



DHA Head Start /  
Early Head Start /  
Childcare Partnership

# Annual Report 2022/23



**DELTA  
HEALTH  
ALLIANCE**

HEALTH • EDUCATION • COMMUNITY



# Annual Report 2022/23

This Annual Report covers Delta Health Alliance's activities in:

- **Sunflower EHS-CCP**  
Early Head Start Childcare Partnership in Sunflower County, MS
- **Sunflower HS / EHS**  
Head Start / Early Head Start in Sunflower County, MS
- **Leflore & Warren HS / EHS**  
Head Start / Early Head Start in Leflore and Warren counties, MS

## Table of Contents

### 3 Greetings

Letter from the DHA President

### 4 About Us

Delta Health Alliance (DHA)  
DHA Board Members  
DHA Executive Staff  
HS/EHS Team  
HS/EHS Policy Council

### 6 DHA's Head Start / Early Head Start Programs

Locations

### 8 School Readiness Goals

Early Head Start  
Head Start

### 12 Early Learning Environment

Hands-on Learning  
Theme-based Learning  
Growing Healthy Minds  
Nutrition  
Screenings

### 16 Kindergarten Readiness

Summer STEAM Camp  
Transition Field Trip  
Elevate to Kindergarten

### 18 Family Engagement

The Week of the Young Child®  
STEP Parent Training  
Family Calendars

### 20 Community Engagement

Kiwanis Club Garden Project  
Junior Auxiliary At-Home Literacy Kits  
Tasty Tuesday - Stone Soup  
Vicksburg Imagination Library

### 22 Professional Development

CDA Training  
Coaching

### 24 The Year By the Numbers

Annual Budget  
Enrollment  
Eligibility  
Screenings

These programs are supported by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services / Administration for Children & Families/Office of Head Start (Grant #04CH011162-01-00 and #04HP000224 and #04CH011654)

Our vision is for all children ages birth to five in Sunflower, Leflore, and Warren counties to experience high quality early education opportunities that will prepare them for kindergarten and beyond.



Greetings,

Delta Health Alliance is proud to present the 2022-23 Head Start / Early Head Start Annual Report. This report is prepared in compliance with the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2017.

From starting new partnerships focused on growing the whole child, to ensuring children's nutritional needs are met, the Head Start / Early Head Start team prioritized creating positive spaces for our students to learn last year. We also found innovative ways for families to enhance their child's learning at home through interactive take-home activities and engaging events at our facilities that keep parents engaged in their child's education.

DHA Head Start / Early Head Start's commitment to providing high-quality learning environments facilitates the development of children's social, emotional, and cognitive skills, preparing them for success in kindergarten and beyond. Without the dedication of DHA Head Start / Early Head Start educators and staff, none of this work would be possible. And, of course, the support and involvement of the families we serve binds the work we do in the classroom together.

We are very proud of the work our early education team does to best equip students to enter elementary school, setting them up for life-long success. I hope you will take a moment to learn a little more about our work.

Karen Matthews, PhD

President & CEO  
Delta Health Alliance





Delta Health Alliance (DHA) was established in 2001 as a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization with the goal of changing health care and education in the Mississippi Delta by improving access to health services, promoting healthier lifestyles, and expanding educational opportunities.

## Delta Health Alliance (DHA)

Delta Health Alliance has been a leader in:

- Supporting and operating community-based clinics that serve as medical homes for patients;
- Implementing new technologies such as electronic health records, health information, exchange networks, and telehealth diagnosis and treatment centers;
- Managing innovative education programs in community settings; and
- Creating robust home visiting programs that address prenatal and early childhood education challenges.

Two principles guide our work in the Delta:

1. Using data to make decisions; and
2. Building community partners to manage our programs.

- We seek to understand the fundamental causes of poor health and lack of educational opportunities in our region through comprehensive analysis of relevant data and statistics.
- We fund programs that are built on the latest medical, public health, and education research.
- We regularly assess the performance of these programs based on objective measures that are produced and recorded as part of these initiatives, and we make changes based on those outcomes.
- We do our work through community organizations, recognizing that long-lasting change occurs only when it is nurtured and supported by community members.

