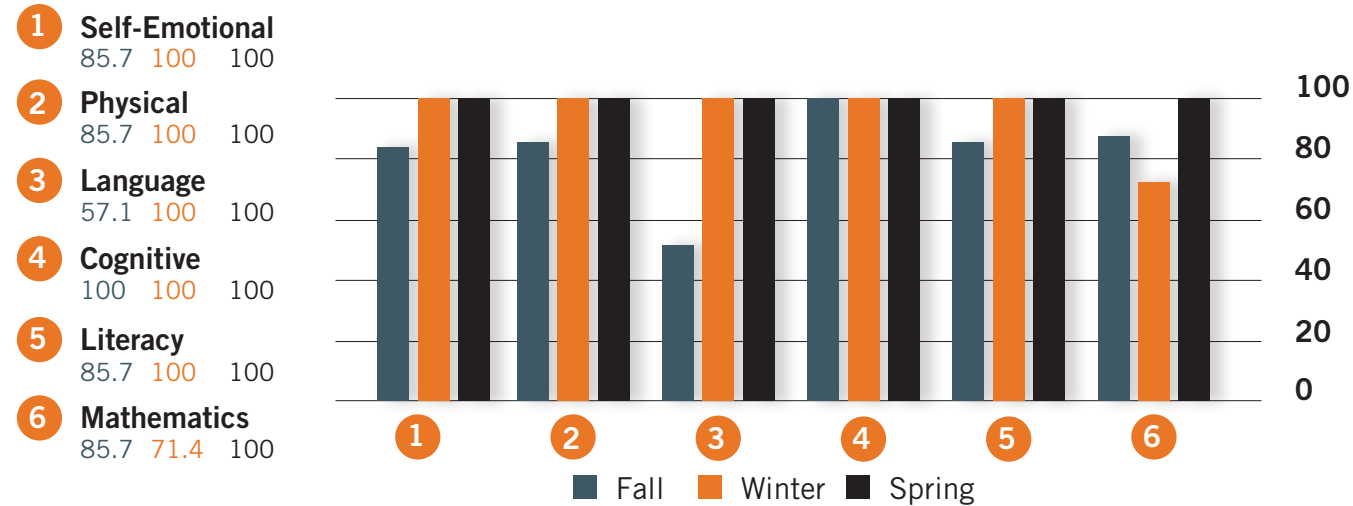
AUDIT INFORMATION

- GovState EHS received an FA2 Monitoring Review in June 2023. GovState EHS was found to be in full compliance with all regulations.
- Copies of the Compliance and Financial Audit Reports can be found on the Illinois General Auditor Page: <https://www.auditor.illinois.gov/Audit-Reports/GOV-ERNORS-STATE-UNIVERSITY.asp> EHS did not receive a finding in 2024.

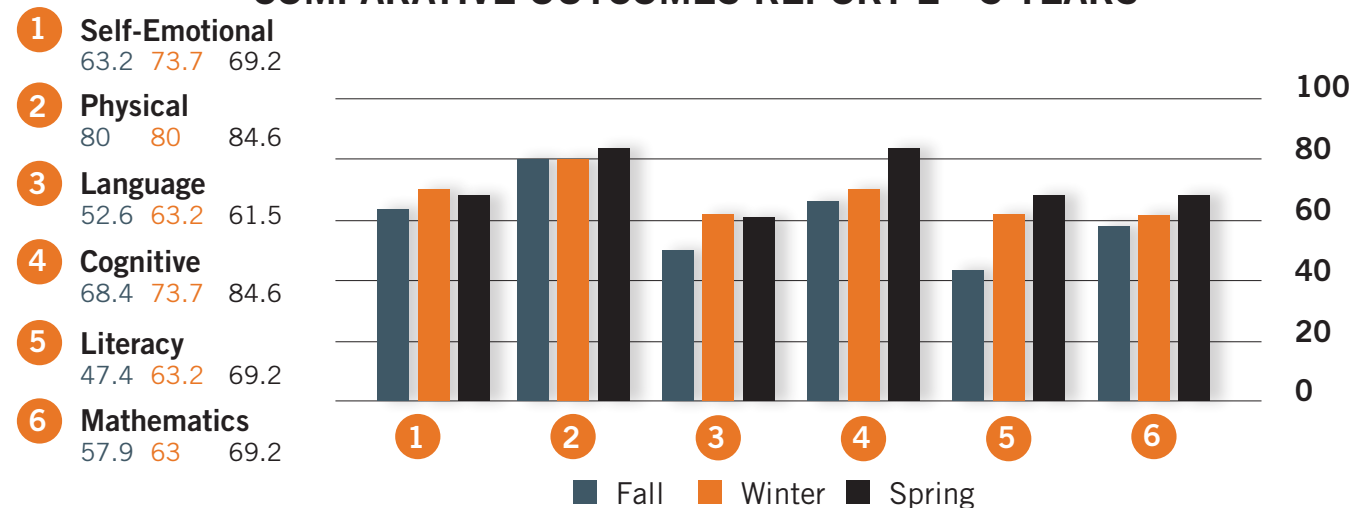
COMPARATIVE OUTCOMES REPORT 0 - 1 YEARS



COMPARATIVE OUTCOMES REPORT 1 - 2 YEARS



COMPARATIVE OUTCOMES REPORT 2 - 3 YEARS





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