



Annual Report



**DELTA
HEALTH
ALLIANCE**

HEALTH • EDUCATION • COMMUNITY

Head Start /
Early Head Start /
Childcare Partnership



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

These programs are supported by
the U.S. Department of Health &
Human Services, Administration for
Children & Families, Office of Head
Start (Grant #04CH01162-01-00 and
#04HP000517 and #04CH011654)

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Greetings,

Delta Health Alliance (DHA) is pleased to present our 2023-24 Head Start / Early Head Start Annual Report. This report is prepared in compliance with the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2017.

Recognizing the foundation for early learning begins with the family. We are especially proud of the work we've done to engage parents and families in their children's education. DHA's Head Start / Early Head Start team meticulously plans family and community engagement events tailored to the season with each family receiving comprehensive event calendars each month.

Thanks in large part to our efforts, the share of program households with fathers involved in their children's education has increased markedly. Combined with other DHA programs such as our new Resource and Referral Centers, families now have more opportunities to enhance their children's education through community events and take-home educational activities.

Data continues to show the effectiveness of our early learning strategies. As the school year progresses, more Head Start / Early Head Start students are expressing themselves through verbal communication and fewer are developmentally delayed. These improvements reflect that more students are ready to succeed in elementary school and beyond. Our early childhood education curriculums have contributed to substantial growth in the percentage of pre-k students in Leflore County ready for kindergarten.

Children succeed in school when parents can work and provide for their families. Many parents of Head Start / Early Head Start children are participating in DHA's workforce development programs, illustrating the importance of our multi-faceted approach to serving families. Through our WORC and LEAD programs, DHA connects parents of Head Start students with employment and job-training opportunities that allow them to better provide for their kids. Our workforce development programs have connected more than 450 Head Start / Early Head Start parents with jobs with local businesses.

Our early education team's commitment to the children of the Mississippi Delta is making a difference in the lives of these families and the communities in which they live. I hope you will take a moment to learn more about this great work through our Annual Report.

Karen Matthews, PhD
President & CEO
Delta Health Alliance



About 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.

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

Leigh-Anne Gant
VP of Early Education

Brooks Ann Gaston
VP of Community Outreach

Rhonda Lewis
VP of Education

Elizabeth McCullers
VP of Sponsored Programs

Hilary Meier
VP of Health

Sheldon Morris
Senior Advisor

Aparna Nandula
Chief Information Officer

Allison Poindexter
VP of School-Based Education

Rona Strong
VP Grants & Operations

Melanie Williams
VP of Home Visiting Initiatives



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.

Delta Health Alliance

Child Care Partnership / Head Start / Early Head Start

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.

HS / EHS Team

Verneitha Causey
Director of Nutrition

Marcia Erving
AVP of Outreach

Marilyn Grice
Director of Transportation

Monica May
AVP of Education

Natonja Robinson
Fiscal Office Manager

Tashiri Wheeler
Director of Disabilities

HS / EHS Policy Council

Community Reps

William Nettle
Warren County

Sunflower County EHS-CCP

Jasmine Williams
Buck-A-Roo Childcare Center

Zsorya Redmond
Empowering Kids University

Tiffany Sibley
Little Angels Daycare

Sunflower County HS / EHS

Sharon Brown
Drew HS

Symone Daniels
Indianola HS / EHS

Joycelyn Haley
Sunflower HS / EHS

Leflore / Warren County HS / EHS

Sylvia Smith
Greenwood HS / EHS

Jeffrey Willis
Kings HS / EHS

Laderka Coats
MVSU Development Center

Three Delta Health Alliance HS / EHS grants are covering services at 12 locations.