## DHA Board Members

- Bill Kennedy, Chairman (Inverness)  
 Hon. Willie Bailey (Greenville)  
 Woods Eastland (Indianola)  
 Donald Green (Clarksdale)  
 Walton Gresham (Indianola)  
 Lamar Liddell (Greenwood)  
 Joyce McNair (Belzoni)  
 Joe Nash (Greenville)  
 Lisa Percy (Greenville)  
 Myrtis Tabb (Cleveland)

## DHA Executive Staff

- Dr. Karen Matthews  
 Chief Executive Officer & President
- Marlin Womack  
 Executive VP of Operations
- Sheldon Morris  
 Executive VP of Programs
- Brooks Ann Gaston  
 VP of Community Outreach
- Leigh-Anne Gant  
 VP of Early Education
- Melanie Williams  
 VP of Home Visiting Initiatives
- Allison Poindexter  
 VP of School-Based Education
- Hilary Meier  
 VP of Health
- Aparna Nandula  
 Chief Information Officer
- Elizabeth McCullers  
 VP of Sponsored Programs

## DHA Head Start / Early Head Start (HS / EHS)

### HS / EHS Team

- Tashiri Wheeler  
 Director of Disabilities
- Marcia Erving  
 Director of Outreach
- Marilyn Grice  
 Director of Transportation
- Monica May  
 Director of Education
- Natonja Robinson  
 Fiscal Office Manager
- Verneitha Causey  
 Director of Nutrition

### HS / EHS Policy Council

#### Community Reps

- William Nettle  
 Warren County
- Henry Fant  
 Leflore County

#### Sunflower County EHS-CCP

- Tambria Shaw  
 Buck-A-Roo Childcare Center
- Tayanna Rias  
 Imaginarium Learning Center
- Mary Hankins  
 Little Angels Daycare

#### Sunflower County HS / EHS

- Casey Coleman  
 Indianola HS / EHS
- Jakayla Flowers  
 Ruleville HS
- Ja Quanna Williams  
 Sunflower HS / EHS

#### Leflore / Warren County HS / EHS

- Michelle Hoskins  
 Greenwood HS / EHS
- Irene Davis  
 MVSU Development Center

# DHA's Head Start / Early Head Start Locations

Three Delta Health Alliance HS / EHS grants are covering services at 13 locations.

## Sunflower County Early Head Start Childcare Partnership (EHS-CCP)

- (1) Bebe' Kids Learning Center  
413 Second Street,  
Indianola, MS  
(662) 635-5753
- (2) Buck-A-Roo Childcare Center  
805 Hoover Street,  
Indianola, MS  
(662) 445-2503
- (3) Empowerment Kids University  
307 Curtis Street,  
Indianola, MS  
(662) 445-2220
- (4) Imaginarium Learning Center  
160 East Broadway,  
Drew, MS  
(662) 745-0349
- (5) Little Angels Daycare  
1012 Roy Street,  
Moorhead, MS  
(662) 246-5328

## Sunflower County Head Start / Early Head Start (HS / EHS)

- (6) Drew HS  
120 S. Church Street,  
Drew, MS  
(662) 482-5008
- (7) Indianola HS / EHS  
702 Roosevelt Street,  
Indianola, MS  
(662) 452-5063
- (8) Ruleville HS  
710 Byron Street,  
Ruleville, MS  
(662) 878-5033
- (9) Sunflower HS / EHS  
225 E. Claiborne Street,  
Sunflower, MS  
(662) 569-7121

