

# EARLY HEAD START

FAMILY DEVELOPMENT CENTER

## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Fiscal year 2023 was the first full year of “back to normal” in the post-COVID-19 landscape without the support of additional funding that provided much-needed relief to classroom educators using bonus pay and support.

According to the Institute of Education Sciences, in 2021 staff turnover rates at centers serving children birth to age five were almost double that among staff serving children ages three to five. They also found that across all centers, higher wages were associated with lower levels of turnover. According to the Illinois Staffing and Salary Survey of Licensed Childcare Facilities in 2021, the turnover rate for early childhood teachers over the last two years increased from 32.1% in 2019 to 39.5% in 2021. Across all studies, pay was cited as the number one reason for turnover (25.9%), followed by family issues (14.7%) and then burnout (11.4%).

According to a 2022 study by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minnesota which examined teacher turnover in early care and education, research shows that turnover decreases with increased wages. Turnover for teachers making \$15-\$19.99 was 16.8% while teachers making \$20-24.99 per hour was 10.4%. Zero to Three identified key retention strategies including consistent supervisory support, regular breaks, mental health, and physical health supports, ongoing coaching to develop skills and maintain high outcomes for children, and professional development on trauma-sensitive care, challenging behavior, and collaboration with families for strength-based partnership.

Our program is committed to increasing staff salaries and support needed to ensure positive outcomes for children and families.

*Erin Soto*

**Erin Soto**  
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, 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 eclecticism 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 Services at Governors State University and was originally established as a charter school in 2003.

The building, nested on campus among native prairie flowers and GSU's esteemed 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 aged 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, Preschool for All, 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, and 20 in our home-based programs.

At age three, our children may transition to our full day 10-month Preschool for All classrooms or Preschool for All Expansion classrooms. The goal of the Preschool for All program is to provide educational services to all 3- to 5-year- old 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.

Our full-day PreK options blend Preschool For All or Early Head Start grant funding with parent's tuition or state Child Care Assistance Payments to provide wrap around care for 11 hours of high-quality education and care for families that are working or in school full time.

When children turn five, they transition to Kindergarten in their local school districts. The Family Development Center continues to offer before-and-after childcare during the school year for children enrolled in Crete-Monee School District 201-U.

We also offer full day summer camp open for 3–8-year-olds in the summer.

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 also an ExceleRate Gold Level program.



# MEET THE EARLY HEAD START TEAM

## LEADERSHIP:

**Executive Director:** Erin Soto  
**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:** Rebekah Johnson  
**Vice Chair:** Christina 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:

GSUEHS received a \$1500 NHSA 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. GSU 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** – GSU 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**– GSU Communication Disorders Dept

**GSU 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

## PARENT SUCCESS STORY

**Jenai Hicks EHS Center Based Program, CCAMPIS Grant Recipient**

The family development center has been very helpful in several ways and I will forever be grateful for the patience, empathy, education, and compassion that the staff had provided to me and my family. The first couple of months were very rough for me and family due to increased anxiety of both my son and nephew being in a daycare facility for the first time. This was a major change as both were being watched by family prior to this. I was able to call and check on them and soon build a rapport with not only the teachers, but the entire staff. The amount of patience and grace that the Family Development Center has provided has been outstanding. The communication is also something all staff have provided to parents, along with parenting meetings, fun activities, and advocacy of students and family's needs. Both my son and nephew enjoy class and come home showing things that they've learned from signing ABC's or new exploring their new excitement for books. My nephew who also received speech services from Governor's State professors and students has gone from not communicating as much, talking, or reading to reading words and showing my son colors, numbers, and letters. This has been such a huge help for me as I am usually busy throughout the day being a full-time master's student at Governor's State, part time program coordinator, and part time school social work intern. CCAMPIS has allowed me to do those things while my son and nephew are in school as well. I started my master's program when my son was 6-weeks, and my main concern was the financial aspect and finding the proper care for my child and nephew. I can honestly say I found that, and I will forever be grateful for the financial assistance CCAMPIS has provided for me and my family and support from the staff at the Family Development Center"

- 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

**Oral Health Services:** The Heart that Smiles Mobile Unit visited the Family Development center in June 2023 and November 2023. During the two visits, FDC children were seen by the dental hygienist. Of those 20 children, 6 children were from our Early Head Start program.

