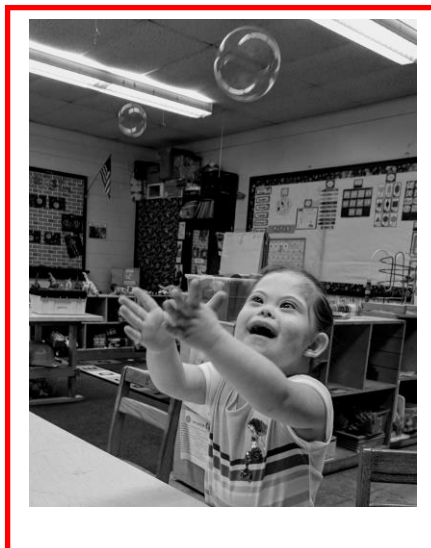


# **action pact**

## Head Start

2017-2018 Annual Report



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## AGENCY MISSION

Our mission is big. We strive to create equal opportunity by prioritizing progress over programs.

## OUR PACT

We draw strength from our past and focus our energy on an even stronger future. With action pact's help, our communities will be full of neighbors who can support their families, boost their education, and have a meaningful impact.

Board Chairman:	Dr. Esco Hall, Jr.
Vice Chairman:	Leonard Burse
Treasurer:	Cathy Benton
Secretary:	Gloria Paulk

Board Members: Rose Bailey, Cathy Benton, Leonard Burse, Jr., Ethelyn Creech, Sam Edgar, Michael Garvin, William George, Walter C. Gibson, ReKasa Hart, Bishop Michael-Angelo James, Kelley Harmon, Bobby Kennedy, Dr. Kim Morgan, Diane Moore, Synita Mathis, Anthony Simmons, James A. Thomas, Sr., and Louise Wilkerson

## Together we can solve setbacks

America was built on the promise that every family should have an opportunity for success.

**Action pact**, formerly **Concerted Services, Inc.**, is a Community Action agency committed to this promise.

## The Head Start Goal Statement

**Action pact's** Head Start/Early Head Start Program will provide quality teaching and learning environments to meet the developmental needs of all children to ensure future educational success. To accomplish this goal, all Head Start Learning Centers will meet or exceed the requirements of the Federal Head Start Program Standards and maintain Quality Rating Standards.

The School Readiness mission of action pact Head Start/Early Head Start is to partner with families and communities to work together to plan, coordinate, and improve services for all children. Head Start/Early Head Start provides all eligible children opportunities to participate in early childhood programs that enable them to enter school with the skills, behaviors, and family support necessary for them to progress and succeed. Action pact also enhances the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social, and other services.

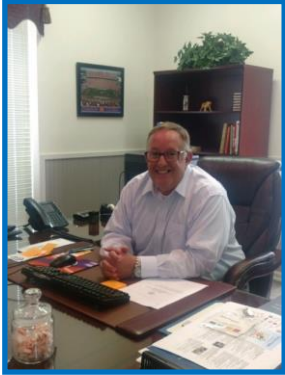
*action pact*

**SAY GOODBYE TO JUST GETTING BY.....**



## **From the Desk of the Executive Director**

**A**ction pact is a community action agency deeply rooted in the promise of improving lives and communities.



For over 50 years, we have worked alongside local partners and have become integral to the progress of individuals and families in the communities we serve. With action pact's help, our community will be full of neighbors who can support their families, boost their education, and contribute to their communities. Our Head Start program enables families to build a firm early learning and literacy foundation for their children and partners with the entire family to build capacity for a strong future.

## **A Message from the Head Start Director**

**A**ction pact's Head Start program continues to thrive. In our third year of our 5-year grant the program now provides 930 infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families, with high-quality, comprehensive services which include: education, health, nutrition, mental health, disabilities, family engagement, male involvement, school readiness, and transition. Ensuring the safety and supervision of the children we serve is top priority.

**O**ur highly-qualified teaching staff continues to exceed the standard for professional credentialing, with 100% of Early Head Start Teachers having a minimum of an Infant/Toddler CDA, and 100% of Head Start Teachers having a minimum of an Associate's degree. More than 70% of all staff hold a Bachelor's degree or higher.

**We** welcome our parents, extended families, community leaders, and partners to visit one of our Head Start centers, become a volunteer, and make a difference in the life of a child.



## **Head Start Enrollment/Service Area**

**Action pact** Head Start operates Head Start, Early Head Start and Pre-K programs in twelve counties in rural Southeast Georgia, with a total of 17 sites during the 2017-2018 program year. Comprehensive services were provided to 184 Early Head Start infants, toddlers, and/or expectant families, which is an increase from the previous year. In addition, we served 839 Head Start pre-school (ages 3-4) children and families, of which 120 children (4 year olds) received Georgia state lottery funded Pre-K/Head Start blended services.



<b>County Numbers</b>	<b>EHS Classrooms</b>	<b>EHS Funded Slots</b>	<b>HS Classrooms</b>	<b>HS Funded Slots</b>
Appling	1	8	3	50
Atkinson	3	24	2	34
Bacon	3	24	3	53
Brantley	1	8	2	32
Candler	2	16	2	34
Charlton	1	8	2	34
Clinch	0	0	2	32
Coffee	2	16	4	74
Jeff Davis	0	0	2	36
Pierce	1	8	3	54
Toombs	2	16	1	54
Ware	10	80	14	235
<b>Totals</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>722</b>

### **Program Operation**

The program operates a full year, full day, center-based option in which the children attend the program 6.25 hours per day. Pre-K children attend for an extended stay from 7:45 a.m. - 2:45 p.m. The center calendars are based on the local public school board calendars. The Early Head Start Program also operates a center-based program during the summer months.

**Action pact** operates **26** Early Head Start classrooms and **43** Head Start classrooms. There are **17** Head Start/Early Head Start centers in **12** counties and one Head Start administration office located in Waycross.

### **Program Planning**

Each year, the management team, program staff, Policy Council and Governing Board review and update the Head Start program's short and long term goals to ensure that the best quality services are being provided to the children and families we serve. Goals for the 2018-2019 Program Year are as follows:

<b><u>Short Term Goals:</u></b>	<b><u>Long Term Goals:</u></b>
Continue with Quality Rated	Continue to increase partnerships and collaborations within each community served.
Continue to increase family and male engagement.	Increase number of EHS slots to meet demands.
Continue to improve tracking of child outcomes.	Continue to improve and expand facilities.
Continue to update and replace as funds allow.	Explore additional service opportunities.
Continue practice based coaching process to improve teacher-child interactions, child outcomes, and CLASS scores.	Update and replace technology as funds allow.
Continue work to develop a wellness policy.	Continue to hire the most qualified staff and enhance professional development opportunities
Implement attendance training at Center Open House to improve child attendance.	
Implement fidelity of curriculum.	
Implement CLASS for Early Head Start.	
Improve center security.	