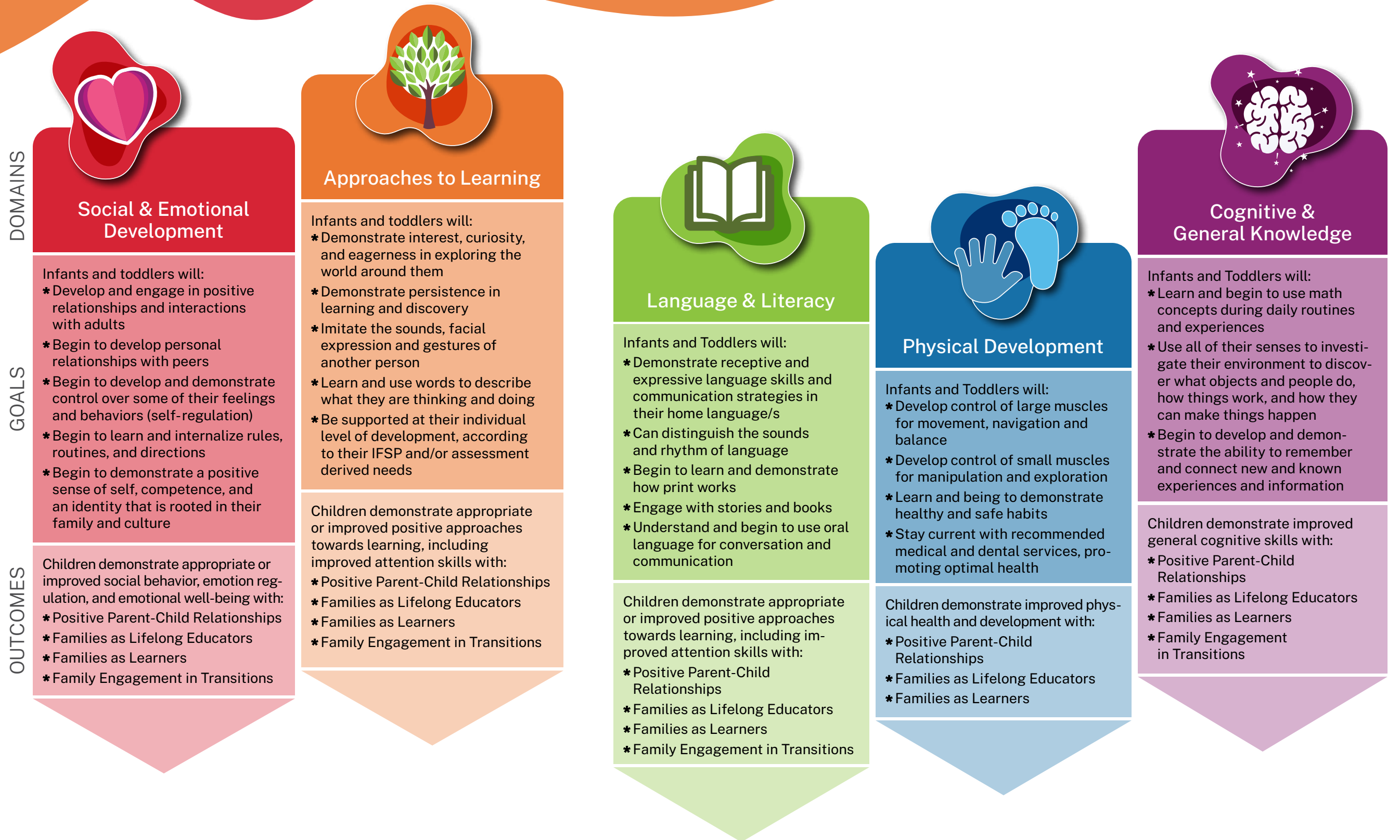
## Leflore County & Warren County Head Start / Early Head Start (HS / EHS)

- (10) Cedars HS / EHS  
234 Cedars School Circle,  
Vicksburg, MS  
(601) 262-0753
- (11) Greenwood HS / EHS  
100 E. MLK Jr. Drive,  
Greenwood, MS  
(662) 459-9174
- (12) MVSU Development Center  
14000 Hwy 82 W,  
Itta Bena, MS  
(662) 254-3105
- (13) Vicksburg HS / EHS  
200 R.L. Chase Drive,  
Vicksburg, MS  
(601) 262-0954

\* DHA Headquarter  
Stoneville, MS  
Washington County



# School Readiness Goals Early Head Start

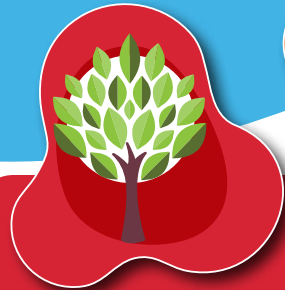


# School Readiness Goals Head Start

DOMAINS

GOALS

OUTCOMES



## Approaches to Learning

- Children will:
- \* Demonstrate the use of creative and imaginative expression such as music, movement, art and drama
  - \* Demonstrate an interest and engagement in large and small group experiences as well as cooperative play with peers
  - \* Manage their actions, words, and behavior with increasing independence

- Children will learn to:
- \* Express emotions in ways that are appropriate to the situation
  - \* Demonstrate awareness of classroom rules when asked and an ability to follow these rules most of the time
  - \* Appropriately handle materials during activities



## Social & Emotional Development

- Children will:
- \* Demonstrate positive relationships and interactions with adults and peers
  - \* Recognize and regulate emotions, attention, impulse and behavior
  - \* Initiate longer and more reciprocal interactions with trusted adults, such as asking questions or talking about ideas

- Children will learn to:
- \* Interact readily with trusted adults
  - \* Engage in pro-social behaviors with adults, such as using respectful language or greetings



## Language & Communication

- Children will:
- \* Demonstrate the ability to use language
  - \* Demonstrate familiarity with writing implements, conventions and emerging skills to communicate through written representations, symbols and letters

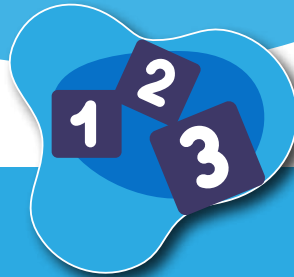
- Children will learn to:
- \* Use verbal and non-verbal signals appropriately to acknowledge the comments or questions of others
  - \* Show ongoing connection to a conversation, group discussion, or presentation
  - \* Show an ability to recall multiple step directions
  - \* Show understanding of a variety of sentence types, such as multi-clause, cause-effect, sequential order, or if-then