**Supplemental Speech Services:** The Family Development Center has continued their partnership with GSU’s Communication Disorders Department. In 2023, 12 FDC children received supplemental intervention to support their speech and language. Of those 12 children, 5 were Early Head Start children.

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



FUNDING  
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET

FY23 FUNDING	
PROGRAM	TOTAL FUNDING
Early Head Start (January-December)	\$1,190,407
Non Federal Share	\$0
US Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program Reimbursement (July-June)	\$70,511
INCCRRA Strengthen & Grow Child Care Grant	\$83,336
INCCRRA Smart Start	\$53,000
Illinois Department of Human Services Child Care Subsidies (July-June)	\$608,662
ISBE Preschool for All (July-June)	\$76,071
ISBE Preschool Expansion (July-June)	\$369,880
ISBE Preschool for All (July-June)	\$2,254,868
ISBE Preschool Expansion (July-June)	\$340,016
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET	\$2,339,587

EHS BUDGET		
Early Head Start	BUDGETED	ACTUAL
Personnel Salaries	\$721,251	\$692,977
Fringe Benefits	\$356,801	\$328,842
Travel	\$2,479	\$9,057
Equipment	\$0	\$0
Supplies	\$24,860	\$29,465
Other	\$38,249	\$84,708
Indirect Costs	\$46,767	\$45,358
Total	\$1,190,407	\$1,190,407
Food Program income		\$70,510

DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Single parent		Foster parent		Homeless	Two-Parent
54		9		2	16
Bi-racial	African American	Caucasian	Asian	Hispanic	Other
26	90	30	0	31	1
WIC		Food Stamps		Cumulative Number of Children Served	Early Head Start
35		80			148

ACTUAL EARLY HEAD START AVERAGE MONTHLY ENROLLMENT			
QUARTER 1	QUARTER 2	QUARTER 3	QUARTER 4
Jan – 47	April –47	July – 54	Oct – 59
Feb – 47	May –48	Aug – 58	Nov – 60
March – 45	June –53	Sept – 57	Dec – 57

87.79 =% Average Monthly Attendance





PERCENTAGE OF ELIGIBLE EARLY HEAD START CHILDREN SERVED

According to latest IECAM data available, there were a total of 3,550 children under age three in the GSUEHS service delivery area. Of these children, 866 met poverty guidelines. GSUEHS served 148 children or

17% of eligible children in the service delivery area.