## Quality Rated

During the 2017-18 school year, **action pact's** 17 sites continued the Quality Rated process. The majority of our centers will go through the re-assessment process during the 2018-2019 program year. Below are the current levels of our centers. We were honored that the Brantley County Head Start Center's Inclusion Endorsement was renewed for a third year. An additional Head Start center, Coffee County Head Start, has been asked to go through the pilot program in the upcoming program year. The program is sponsored by the Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL).

Appling	1 Star
Atkinson – Pearson	2 Stars
Atkinson – Willacoochee	3 Stars
Bacon Northside	2 Stars
Bacon Southside	3 Stars
Bacon at ABC	2 Stars
Brantley HS	2 Stars
Brantley EHS	3 Stars
Candler	3 Stars
Charlton	1 Star
Clinch	2 Stars
Coffee	2 Stars
Hazzard EHS	2 Stars
Jeff Davis	2 Stars
Pierce	3 Stars
Toombs	2 Stars
Ware	2 Stars



## Staff of the Year

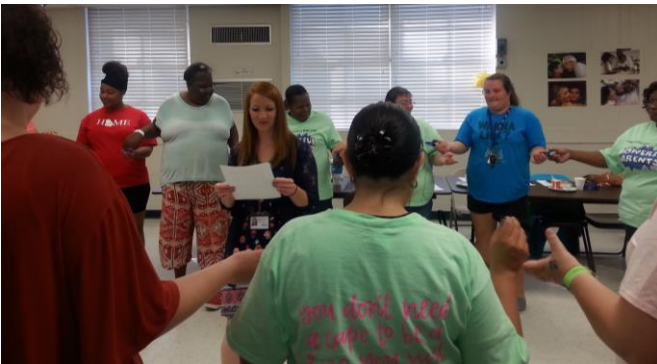
Staff of the Year for 2017-2018 is Ronald Johnson. Mr. Johnson is a custodian at our largest center, Ware County Head Start. "The children just love Mr. Johnson," noted Amanda Lankford, Head Start Director. "Every time they see him in the hall or in the classroom, they shout out to him. He continually goes above and beyond to keep the center clean and safe." No matter what is needed Mr. Johnson is always willing to step in and help. Everyone at Head Start congratulates Ronald Johnson!



## **Powerful Parents**

In January 2018, we received a literacy grant from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement. We submitted a plan to have two sessions of "Powerful Parents" classes – one beginning in March and the second session in the fall. The classes focus on the *Nurturing Parenting* curriculum (the chosen parent curriculum for our program) and contain a literacy component as well. There were ten classes and twenty "Powerful Parents" were recruited for each session to take part from our Ware Head Start and Hazzard Hill Early Head Start centers.

The curriculum includes, but is not limited to, lessons such as "Ages & Stages of Growth for Infants & Toddlers", "Communicating with Respect", "Building Self-Worth in Children", "Praising Children & Their Behavior", and "Alternatives to Spanking". With the grant, we were able to have an incentive each week of a book and a literacy activity to go along with the book. Parents were very engaged in the classes and many parents formed a bond during the sessions. After graduation, parents received other literacy incentives provided through the grant. All participating parents received a year's subscription to Highlights Magazine. If parents attended 9 out of 10 classes, they received a Leapfrog Early Learning System. For each class attended, parents earned \$10 "Literacy Dollars" with the possibility of an extra \$20 if they attended all classes. The parents worked with their Family Advocate to order literacy supplies with these "Literacy Dollars" and were very appreciative of all the materials they received.



## **Stars Program**

The agency has completed its second year of the STARS program (Strategically Training Agency Rising Stars). To date, eight of fourteen STARS candidates have come out of the Head Start program, and all have successfully graduated. Three HS graduates have also moved into positions of additional responsibility.

## **What To Do When You're Having A Baby**

In October 2017, we held our first "What to Do When You're Having a Baby" workshop/baby shower for expectant families. All moms-to-be received training and a copy of the health guide book "What To Do When You're Having a Baby" that gives month-to-month information of the developing baby, when to see a doctor, and what to expect for each month. Moms heard information from the local health department on breast feeding and programs such as WIC. Goody bags were given to each attendee and a wide variety of door prizes were donated by community partners.

## **UCLA Health Training Grant**

As part of the grant from UCLA Health Care Institute, staff attended Train-the-Trainer training on oral health and staff wellness. Plans are to provide training to staff at pre-service for the 2018-2019 program year.

We plan to train at least 100 families on oral health. Data has shown that many children go without routine dental care. This training will include topics such as how oral health affects school performance, attendance and a child's overall health status. We will again be collaborating with our community partners for this event. In anticipation of the training we are planning to conduct a number of classroom activities to involve the children and create excitement about the training.

## **Budget**

**Action Pact, Inc.** Head Start receives Federal funds to operate the Head Start and Early Head Start programs from the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start. Additional funding is also received from Georgia Pre-K and CACFP.

The annual budget is developed with input from parents, community members, staff, Policy Council, and Governing Board. Monthly budget meetings are held throughout the year, and the budget is reviewed at all Policy Council and Governing Board meetings. In addition, Policy Council and Governing Board members receive monthly budget reports during months in which a regular meeting is not scheduled.

<b>Regular Budget</b>			
	<b>Head Start</b>	<b>Early Head Start</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Program Operations</b>	6,495,337	2,723,298	9,218,635
<b>T/TA</b>	76,339	50,708	127,047
<b>Non Federal Share</b>	1,642,919	588,912	2,273,256
<b>Total</b>	8,214,595	3,467,508	11,682,103

## **Financial Audit**

The annual agency audit was conducted by Clausell & Associates. The agency audit report is available at the Administrative Office in Waycross for review.

## **Monitoring and Self-Assessment**

The program self-assessment was conducted January – April 2018. Staff, parents, Policy Council, Governing Board and community volunteers took part in the self-assessment process. A few areas in which growth opportunities were identified were noted, and corrective action plans were put in place to address those areas. The Self Assessment Summary Plan was approved by both Policy Council and Governing Board.

Program monitoring is an on-going process, with the Head Start Director, Management Staff and coaches regularly monitoring all aspects of the Head Start program to ensure compliance with all rules and regulations as well as continuous improvement. Sites were also heavily monitored as part of the Quality Rated process and licensing.



## **Facilities**

Action pact is proud of our long history of working with local and state government officials for applying and receiving CDBG (Community Development Block Grants) as well as other types of partnerships. Facilities already built with CDBG funds are Atkinson, Bacon (expansion at ABC Child Development Center), Brantley Head Start, Coffee, Pierce, Toombs and two grants at Hazzard Hill Early Head Start.