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

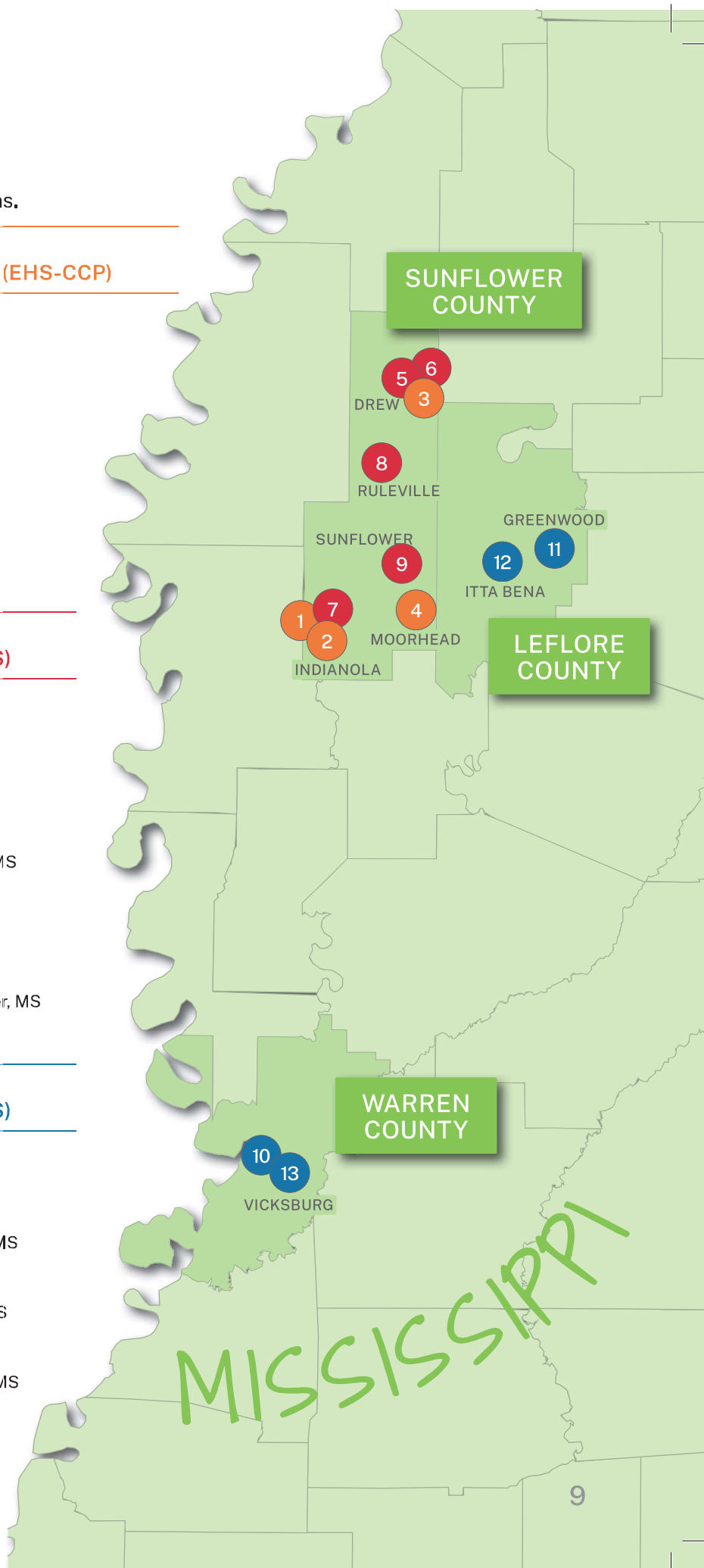
- | | |
|-------|---|
| 4 | (1) Buck-A-Roo Childcare Center
805 Hoover Street, Indianola, MS
(662) 445-2503 |
| Sites | (2) Empowerment Kids University
307 Curtis Street, Indianola, MS
(662) 445-2220 |
| 130 | (3) Imaginarium Learning Center
160 East Broadway, Drew, MS
(662) 745-0349 |
| Slots | (4) Little Angels Daycare
1012 Roy Street, Moorhead, MS
(662) 246-5328 |

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

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 5 | (5) Drew EHS
181 W. Park Avenue, Drew, MS
(662) 649-6167 |
| Sites | (6) Drew HS
120 S. Church Street, Drew, MS
(662) 482-5008 |
| 288 | (7) Indianola HS / EHS
702 Roosevelt Street, Indianola, MS
(662) 452-5063 |
| Slots | (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)

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 4 | (10) Cedars HS/EHS
235 Cedars School Circle,
Vicksburg, MS |
| Sites | (11) Greenwood HS / EHS
100 E. MLK Jr. Drive, Greenwood, MS
(662) 459-9174 |
| 448 | (12) MVSU Development Center
14000 Hwy 82 West, Itta Bena, MS
(662) 254-3105 |
| Slots | (13) Vicksburg HS / EHS
200 R.L. Chase Drive, Vicksburg, MS
(601) 262-0954 |



Child Health and Safety



DEVELOPMENTAL, VISION, HEARING SCREENINGS

Making sure children have access to the services and resources they need is a top priority for DHA HS / EHS. 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 HS / EHS and CCP programs to identify any concerns regarding a child's developmental, behavioral, motor, language, social, cognitive, and emotional skill within 45 days of when they come to school. This helps ensure all children in our early education programs receive the assistance they need to learn properly and set themselves up for success later in life.