## Literacy

- Children will:
- \* Demonstrate an interest in books and their characteristics, and the ability to understand and get meaning from stories and information from books and other texts
  - \* Demonstrate knowledge of concepts about print and early decoding (identifying letter-sound relationships)

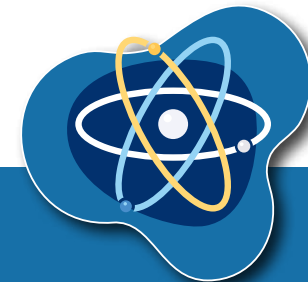
- Children will learn to:
- \* Demonstrate appropriate or improved communication, language, and emergent literacy skills



## Mathematics Development

- Children will:
- \* Demonstrate the use of numbers to describe relationships and solve problems

- Children will learn to:
- \* Count verbally or sign to at least 20 by ones
  - \* Instantly recognize, without counting, small quantities of up to five objects and say or sign the number
  - \* Accurately count as many as five objects in a scattered configuration
  - \* Understand that each successive number name refers to a quantity that is one larger
  - \* Identify and use numbers related to order or position from first to tenth
  - \* Associate a number of objects with a written numeral 0-5
  - \* Recognize and, with support, write some numbers up to 10



## Scientific Reasoning

- Children will:
- \* Demonstrate the ability to observe and collect information and use it to ask questions, predict, explain and draw conclusions

- Children will learn to:
- \* Identify the five senses (smell, touch, sight, sound, taste) and use them to make observations
  - \* Use scientific practice words or signs, such as observe, describe, compare, contrast, question, predict, experiment, reflect, cooperate, or measure
  - \* Categorize by sorting observable phenomena into groups based on attributes such as appearance, weight, function, ability, texture, odor, and sound



## Perceptual, Motor & Physical Development

- Children will:
- \* Demonstrate the understanding of one's relationship to the family and community, roles in the family and community and respect for diversity
  - \* Understand and practice healthy and safe habits
  - \* Demonstrate age appropriate control of large muscles for movement, navigation and balance
  - \* Demonstrate age appropriate control of small muscles for such purposes as using utensils, self-care, building and exploring

- Children will learn to:
- \* Demonstrate balance in large-muscle movement, such as walking on a log without falling or balancing on one leg
  - \* Demonstrate strength and stamina that allow for participation in a range of physical activities, such as running around playing tag
  - \* Demonstrate awareness of own body and other people's space during interactions
  - \* Change directions when moving with little difficulty

# Early Learning Environment (1/2)

We implement thematic units throughout early education classrooms with developmentally appropriate, hands-on learning activities. Our theme-based approach to learning embeds common topics throughout the curriculums we teach to children.



## THEME-BASED LEARNING



## HANDS-ON LEARNING

Our theme-based modules allow teachers to connect our curriculum to real-world experiences and build on prior topic knowledge that builds a foundation for learning. This approach enables children to understand their unique strengths, explore multiple ways of learning, and develop skills over time through hands-on opportunities.

Theme-based curriculums provide an early learning framework that introduces children to foundational life-skills, academic skills, and critical thinking. We provide ample opportunities for children to increase their social, cognitive, emotional, and physical development.

Hands-on learning begins as early as birth. This approach capitalizes on the natural progression of how young children learn through use of all five senses and exploration of their environments. Hands-on learning is part of sensory development that builds neurological connections in the brain. Children who take on developmentally appropriate tasks activate their brains and build their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

# Early Learning Environment (2/2)

## GROWING HEALTHY MINDS



Last school year, DHA Head Start / Early Head Start partnered with the University of Mississippi Department of Teacher Education to implement the Growing Healthy Minds, Bodies, and Communities program. This evidenced-based program supports the well-being of each child by providing high-quality education that incorporates hands-on-learning, community engagement, gardening and nutrition, anti-bullying messages, and physical activity. The partnership provides DHA with curriculum, tools, resources, and training for educators to implement the program, and also equips families and communities with take-home ideas and activities to continue their child's learning at home.

## NUTRITION



DHA Head Start / Early Head Start makes sure children's nutritional needs are met both now and in the future. We provide our students with nutritious meals and snacks and ensure children and parents understand the importance of nutrition. We believe nutrition is not a one and done approach, but an ongoing lesson that both children and families benefit from hearing about regularly. We add nutritional education materials and resources into lesson plans, parent meetings and special programs.