Appling County received funding to build a new facility that houses a Head Start and a Senior Citizen Center for the agency. We are thrilled that Head Start moved in and was ready to serve our children and families for the 2017-2018 program year. An added benefit has been the interaction with the seniors and the children as they are regular visitors in the classrooms and can be spotted reading to the children.

During this school year we upgraded several playgrounds with newer and better equipment. We have replaced some older spring riders on several playgrounds. We also added new spring riders and play panels to several playgrounds.



## **How a Garden Grows**

Gardening and taste activities have been in full bloom this past year. More centers have added gardens and our plan is for every center to have a garden by next program year. We are extremely honored that our gardening program was featured on the Georgia Organics website as part of the "The Daily Dirt" at:

<https://georgiaorganics.org/2018/05/farm-to-early-care-and-education-spreads-across-south-georgia/>

Centers participated in "Make Room for Legumes" and children had the opportunity to help make and try hummus as they learned that legumes were beans. Children were also able to make homemade salad dressing from herbs and vegetables they helped to grow and try new and different types of vegetables.





## **Parent & Family Engagement**

**At action pact**, we recognize that parents are their child's first and most important teachers. Parents play an integral part in the program and serve on center parent committees, Policy Council, Health Services Advisory Committee, and the ERSEA Committee. They also assist the program with center activities, program curriculum planning, self-assessment, and volunteer countless hours in the classrooms and at the centers.

**Monthly** parent meetings/trainings were held during the program year. Training was geared toward the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework and the 7 Family Outcomes areas. Topics included: Becoming a Leader – elections were held for parent officers and Policy Council members, Car Seat Safety, Thanksgiving Crafts, Tax Information, Parenting Tips, Managing Stress, Turning Over a New Leaf, Weatherization Program, Fire Safety, Adult Learning Opportunities, Healthy Lifestyles, Flu Prevention, Healthy Holidays, Holiday Crafts, Children's Health, How you Spend Makes a Difference, Poisoning Prevention, Literacy Workshops, Cooking with Kids, Darkness to Light Child Abuse Prevention, Community Resources, Verbal Judo, the Library System, Re-enrollment, Exercise Class, Autism Awareness, Gardening, Nurturing Parenting Classes, Information from CMOs, Gun Safety, Dance Decorating, Promoting School Safety, Job Skills, Positive Discipline, and Kindergarten Readiness. Monthly newsletters and activity calendars were also available to all parents.

**Additional** specialized training opportunities, such as CPR classes, IEP (Individual Education Plan) workshops, "What To Do When Your Child Gets Sick" health training created by UCLA/Johnson & Johnson and the National Center on Health were offered. The program continued working with the grant requirements and sent two staff to the Oral Health train-the-trainer session. The Oral Health parent training event will be held in October 2018. There will be additional trainings upcoming on diabetes and childhood obesity prevention and mental health. Families were also invited to participate in activities such as My Family Day, Math Madness, College Colors Day, Breakfast with Grands, Parent Orientation sessions, Open House, Talls and Smalls Dance, Family Holiday Express, and Morning Coffee Breaks. Parent and community volunteers were recognized at the annual volunteer recognition luncheon in the spring. The theme was "Volunteers are Real Life Super Heroes!"

**A** number of special events for fathers and father figures were held. These included: Breakfast with Dads and Egg Hunt, sports events, Pumpkin Carving, center decorations and repairs, and gardening. Our agency Volunteer of the Year was one of our fathers. "Dad's Groups" continued to grow in different counties and those involved received special T-Shirts displaying "REAL Men Love Head Start" – where REAL stands for: Responsible, Encouraging, Accountable, Leaders."

## **School Readiness**

**Why is School Readiness Important?** **Action pact** Head Start continues to be committed to ensuring all children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children. Along with clear and strategic goals for children and highly qualified and diverse staff, **action pact** strives for children's success.

**Each** child receives individualized instruction based on his/her strengths and needs. The curriculum is evidenced-based and specifically designed to help children develop language and literacy and problem-solving skills, as well as learning how to socialize and interact with others. Children are provided with the opportunity to participate in activities that support math, science, art, drama, language and culture. Our goal is for our children to leave **action pact** Head Start prepared for kindergarten, excited about learning, confident in their own abilities and ready to succeed.

**A** number of our classes are using the new 6<sup>th</sup> edition of Creative Curriculum for Preschool. This new edition provides daily resources that help our teachers plan and manage every moment of their day. The daily resources include Teaching Guides, Intentional Teaching cards, Book Discussion cards, Children's Book collection, and Mighty Minutes. This is a curriculum that is research based and features exploration and discovery as a way of learning, enabling children to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical thinking skills.

**The** goal of Teaching Strategies is to help children succeed. To do this they must be creative, confident thinkers. This means offering opportunities for hands-on exploration and discovery that helps to build lifelong critical thinking skills and fosters confidence.

**Through** the use of The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, teachers are provided with the content and tools needed to encourage and support every type of learner. Studies are used in place of the weekly themes. Studies tap into children's natural curiosity, resulting in a learning environment that is both fun and intentional. The five study topics offer flexibility allowing teachers to incorporate many of the typical themes that are used in preschools.

**We** had one classroom in Charlton County do a trial run of The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos. This curriculum supports teachers and caregivers as they create responsive daily routines and meaningful learning experiences. A rich collection of resources, known as the Daily Resources, helps teachers to put knowledge into practice and helps them foster children's learning and growth. This curriculum contains the following resources: Intentional Teaching cards, Book Conversion cards, Highlights Hello-Classroom Set, Highlights Hello-Family sets, Mighty Minutes for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos, and The Creative Curriculum Learning Games. This curriculum was created to support and guide staff through discovery filled days with their children.

**The** Daily Resources that we identified are instructional tools that feature expanded and detailed guidance for providing intentional, responsive care and teaching during routines and learning experiences for very young children. Routines and experiences are at the center of the framework for the Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos. Because of routines and experiences that build each day, and the responsive care and teaching provided during these times, children are enabled to develop a secure attachment with important people in their lives and gain confidences in themselves as learners.

**Both** curriculums, The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos and the Creative Curriculum for Preschool supply our staff a solid foundation – volumes that provide theory, research and best practices for providing responsive teachers. The resources provided are both research-based and research-proven.

**The** supportive curriculum solutions are used by staff, helping them to provide children with developmentally appropriate programs that support active learning and promote progress in all developmental areas. This curriculum has helped us to create a high-learning environment that enables every child to become a creative, confident thinker.

**We** look forward to all of our classes having this newest edition. The new edition means more knowledge, more resources, and more opportunities for learning which makes these latest editions winners for everyone including staff, enrollees, and families.

**Assessments** document and reflect children's growth and learning. Information is used to intentionally plan instruction. The DIAL-4 is used as a screening tool, and this screening is completed within 45 days of enrollment. The screening tool used for enrollees younger than 2 years 6 months is Ages and Stages.