Sunflower EHS-CCP	Sunflower HS / EHS	Leflore/Warren HS / EHS
Medical 91%	Medical 99%	Medical 99%
Dental 90%	Dental 97%	Dental 95%



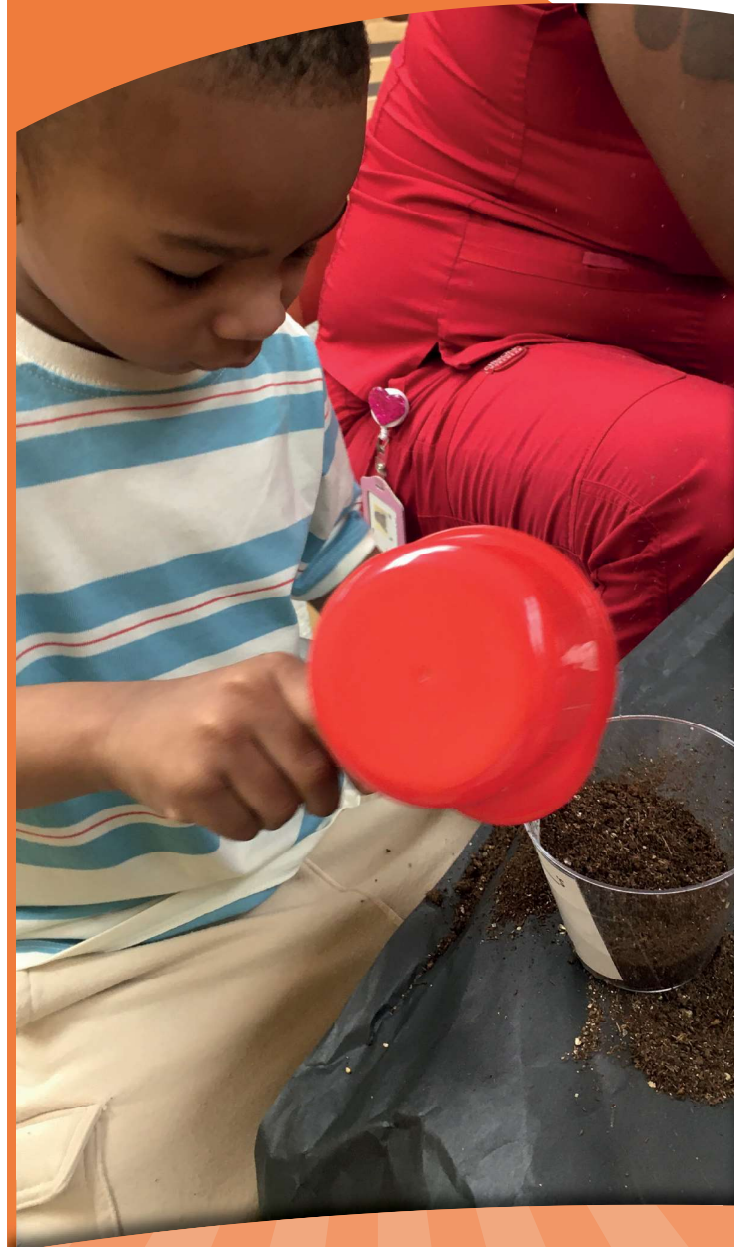
COOKING IN THE CLASSROOM

Healthy eating habits are essential for proper growth and development of young children. DHA HS / EHS recognizes the essential role nutrition plays in childhood success, and we provide not only healthy meals for children but ongoing lessons for children and families to continue nutritious meals at home. DHA HS / EHS incorporates nutrition into lesson plans, parent meetings, and special programs for the whole family.

NUTRITION

DHA HS / EHS conducts body mass index (BMI) screenings as part of its health and nutrition screenings. Obesity and weight struggles often start young. By identifying children who may be at risk of obesity or underweight, DHA HS / EHS can help families access the supports they need to raise healthy children. Additionally, DHA HS / EHS helps set the foundation for lifelong wellness for children through an emphasis on balanced meals, physical activity, and education for children and families.

Quality Environments



HANDS-ON LEARNING

Hands-on learning is the natural progression of how young children learn beginning as early as birth utilizing all five senses through exploration of their environments. Hands-on learning is part of sensory development that builds neurological connections in the brain. As children are active in accessing developmentally appropriate activities, they are learning; and their brains are engaged. As young children are provided developmentally appropriate, hands-on learning experiences, they increase their critical thinking and problem-solving skills using realistic experiences in the early learning environments.