Making sure children have access to the services and resources they need is one of DHA Head Start / Early Head Start's top priorities. Children who lack access to resources they need cannot learn and develop their cognitive and emotional abilities as well as they should. DHA screens ALL children in our Head Start / Early Head Start and Child Care Partnership programs to identify any concerns regarding a child's developmental, behavioral, motor, language, social, cognitive, or emotional skills within the first 45 days of when they come to school. This helps ensure all the children in our early education programs receive the assistance they need to learn properly and set themselves up for success later in life.

## SCREENINGS



## DEVELOPMENTAL, VISION & HEARING

# Kindergarten Readiness

DHA recognizes that transition activities are integral and necessary to allow children and families move smoothly from Head Start into the local school system.

DHA and Sunflower County School District, Greenwood Leflore County School District, and Warren County School District provided transition field trips to rising kindergarten students to experience kindergarten for a day! Students rode DHA buses to the same elementary schools they will attend next year. Students and the DHA team learned from kindergarten teams what a day in K looks like from beginning to end!

## TRANSITION FIELD TRIP



## SUMMER STEAM CAMP



Our four-week STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) Camp gave teachers and preschool/pre-k children alike fantastic opportunities to learn new skills.

Themes implemented were

- *Art in Our World*
- *Building and Constructing Around Us*
- *Let's Go Exploring, and*
- *Bubble, Pop, Splash.*

Each theme provided opportunities for children to develop every early learning domain, including cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and literacy skills.

## ELEVATE TO KINDERGARTEN



DHA collaborated with sites to create and develop a program to celebrate the accomplishments of each child and family at the end of the year. All children had the moment to be celebrated and have their families join them in a moment of recognition.

# Family Engagement

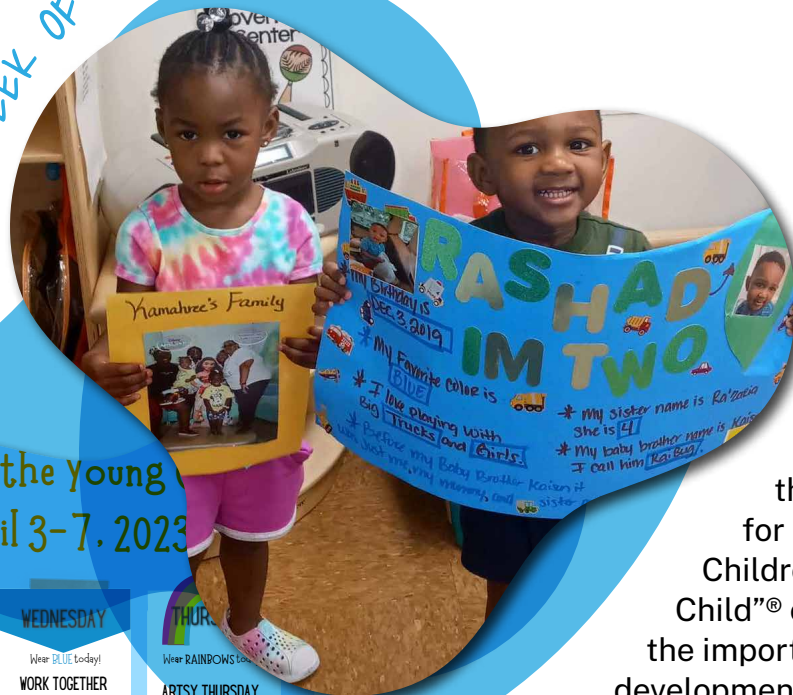
DHA believes that early childhood education is grounded in positive relationships. The foundation for school readiness begins early in life. School readiness means that children are ready for school; DHA offers a variety of activities to engage families virtually and in-person on a regular, on-going basis. School readiness also means that families are ready to support their children's learning. The DHA Head Start/Early Head Start program is about building relationships with families that support family well-being, strong relationships between parents and their children, and ongoing learning and development for both parents and children. DHA offers a variety of activities to engage families virtually and in-person on a regular, on-going basis.



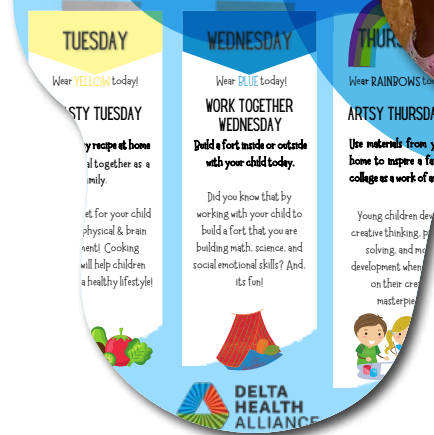
STEP PARENT TRAINING

Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) improves parent-child communication and overall family functioning. Parents attend group meetings covering lessons on children's behavior, parents' behavior, positive listening, giving encouragement, development of a child's responsibilities and confidence, consequences, and effective family meetings. Parents complete STEP training with a better understanding of their child's behavior and the tools to help kids learn from the consequences of their actions, allowing families to function better.