The program continues to employ classroom teachers that are highly qualified and demonstrate competencies in early care and education and child development. All Head Start Teachers have an Associate degree or higher in Early Childhood Education or its equivalent.

Teaching staff receive regular training to ensure on-going professional development. Staff participate in group training sessions, as well as individual staff development plans that support his/her own professional growth and education goal attainment.

Teachers are provided one-on-one coaching and mentoring so that new training lessons are incorporated into daily routines and teaching. Through a consistent, systemic and guided approach, coaches present feedback in a supportive and non-judgmental manner that engages each teacher. Working together, the coach and the teacher develop an individualized plan which results in enhanced classroom interactions and classroom environments.

We continue ongoing communication with local schools to exchange information about children as we both share an interest in children's school readiness.

**Action pact** Head Start collects, analyzes and aggregates school readiness data during the year to track individual child progress, as well as the program's overall achievement of its school readiness goals.

The following graphs reflect the results of the 2017-18 School Readiness goals. Each graph shows the goal in each age designation and the percentage of children Emerging and Accomplished at the close of the final 2017-18 assessment.

According to data entered in *Teaching Strategies Gold* that Concerted Services, Inc. chose as it's measure for the Approaches to Learning domain, over 60% of children in each age designation were accomplished by the close of the final assessment. As is shown in each of the following graphs, the same decline was seen in every measure for each of the seven goals established for Concerted Services, Inc. enrollees.

The oldest enrollees in the PreK4 Year age designation who will transition to kindergarten in the fall were most accomplished in School Readiness Goals 1 and 7. In each of these goals, 60.37% of the children were accomplished, while 39.63% were emerging in their Approaches to Learning skills and Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development skills. More specifically, 11a. Attends and engages and 7a. Uses fingers and hands.

The same was true of enrollees in the Preschool 3 Years age designation. Both objectives listed above reflected the greatest percentage of children having accomplished this goal with 78.35% accomplished and 21.65% emerging.

On the other hand, School Readiness goal 5 seemed to be the most challenging goal for the oldest enrollees as 97.80% of the children in the PreK4 Year designation were emerging in skills directly related to number concepts and operations. For children in the Preschool 3 Years designation, goal 2 was most challenging with 71.87% emerging in skills related to managing their own emotions and behaviors.

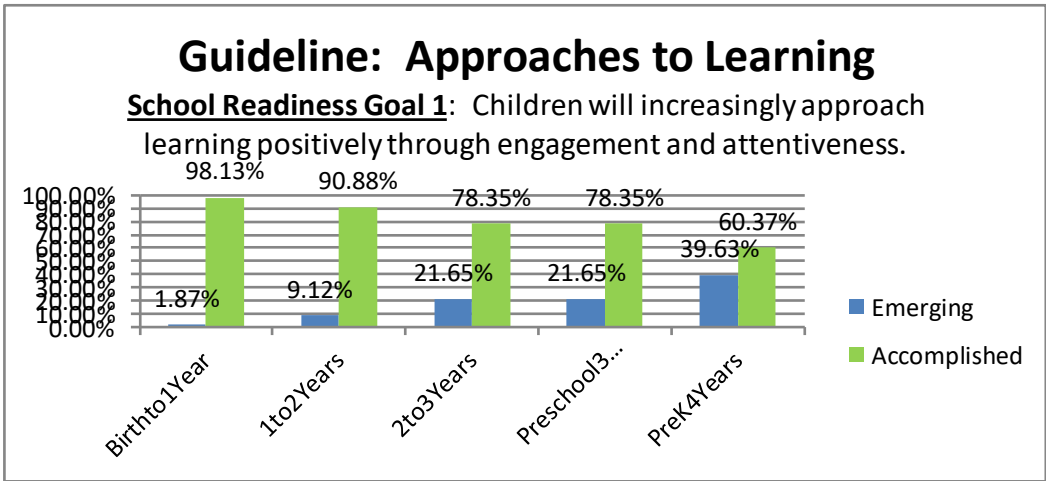
Enrollees who were a part of the 2 to 3 Year designation were strongest in their Social and Emotional Development skills as 79.12% were accomplished at the close of the 2017-18 school year. On the other hand, the most challenging area was goal 4 which indicated 59.45% of the enrollees in this designation were still emerging in their language and literacy skills directed related to expanding their expressive vocabulary.

Percentages related to enrollees who were a part of the 1 to 2 Year designation were also strongest in goal 2 which showed 98.13% of these children having accomplished skills related to managing their own feelings. As

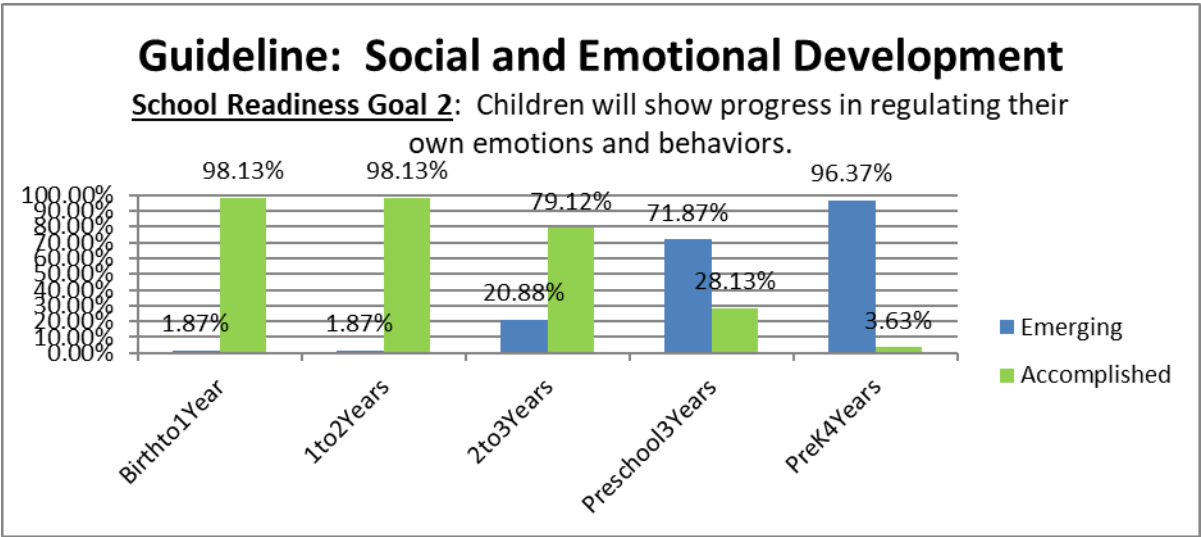
was true in the previous age group, children’s skills related to expanding their expressive vocabulary was the most challenging as 59.45% were still emerging in such skills at the close of the 2017-18 school year.