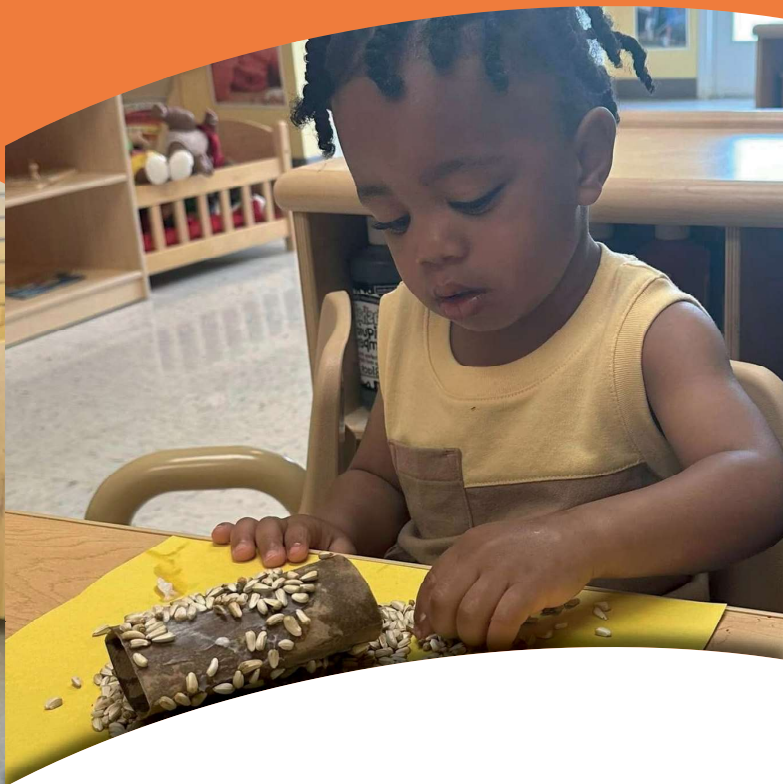


THEME-BASED LEARNING

The theme-based approach to learning organizes curriculum around a topic or theme that spans multiple areas and lessons. Thematic units are implemented throughout an early education classroom with developmentally appropriate, hands-on learning activities. Thematic units are mainstream among kids and educators alike. Thematic units enable teachers

to connect real-world experiences and build on prior knowledge of a topic as a foundation for learning. Children get to explore their own unique strengths, explore multiple ways of learning, and participate in hands-on-activities that support their development.

A theme-based curriculum integrates into an early learning framework that helps children to be introduced to foundational life skills, academic skills, and use of critical thinking skills. There are ample opportunities provided for children to increase their social, cognitive, emotional, and physical development.

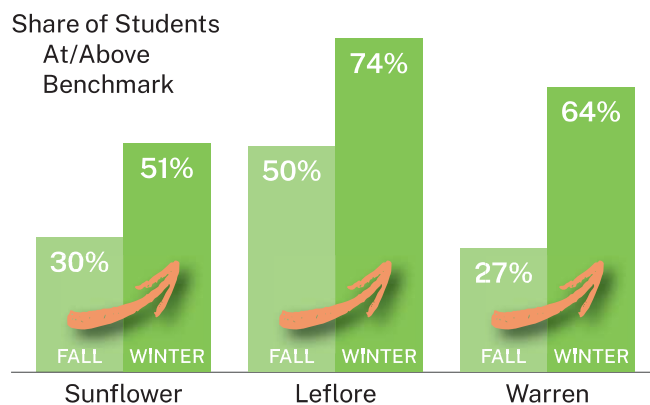
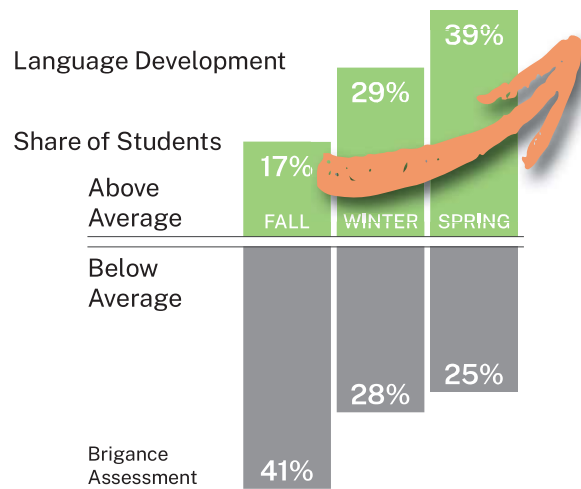


ON-GOING MONITORING

DHA has aligned resources to effectively monitor the early learning components of the programs to improve the quality of all Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The focus of the on-going monitoring is to continuously improve and sustain the environmental health and safety, professional development, and emergency preparedness for the children, families, and staff. Recent monitoring changes include adjustments that ensure better planning, communication, recordkeeping, and reporting.

MISSISSIPPI KINDERGARTEN READINESS ASSESSMENT (MKAS)

Evaluation data shows DHA's high-quality early learning strategies help prepare students for kindergarten. As the academic year progresses, more Head Start students score above average on language development assessments as the percentage of students considered developmentally delayed falls sharply. Additionally, kindergarten readiness continues to improve across all DHA pre-k sites in Leflore County between Spring 2022 and Spring 2024 driven largely by gains among Head Start students.