## THE WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD



Week of the young April 3-7, 2023



For "Week of the Young Child"® this year, DHA HS/EHS put together a week full of engaging activities for the entire family. Sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, "Week of the Young Child"® celebrates and stresses the importance of early learning and development for children's long-term success. Between April 3 and April 7, DHA celebrated by hosting a musical event that promoted cognitive development, encouraging families to try healthy recipes at home, drumming up collaborative at-home exercises for families, and giving students the day off from school on Friday to spend quality time with their loved ones.

## FAMILY CALENDARS



Centers provided families with a family engagement calendar each month. These calendars included important dates at the center and in the community as well as family engagement opportunities.

# Community Engagement

KIWANIS CLUB



GARDEN PROJECT

The Vicksburg Kiwanis Club built garden boxes at our Cedars Head Start / Early Head Start center. After completing the boxes, Kiwanis Club members and HS / EHS staff helped children plant flowers and vegetables in the boxes, which supplemented students' classroom science lessons and promoted a greater love for fresh garden vegetables.

The Junior Auxiliary of Vicksburg Warren County provided At-Home Literacy Kits for every child enrolled in Head Start in Warren County. The Junior Auxiliary worked closely with the DHA education team to select materials based on the current theme and encourage age-appropriate family engagement opportunities to foster the love of literacy for the entire family!



AT-HOME LITERACY KITS



TASTY TUESDAYS  
STONE SOUP

Vicksburg High School Key Club and Vicksburg Kiwanis Club partnered with Delta Health Alliance for Week of the Young Child to bring Tasty Tuesday to life! Key club members acted out the story of Stone Soup while the book was read by Kiwanis Club members via Zoom. Every child enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start in Warren County received their own personal copy of the book to add to their home library.

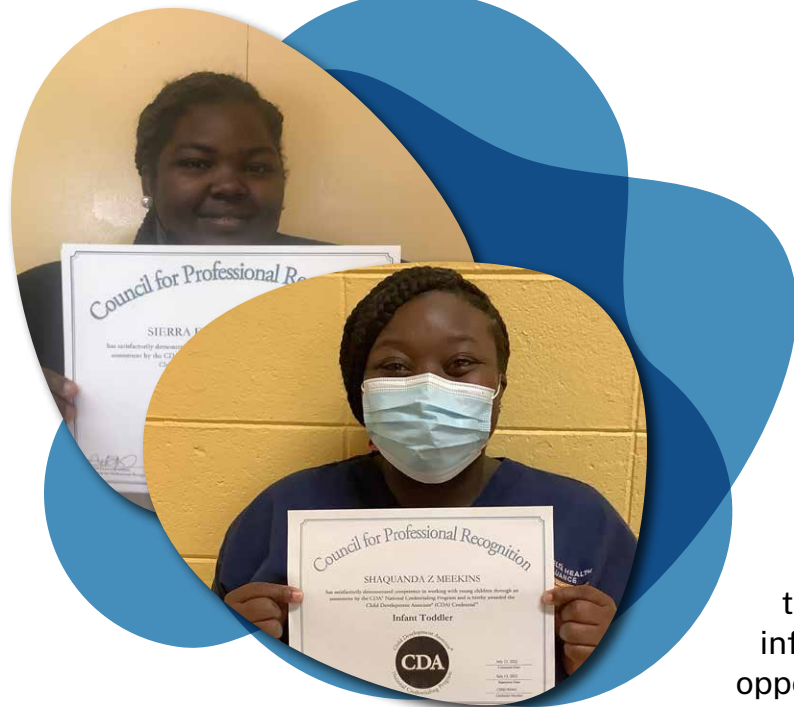


VICKSBURG IMAGINATION LIBRARY

The Vicksburg Imagination Library extends DHA's successful experience with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to Warren County. This program establishes a love for reading in children at a young age by gifting free books to children from birth to age five. Thanks to the Batesville Casket Company for partnering with us on this project and providing the funding to ensure Warren County kids have access to good reading materials.

# Professional Development

Professional development opportunities are essential in building the capacity of the next generation of early childhood professionals, leaders, and influencers. Delta Health Alliance offers professional development and training opportunities periodically throughout the year, including during pre-service, quarterly while in service, monthly, weekly, and as needed. Pre-service and in-service professional development experiences include required training and needs-based training tailored to each educator.