Based on spring assessment data entered in *Teaching Strategies Gold* for children birth to 1-year, higher percentages of children were accomplished in each of the age appropriate School Readiness goals than for the other three age designations. Goal 6 represented the highest percentage of children accomplished in this age group with 99.01% already accomplished in skills related to physical activities which were specific to gross motor skills. As children are just learning language skills during this period, Goal 4 related to Language and Literacy skills was understandably a little more challenging as 2.86% were still emerging in these skills.

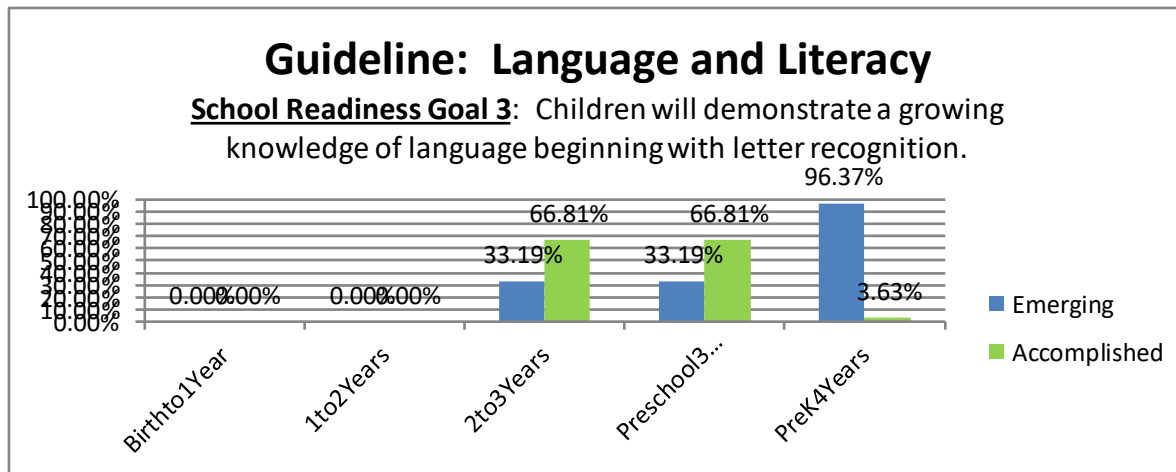
Goal 1: Children will increasingly approach learning positively through engagement and attentiveness.



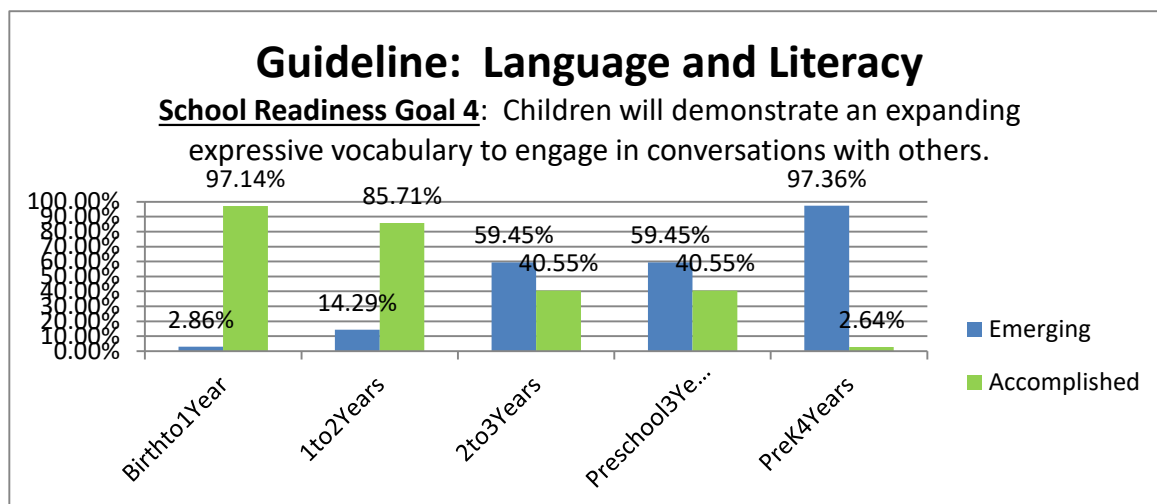
Goal 2: Children will show progress in regulating their own emotions and behaviors.



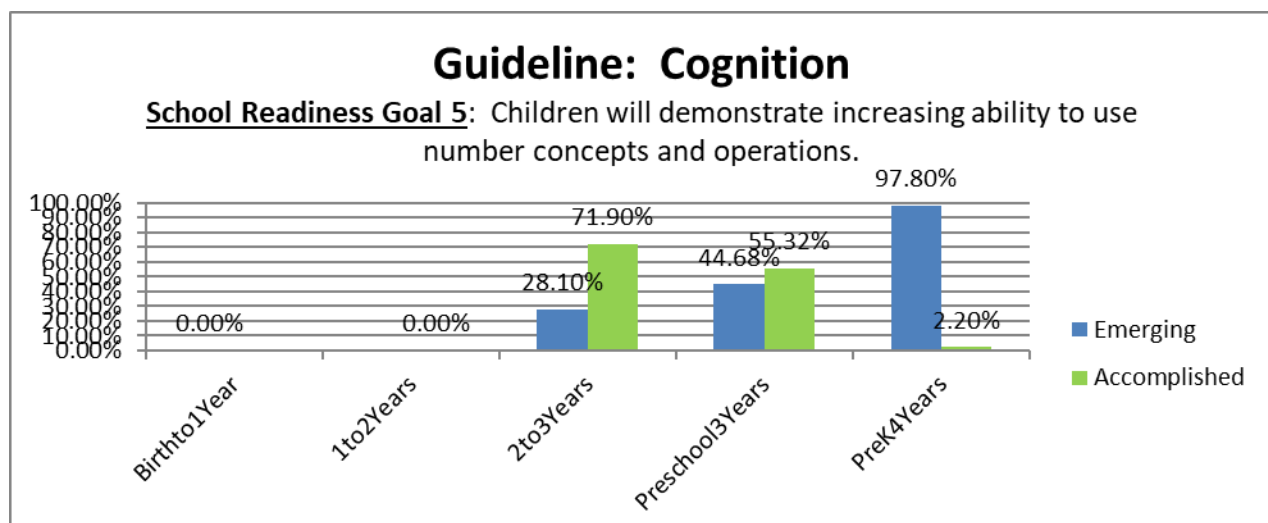
Goal 3: Children will demonstrate a growing knowledge of language beginning with letter recognition.