STAR Early Literacy (MKAS)
in DHA Head Start Sites 2023-24

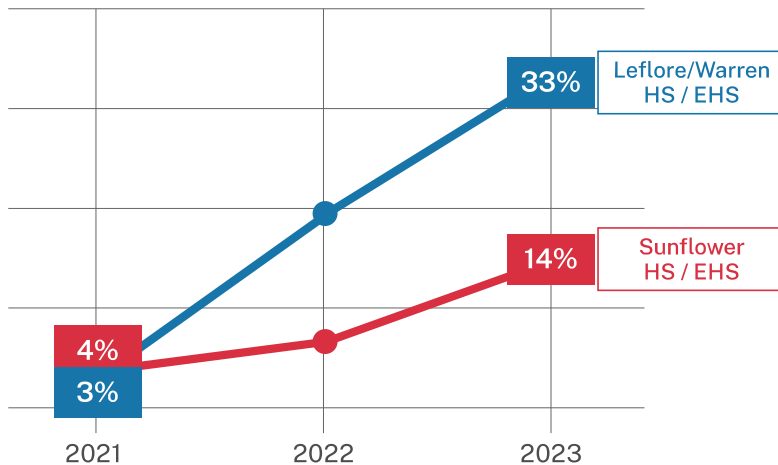
Reaching Children and Families



DHA believes that early childhood education is grounded in positive relationships. Families provide the foundation for school readiness by supporting their children's learning.

DHA Head Start / Early Head Start helps construct this foundation by building relationships with families that support their well-being. Throughout the school year, we provide a variety of activities on a regular basis that forge strong relationships between parents and children and promote learning and development for the whole family.

Share of households with father involvement



These efforts have contributed to considerable increases in household father involvement in counties with a DHA HS / EHS presence.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

DHA HS / EHS plans quarterly family engagement activities to bring together families in each center bridging the gap between home and school. During these special times, families have the opportunity to engage with their children by reading stories, making arts and crafts, and other simple bonding experiences.



FAMILY CALENDARS

Families receive family engagement calendars each month with important dates specific to their child's center. These calendars also feature family-friendly community events and other engagement opportunities relevant to the season.

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 family meetings. Parents complete STEP training with a better understanding of their child's behavior and the tools to help kids learning from the consequences of their actions allowing families to function better.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH - TRUNK OR TREAT

DHA Head Start / Early Head Start enjoys participating in Excel-by-5's vibrant Trunk-or-Treat event which creates a safe and joyful environment for families to gather and celebrate Halloween together. The event was filled with laughter, creative costumes, and decorated trunks offering a fun and secure space for children to enjoy trick-or-treating. It is always a wonderful opportunity for families to connect, share in the festive spirit, and build a sense of community, all while ensuring the safety and happiness of little ones.



ELEVATE TO KINDERGARTEN

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

Investing in Workforce



TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

On-going, job-embedded professional development opportunities with early childhood educators and professionals are essential in building the capacity of the next generation of early childhood professionals, leaders, and influencers. Professional development and training opportunities are provided during pre-service, quarterly in-service, monthly, weekly, and as needed. Pre-service and in-service professional development experiences include required training, as well as needs-based topics aligned to coaching and administrative observations. Job-embedded professional development occurs daily and on-going in and out of the classrooms with all HS/EHS teachers throughout the year. Intentional planning of all professional development experiences is based on teacher and center manager learning needs identified through on-going observations and planned for all staff to stay abreast of the most current trends in early childhood education.



WORC FOR HS / EHS STAFF

DHA's WORC (Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities) program allows HS / EHS employees to further their education. Through WORC-5, early childhood educators can work towards obtaining their Childhood Development Associate credential, associates degree in early education, or bachelor degree in early education. Supporting our employees' educational goals invests in our workforce and students as educators gain the skills to better support children's development.

LEADS - AFTERSCHOOL

Eligible parents in DHA's LEADS (Leadership, Education, Action, Development & Sustainability) workforce development program receive child care referrals to DHA HS / EHS, connecting them to a crucial service that enables parents to work and provide for their families. Since the program started, 474 HS / EHS parents have been employed through LEADS and 22 have been connected with job training opportunities. The synergy between DHA HS / EHS child care services and local employment opportunities has supported workforces in the Delta's health care, agricultural, manufacturing, and education industries.

Partnerships



REGISTERED BEHAVIOR TECHNICIAN (RBT) TRAINING

In partnership with Jubilee Therapy, DHA HS hosted and participated in Registered Behavior Technician training. Twenty DHA HS staff had the opportunity to go through 40 hours of training. RBTs provide direct behavior-analytic services, aid in implementing behavior plans, and collect data in classroom settings. These paraprofessionals help to reduce inappropriate behaviors of children while in a classroom setting with the help of a trained professional.



GROWING HEALTHY MINDS, BODIES + COMMUNITIES

In partnership with the University of Mississippi, DHA Head Start in Sunflower, Leflore and Warren Counties participated in Growing Healthy Minds, Bodies & Communities program. This evidence-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 and program activities, while equipping families with take-home ideas, meal kits, and activities to continue their child's learning at home.



VICKSBURG KIWANIS ONE DAY PROJECT

The Vicksburg Kiwanis Club worked on a 1-day project with students at Cedars HS / EHS. Kiwanis Club members built garden boxes with students, then helped the Cedars staff and children plant flowers and vegetables. Cedars HS / EHS uses the garden boxes as an extension to lessons in the classroom.