CDA TRAINING

DHA partners to provide a nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) credential to early childhood educators in our early learning communities. We provide CDA candidates with opportunities to receive training, develop portfolios, and test for an infant/toddler or preschool credential. Two opportunities were provided during the school year to increase program capacity and advance the careers of our HS / EHS staff.

COACHING

DHA's early education coaching increases children's learning experiences by developing quality early childhood educators. Our coaching enables teachers to implement best practices in classrooms, increases their knowledge, develops new skills, and encourages self-assessment. Early education coaching impacts every HS/EHS teacher throughout the year. We develop Quality Implementation Plans for each teacher and early education checklists that are tailored to staff needs and informed by classroom observations.

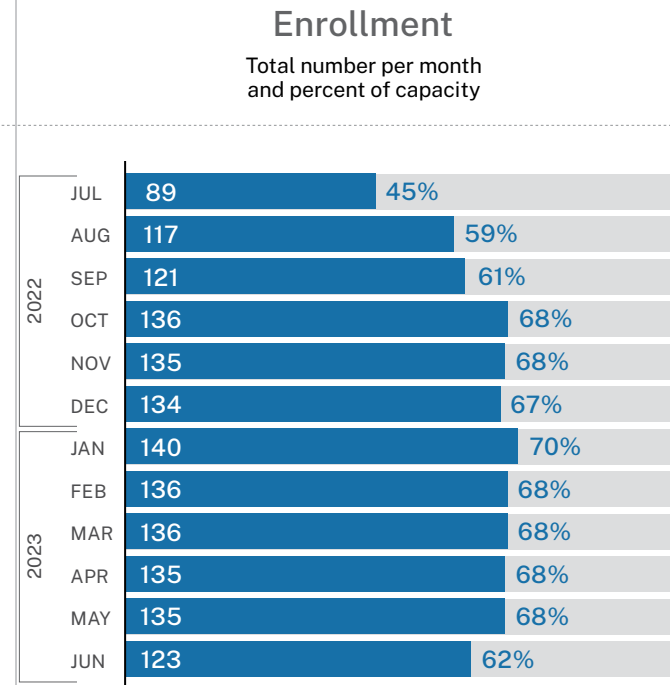
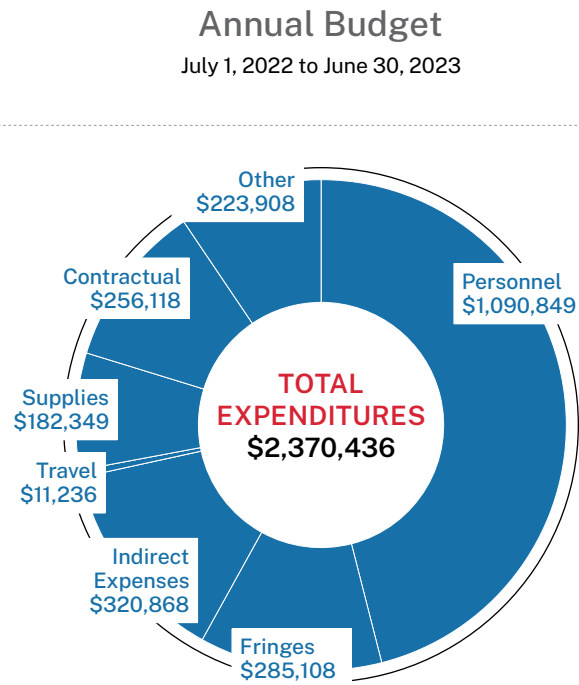
# The Year By The Numbers

**Sunflower County**

**EHS-CCP**

Sites: 5  
 Slots: 200  
 Number Served: 147

Funding \$4,000,000



### Eligibility

Number of enrollees by primary type of eligibility

Income at/below 100% of federal poverty line	80
Public Assistance such as TANF, SSI	9
Status as a foster child or as homeless	2
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children	119
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	87