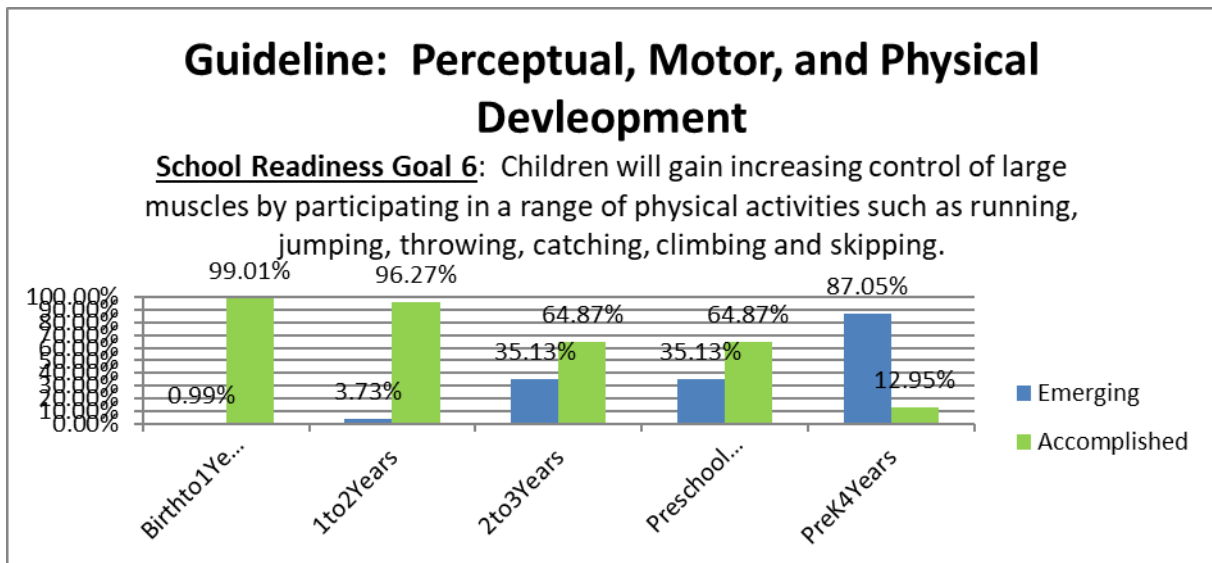
Goal 4: Children will demonstrate an expanding expressive vocabulary to engage in conversations with others.



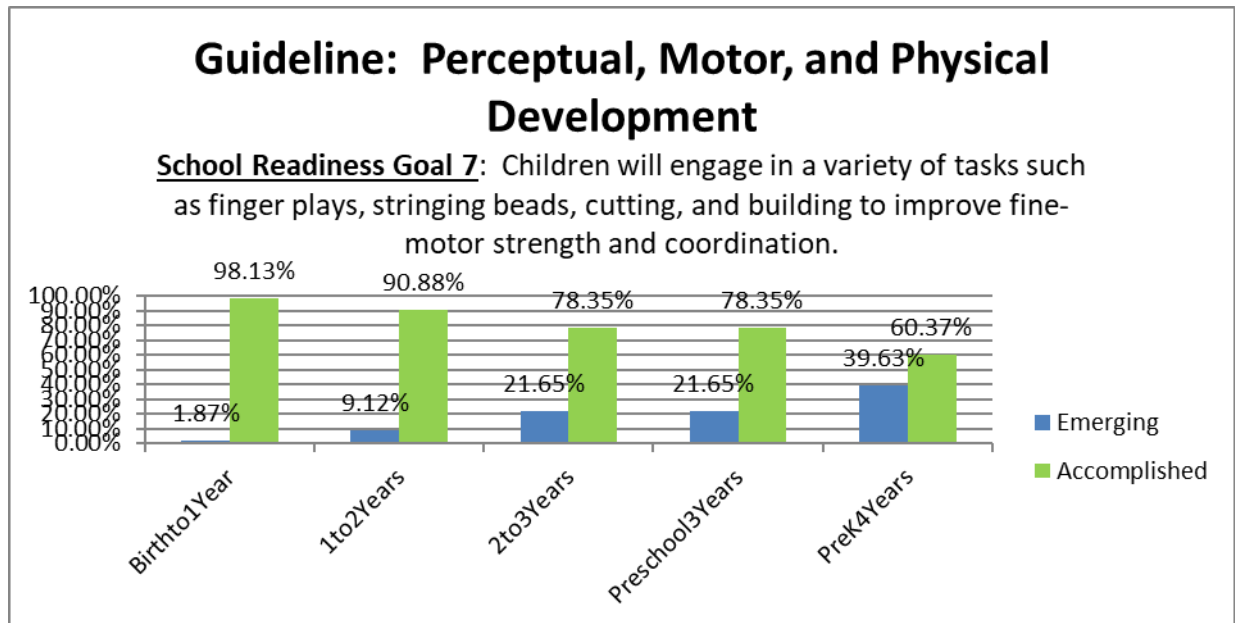
Goal 5: Children will demonstrate increasing ability to use number concepts and operations.



Goals 6: Children will gain increasing control of large muscles by participating in a range of physical activities such as running, jumping, throwing, catching, climbing and skipping.



Goal 7: Children will engage in a variety of tasks such as finger plays, stringing beads, cutting, and building to improve fine-motor strength and coordination.



In conclusion, enrollees in **action pact** Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms showed continued growth throughout the 2017-18 school year. Based on documentation for each of the age designations as represented, children will be better prepared for the next step in their educational process having been a part of our Head Start and Early Head Start programs. As we continue to offer the children of our communities a positive start to their education, we expect the effects to be long lasting.



## By the Numbers

Statistics for the 2017-2018 program year are:

- ✓ 1,052 total enrollment for EHS and HS;
- ✓ 12 homeless families assisted;
- ✓ Hispanic or Latino children – EHS: 23; HS: 79;
- ✓ 55 families note Spanish as their primary language;
- ✓ Over 7,940 volunteer hours;
- ✓ 2,769 Total Volunteers – of these 1597 – Parents/Formers Parents
- ✓ 986 children enrolled in Medicaid and/or CHIP;
- ✓ 31 children with no health insurance;
- ✓ 33 children with private or other insurance;
- ✓ 100% of EHS children up to date on immunizations;
- ✓ 740 children with up-to-date EPSDT (Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Program);
- ✓ 92 Head Start children and 11 Early Head Start child received Mental Health services;
- ✓ 740 children received dental care;
- ✓ 728 single parent homes;
- ✓ 225 two parent homes;
- ✓ 137 families received public assistance;
- ✓ 353 families received WIC;
- ✓ 424 families received SNAP;
- ✓ 230 parents with less than high school education;
- ✓ 215 parents in job training or school;
- ✓ 179 children left the program during the year;
- ✓ 84 children enrolled in EHS for two or more years;
- ✓ 184 children enrolled in HS for two or more years;
- ✓ 7 EHS children transitioned to HS;
- ✓ 1981 children in HS projected to enter Kindergarten;
- ✓ 953 families served;
- ✓ 90% of eligible children served.