TRANSITION FIELD TRIPS

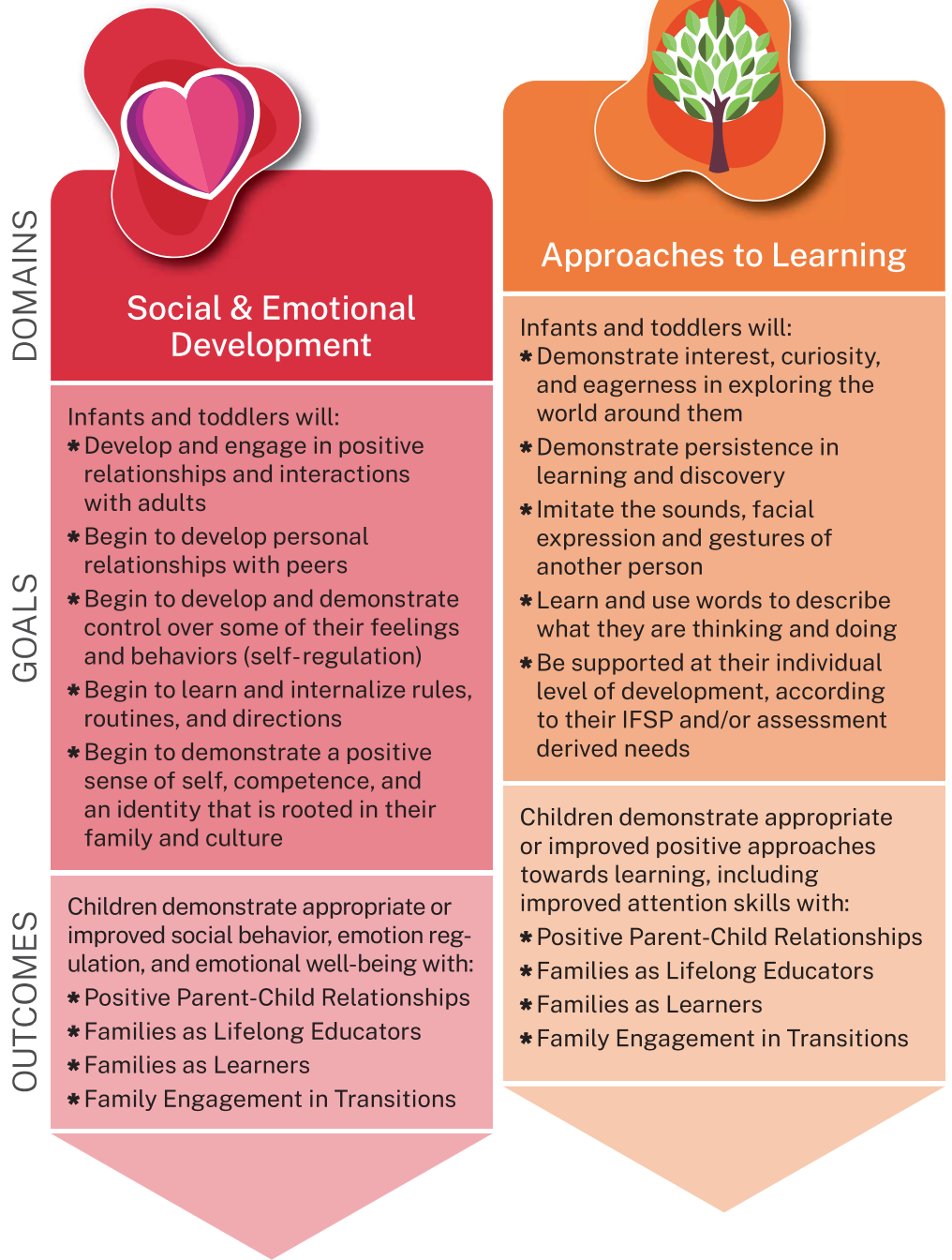
DHA HS / EHS partnered with the Sunflower County, Warren County, and Greenwood-Leflore Consolidated School Districts to provide transition field trips to rising kindergartners to experience K for a day! Students rode DHA buses to elementary schools pulling up to the exact spot where the bus will go next year. These real-life experiences helped students to know what to expect from beginning to end on their first day of kindergarten!



IMAGINATION LIBRARY

DHA HS / EHS proudly enrolls children we serve in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. This remarkable program sends free, high-quality books to children from birth to age five, fostering a love of reading from an early age. By providing a new book each month, the program helps build a home library, promotes early literacy, and encourages families to spend time reading together. Early exposure to books is crucial for cognitive development and language skills, making this program an invaluable resource for families. In 2024, DHA's Imagination Library program served more than 4,400 children, including more than 1,700 in Leflore and Sunflower counties alone.