### Screenings

Share of children with a medical / dental home

**Medical: 99%**

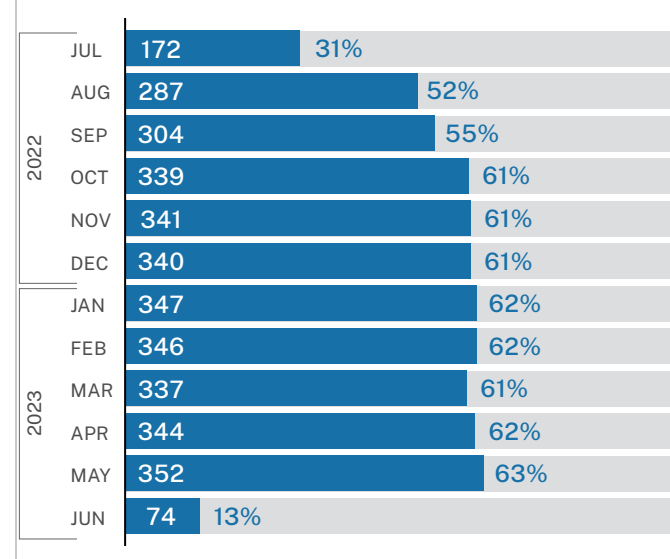
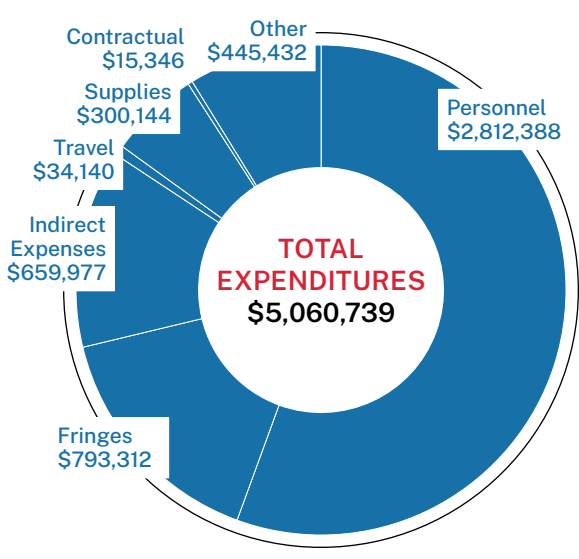
**Dental: 92%**

**Sunflower County**

**HS / EHS**

Sites: 4  
 Slots: 556  
 Number Served: 382

Funding \$3,000,000



Income at/below 100% of federal poverty line	152
Public Assistance such as TANF, SSI	42
Status as a foster child or as homeless	16
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children	224
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	224

**Medical: 97%**

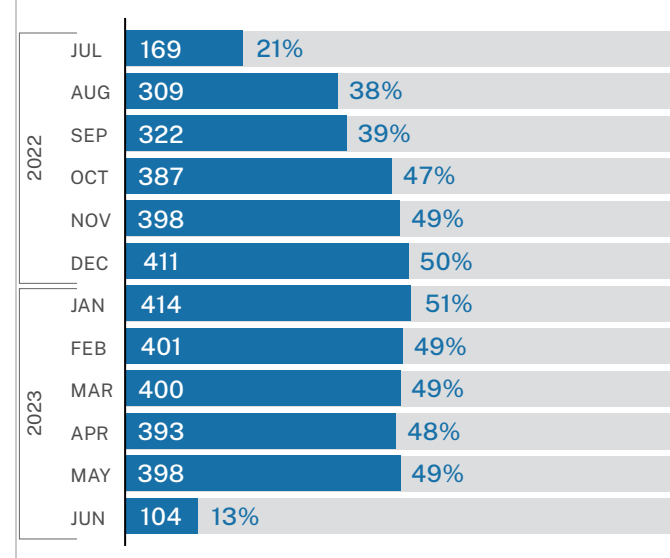
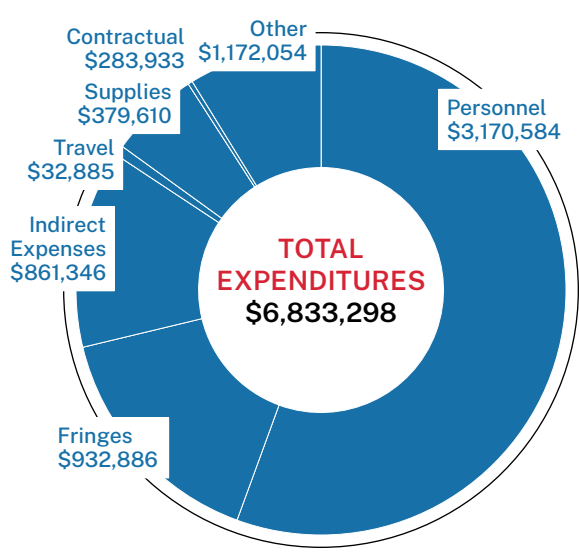
**Dental: 96%**

**Leflore County & Warren County**

**HS / EHS**

Sites: 4  
 Slots: 819  
 Number Served: 447

Funding \$8,000,000



Income at/below 100% of federal poverty line	190
Public Assistance such as TANF, SSI	45
Status as a foster child or as homeless	6
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children	208
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	278

**Medical: 100%**

**Dental: 84%**



**[www.dhaheadstart.org](http://www.dhaheadstart.org)**

This program is supported by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services / Administration for Children & Families/Office of Head Start (Grant #04CH01162-01-00 and #04HP000224 and #04CH011654)