### Head Start & Early Head Start Enrollment by Race

American Indian or Alaska Native:	1
Asian:	2
Black or African American:	614
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander:	3
White:	273
Biracial/Multi-racial:	96
Unspecified:*	63

*\*Families who declined to declare a race*



## **Collaborative Partners**

**Action pact** Head Start has and continues to pride itself on its collaborative partners. Program staff members are involved with all of the Family Connection Agencies and attend their monthly meetings. Civic clubs are supporters of the program and assist with special activities.

Other partnerships include local libraries, health departments, UGA Cooperative Extension, local technical colleges, local Police and Fire Departments, EMS services, UNISON Behavioral Center, Georgia Southern University, etc. Many of these partners provide "on-site" field trip experiences at the centers and/or provide parent and staff training.

## **Education**

**Action Pact's** Head Start Program uses Creative Curriculum for both Infants and Toddlers and Preschoolers. The DIAL-4 is used as a screening tool, and this screening is completed within 45 days of enrollment. Teaching Strategies GOLD is the assessment used by the program. The assessment is online and allows teaching staff to enter observation data to track each individual child's progress throughout the year. Child Assessment reports are shared with parents three times per year, following each assessment period. In addition, data is shared with each partnering school system.

We began the planning process of updating the curriculum used to the 6<sup>th</sup> Edition of Creative Curriculum. Pilot classrooms will be chosen next program year to ensure fidelity which will better enable us to roll out professional development training.

## **Transition**

All Head Start enrollees transitioning from Head Start to kindergarten talk about the transition, watch videos and read books about going to kindergarten. Through the videos, children and families get to see how a typical day unfolds. Due to the elimination of bus services, we no longer visit a kindergarten. However, we view videos such as "Ready, 'Set,' Go! All Set for School" to get a view of a kindergarten room.

From the Children's Perspective on ECLKC (Letting children tell about their own kindergarten experience) is used to get the input from a child about transitioning. For those children transitioning out of Head Start/Early Head Start, our staff provides support through transition in the following ways:

- Promote successful changes in their daily schedule and routines
- Provide positive transition experiences
- Provide staff that help children feel safe and trust adults
- Include parents in the transition process
- Listen to the family's perspective and are responsive to their concerns, worries and questions
- Provide information on kindergarten (Open House, Registration, etc.)
- Provide resources on transitioning
- Create a clear transition plan with families
- Promote independence
- Promote Cooperation

Transitioning into Head Start:

- Introduction to the program (how to get answers, daily schedule)
- Inform parents of open-door policy
- How family members can be engaged in their child's learning (volunteering, doing home activities)
- Provide a program calendar (identifies events and parent opportunities)

In April, parent meetings were held featuring a local kindergarten teacher. Information was shared on the calendar, registration, and preparing for the transition. Transition packets, which include the following, are distributed prior to the closing of school:

- A Resource for Parents – Starting Your Child in School and Your Child’s Education – You Can Make a Difference, which included:
  - Stickers
  - Calendar with activities to use to countdown to the big day
  - A Starting School Activities Book
  - Learn About You, Your Child and School
  - Helping Your Preschooler Learn!
  - Your Child’s Education – You Can Make a Difference

Transition Plans were completed on enrollees entering Head Start and kindergarten. Enrollees’ files were transferred to the schools where they would transition. Parental consent was obtained prior to the transfer. Parents were encouraged to continue to prepare their child for the transition throughout the summer months. This can be done by reading books about kindergarten, visiting the school they will be attending, attending the school’s Open House, set up playdates with some of their future classmates, encourage their child to discuss their fears, have the child write a story with their parent about what his or her first day at kindergarten will be like and ensuring the parent displays a happy, excited mood about the transition so that the child will look forward to the big day. Transition Agreements are signed yearly by the Head Start program and the local Boards of Education and with Babies Can’t Wait.

## **CLASS**

Our certified CLASS Coordinator continues to monitor Head Start classrooms twice a year using the CLASS tool. CLASS observations were completed in 41 classrooms during the fall and 42 classrooms during the spring. Based on observation cumulative averages, each of the domain averages reflected improvements from the beginning of the year. CLASS results were separated into three colors indicating the level of support needed. Red indicates the greatest level of support needed, while yellow indicates improvements are being made. Green indicates the staff are successfully carrying out the dimension indicators. Using the most recent National Averages available, scores were determined for each level of support. Averages increased to 54% Green, 34% Yellow and only 12% of dimension scores in Red by the end of the last observation cycle. The strongest area with the most green scores was Negative Climate, followed closely by Productivity and Behavior Management. The most challenging dimension with the least number of green scores was Concept Development.

A sampling of Early Head Start classrooms (10) were observed using the Toddler CLASS tool to see what was needed in the area of support for our Early Head Start classrooms. The results were compared to the Low, Medium, and High ranges indicated by the CLASS tool and corresponded to red, yellow and green on our analysis chart. The overall cumulative averages for the two domains were 5.81 in EBS and 4.1667 in ESL which indicates mid-range averages. As was true in our Head Start classrooms, Negative Climate was the most successful with a high range average of 6.88 (reverse). The most challenging dimension in these classrooms was Quality of Feedback with a lower mid-range average of 3.83.

We have a CLASS Plan of Improvement in place and staff receive coaching as needs are identified. Ongoing training is also offered throughout the year as staff are encouraged to request additional CLASS training or assistance when needed.

Based upon review and discussion of CLASS, our program’s areas of strength were identified as:

- CLASS training for all new classroom staff
- T&T/A Consultant input and suggestions
- Extensive "Coach" training
- Individualized coaching
- Coaching successes evidenced in CLASS scores
- Above average Instructional Support scores
- Use of Crosswalk of NCQTL In-Service Suites with the CLASS

The following action steps have been implemented to improve our CLASS scores: 1) established a system of providing coaching and effective feedback for improvement and 2) established systematic, ongoing professional development pertaining to CLASS and research-based instructional strategies. A coaching plan based upon 2016-17 Spring CLASS observation data and input from the Head Start Director, Education Specialist, and the T/TA Consultant was implemented and continued throughout the year. The CLASS Observation Feedback Form was updated for the new year with Areas of Strength indicated in green, Continued Growth indicated in yellow, and Focus Areas in which staff need improvement indicated in red. Some of the considerations for coaching were then based upon CLASS observations, below National Average scoring, Observation Feedback Form or personal requests from staff or Administration among other things. Coaches were then assigned classrooms with the coaching intensity determined on a classroom-by-classroom basis.