Early Head Start



School Readiness Goals



Language & Literacy

Infants and Toddlers will:

- * Demonstrate receptive and expressive language skills and communication strategies in their home language/s
- * Can distinguish the sounds and rhythm of language
- * Begin to learn and demonstrate how print works
- * Engage with stories and books
- * Understand and begin to use oral language for conversation and communication

Children demonstrate appropriate or improved positive approaches towards learning, including improved attention skills with:

- * Positive Parent-Child Relationships
- * Families as Lifelong Educators
- * Families as Learners
- * Family Engagement in Transitions



Physical Development

Infants and Toddlers will:

- * Develop control of large muscles for movement, navigation and balance
- * Develop control of small muscles for manipulation and exploration
- * Learn and begin to demonstrate healthy and safe habits
- * Stay current with recommended medical and dental services, promoting optimal health

Children demonstrate improved physical health and development with:

- * Positive Parent-Child Relationships
- * Families as Lifelong Educators
- * Families as Learners



Cognitive & General Knowledge





Infants and Toddlers will:

- * Learn and begin to use math concepts during daily routines and experiences
- * Use all of their senses to investigate their environment to discover what objects and people do, how things work, and how they can make things happen
- * Begin to develop and demonstrate the ability to remember and connect new and known experiences and information

Children demonstrate improved general cognitive skills with:

- * Positive Parent-Child Relationships
- * Families as Lifelong Educators
- * Families as Learners
- * Family Engagement in Transitions

Head Start

DOMAINS	 <p>Approaches to Learning</p>	 <p>Social & Emotional Development</p>	 <p>Language & Communication</p>	 <p>Literacy</p>
GOALS	<p>Children will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	<p>Children will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	<p>Children will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Demonstrate the ability to use language * Demonstrate familiarity with writing implements, conventions and emerging skills to communicate through written representations, symbols and letters 	<p>Children will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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)
OUTCOMES	<p>Children will learn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	<p>Children will learn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Interact readily with trusted adults * Engage in pro-social behaviors with adults, such as using respectful language or greetings 	<p>Children will learn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 	<p>Children will learn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Demonstrate appropriate or improved communication, language, and emergent literacy skills