**Number of Children with Disabilities:**  
Early Head Start: 16 (29%)

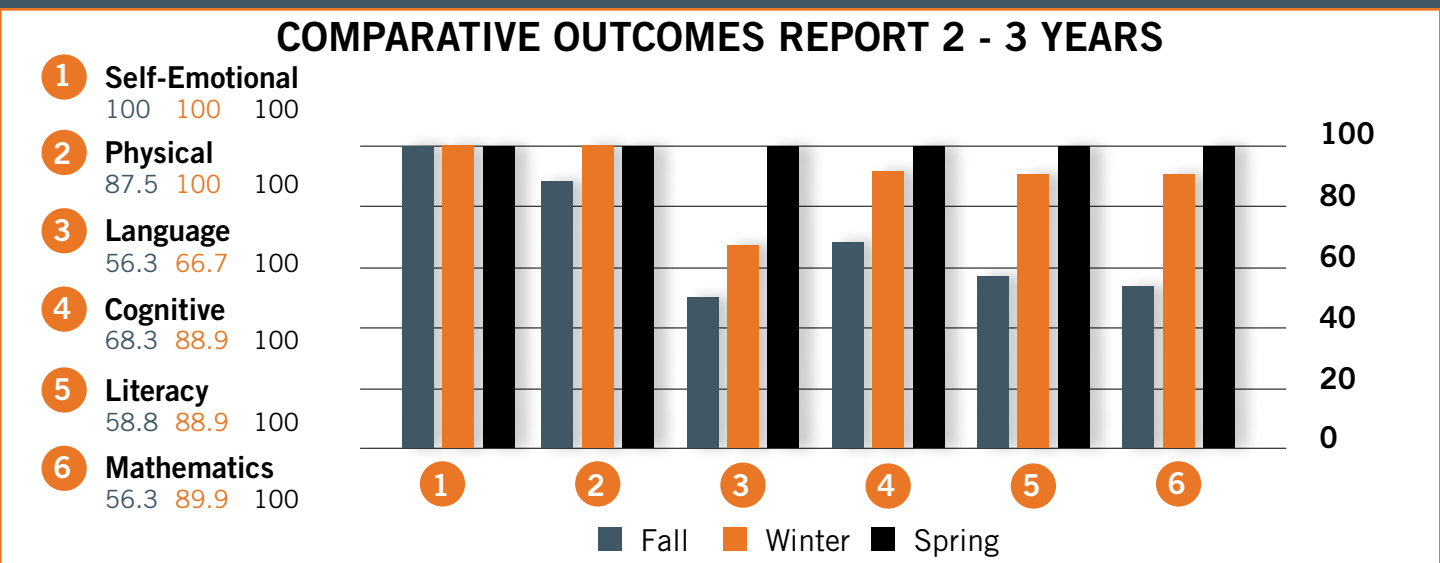
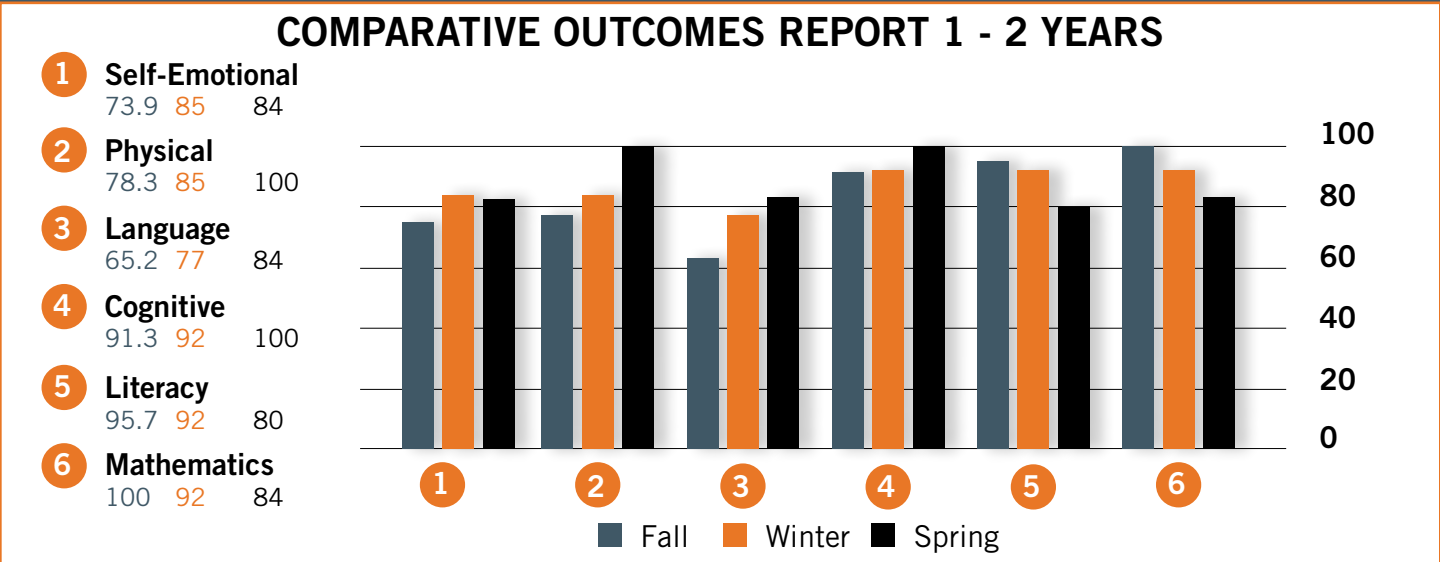
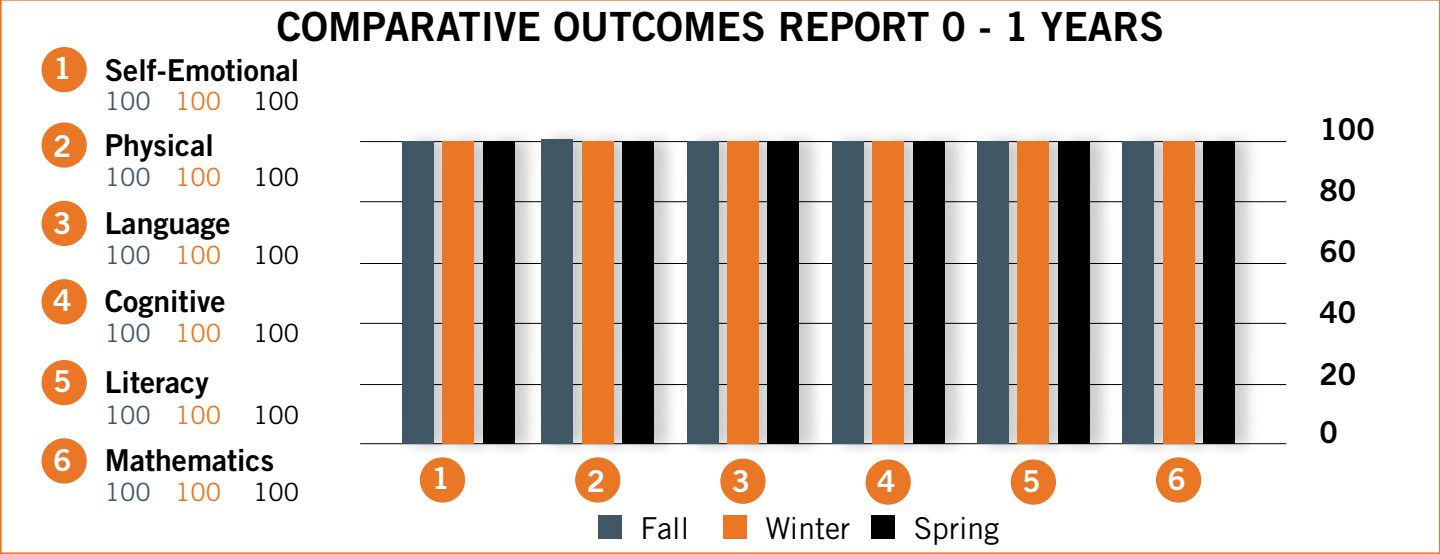
INDICATOR	2023 DATA
Children with health insurance at end of year	100%
Number of children with an ongoing source of health care at the end of the year	96%
Number of children who are up to date on a schedule of age appropriate preventive and well-baby care according to Illinois EPSDT schedule	95%
Number of children who are up to date on all immunizations/all possible immunizations	97%

PREPARATION FOR KINDERGARTEN READINESS

2022-2023 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. 100% of the children in this report met the 80% benchmark by the end of the program year.



AUDIT INFORMATION

- GSU EHS received a FA2 Monitoring Review June of 2023. GSUEHS 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 received a finding related to inaccurate time and effort reporting and implemented a corrective action plan.