School Readiness Goals



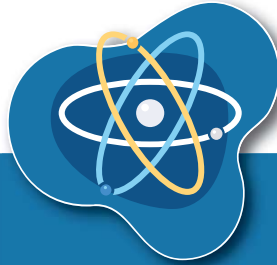
Mathematics Development

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

The Year By The Numbers

Annual Budget July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

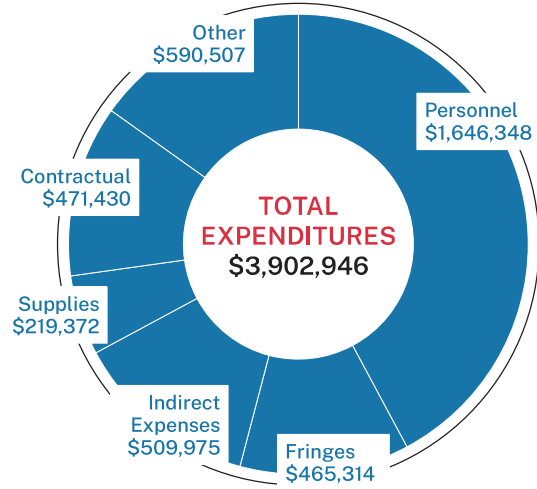
Sunflower County

EHS-CCP

Sites: 4

Slots: 130

Number Served: 143



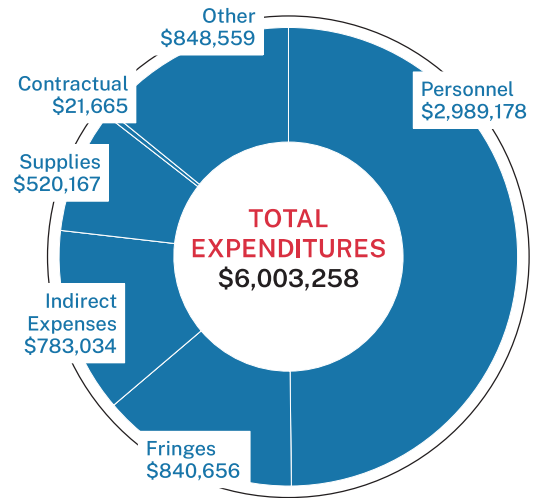
Sunflower County

HS / EHS

Sites: 5

Slots: 288

Number Served: 344



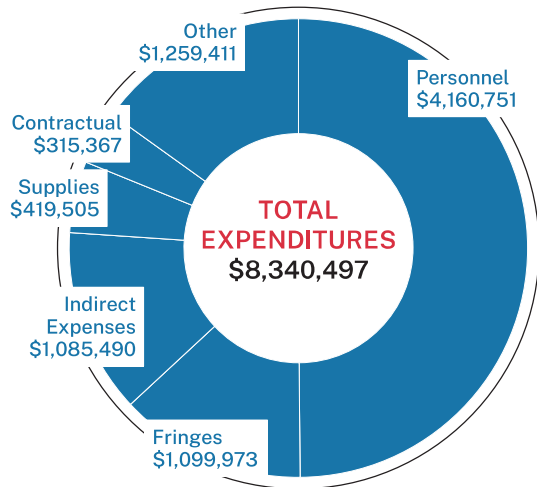
Leflore County & Warren County

HS / EHS

Sites: 4

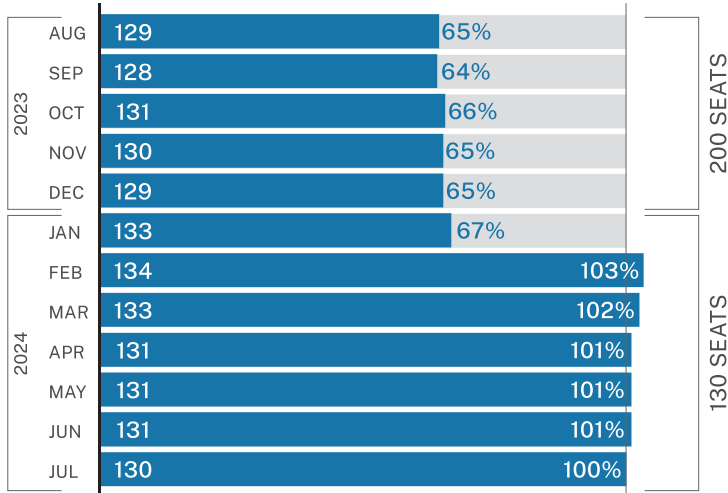
Slots: 448

Number Served: 552



Enrollment

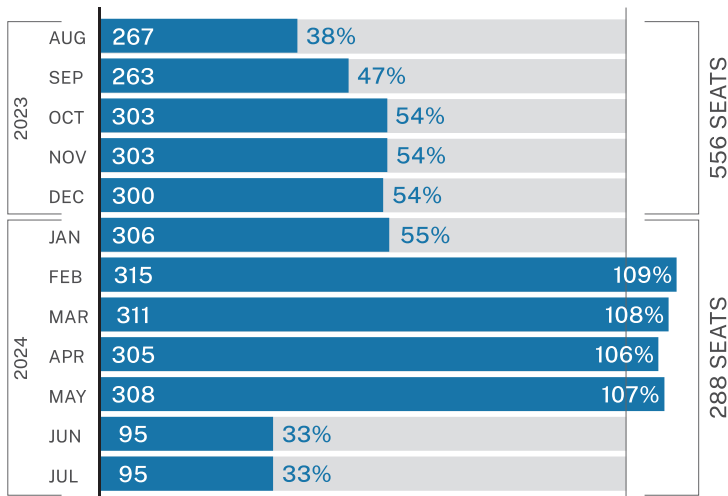
Total number per month and percent of capacity



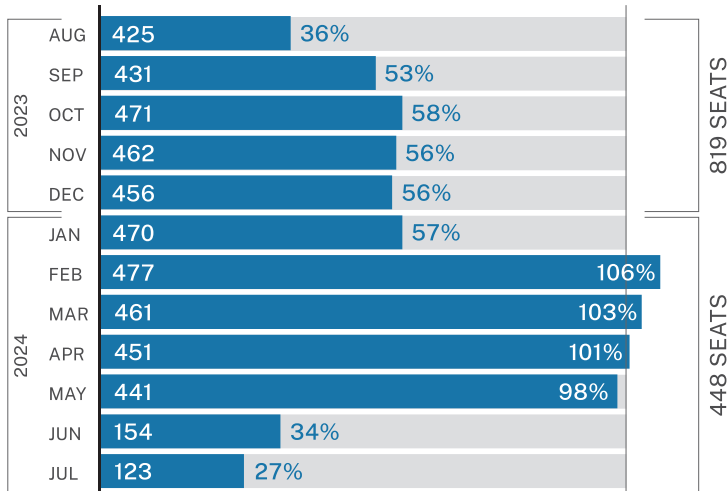
Eligibility

Number of enrollees by primary type of eligibility

Income at/below 100% of federal poverty line	40
Public Assistance such as TANF, SS	3
Status as a foster child or as homeless	3
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children	95
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	118



Income at/below 100% of federal poverty line	248
Public Assistance such as TANF, SS	33
Status as a foster child or as homeless	10
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children	224
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	203



Income at/below 100% of federal poverty line	84
Public Assistance such as TANF, SS	55
Status as a foster child or as homeless	14
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children	290
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	245



www.dhaheadstart.org

These programs are supported by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Office of Head Start (Grant #04CH01162-01-00 and #04HP000517 and #04CH011654)