For example, if a classroom scored only a few dimensions in the red Focus Area, a weekly coaching session was scheduled, whereas a classroom scoring numerous dimensions in the red Focus Area may have been assigned 3-5 days of intensive coaching per week. Staff was introduced to the coaching process and their assigned coach through an orientation process to outline expectations and goals. Coaching plans were customized to individual needs and strategies, which included modeling, individualized teaching sessions, videotaping, peer observations, and ongoing feedback and support. Regular meetings were held with the coaches and the Education Specialist to discuss plans and progress. If coaching plan goals were met, the classroom was stepped down to a bi-weekly check-in and then dismissed from coaching. Classrooms not yet meeting goals were earmarked for continuations and/or ramped up to more intensive coaching based on individual progress and needs. This process was repeated monthly up until the Spring CLASS observations.

During the school year 2017-18, twenty-three Head Start classrooms received some extent of coaching related to CLASS. Based on scoring averages and observations, several of these classrooms received intensive CLASS training which may have included resources such as video review, live side-by-side demonstration, role play, reflection and feedback, and/or a Teacher's Needs Assessment. Review of CLASS data for these classrooms revealed that 52% of the dimension scores improved. Overall results at the end of the year indicated a 15% increase in green scores, while red scores were reduced by 5%.

This improvement is an overall testament to the coaching efforts and continued willingness of staff to implement change. Although every dimension had some red scores, the overall average declined by the end of the coaching cycles.

While we continue to celebrate coaching successes, we also continue to strive to grow the continuous process of improvement. Our system in place for training new staff as they come on board gives staff an overview of CLASS and how it should be evidenced in the classroom. Our professional development includes periodic training and observation opportunities for new staff as they become more familiar with CLASS. For example, new staff receive a half-day training session on CLASS during Orientation to introduce the tool and the Agency's expectations. In addition, CLASS data was analyzed, and a coaching plan developed for classrooms to begin in the fall. With these systems in place, we expect continued improvement in our CLASS scores and more importantly, improved teacher-child interactions throughout our program.

## **Mental Health**

**Action pact** Head Start and Early Head Start contracts with a part-time licensed Mental Health Consultant. The consultant, a licensed professional counselor, provides services to enrollees, family and staff. The consultant also assists with setting up appointments and providing the needed support for our families. All of our Head Start and Early Head Start sites receive a visit by the Mental Health Consultant once a month. The consultant provides a monthly calendar with the dates and sites that will be visited each day. In the case of an emergency, the consultant makes time to visit that particular site. Although the sites are visited by the consultant, our staff and families also receive counseling as needed by the consultant.

The Head Start program now has a full-time licensed counselor on board. The Head Start Counselor provides services to the parents, enrollees and staff as needed. Referrals to outside resources are given to parents and staff if needed by the counselor. The Counselor completes visits at each Head Start and Early Head Start center in the twelve counties once a month, more often as needed. If an emergency arises, the counselor responds immediately.

Mental Health is promoted in all components to ensure the children's overall health and well-being. The Head Start Counselor and the part-time Mental Health Consultant completes the referral process upon the parents' consent with an assessment of the referred child. The counselor and consultant collaborate with the classroom teacher to provide strategies and techniques to help the children conform to the classroom structure and routines. Along with the strategies and techniques in the classrooms, the counselor and consultant provide parents with much needed at-home instructions.

In regard to the Mental Health aspect of the program, the Second Step curriculum and Conscious Discipline techniques are used to assist with non-violent problem solving. The Second Step curriculum uses role playing and puppets to help the children learn how to socialize and deal with their emotions within the classroom environment. The Conscious Discipline program helps to show the children how to breathe and use techniques to describe feelings and regulate their emotions on their own with a safe place to go to inside the classroom environment. Parents were given the information on Conscious discipline as well for use at home.

The Head Start Counselor and the part-time Mental Health Consultant also provides staff training as does the Mental Health Specialist. Staff support days are conducted several times throughout the program year. The mental health training for staff, DESSERTS, stress relief training for teachers, was implemented with staff receiving information on ways to de-stress with the combination of the Head Start Counselor and the Mental Health Specialist providing the training. The Head Start Counselor and the part-time Mental Health Consultant also prepare a resource notebook for all sites which focused on mental health resources.

## **Disabilities**

Children with special needs encompassed over 10% of the funded enrollment for the 2017-2018 program year. In the area of special needs, the Head Start and Early Head Start programs provided services for 154 Head Start children and 40 Early Head Start children. Some of the services provided to the special need's children included a least restrictive environment and inclusion classrooms. Every classroom, including the inclusion classrooms, included materials that were sensitive to the needs of the disabilities of each individual child. Equipment and learning devices were in place to promote learning and inclusion in the classrooms.

We have a strong relationship with our local Lead Education Agencies and the local private providers. The local Board of Education staff in each of our counties also worked with the Head Start staff in our inclusion classrooms, providing one on one interaction with the children and collaboration with the Head Start teachers. At our Head Start/Early Head Start programs, services available included Speech/Language; Pre-school Intervention; Vision Impairment; Physical Therapy; Hearing Impairment; Mental Health Services; the Special News Flash newsletter and Mental Health Tidbits. Newsletters for the families served under the local board of

education of each county and the Babies Can't Wait program were sent out to staff for parents in order to provide information on various disabilities and local resources.

Training was accomplished on a one on one basis, with the parents receiving information in the newsletters. Disabilities Specialist met with parents one on one to answer any questions or concerns they had with the services involved in an IEP or IFSP document or the process. Many of the parents were given resources for support groups and programs to which many joined to find needed services or resources. Training by Parent to Parent of Georgia took place this year. Children diagnosed with special needs for the 2017-2018 school year are noted below. All of these children either had a current Individualized Education Plan or Individualized Family Service Plan in place and account for 17.14% of the program's Current Enrollment and 16.63% of the program's Funded Enrollment.

Category	Head Start	Early Head Start
Vision Impairment	0	0
Hearing/Deafness	0	0
Deaf/Blind	0	0
Emotional Behavior	0	0
Autism	1	1
Health Impairment	0	1
Traumatic Brain Injury	0	0
Learning Disability	1	2
Orthopedic Impairment	1	0
Speech/Language	17	7
Developmental Delay	24	20
Intellectual Disabilities	0	0
Non-Categorized – Other	1	1
Multiple Disabilities	59	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>46</b>

### **Federal Review**

The program's triennial review took place in February of 2014. During the Federal Review, **action pact** Head Start had no deficiencies. The following is a breakdown of the areas reviewed, along with a synopsis of the program's outcomes.

**Program Governance:** All areas were in compliance. This area was identified as a strength for our program, specifically noting the number of Governing Board and Policy Council members that are active participants in city and county governments.

**Fiscal:** We had one finding in this area, which has already been corrected. We did not have a procedure in place to ensure that we went through the proper steps in making a budget revision. This has been addressed so that we remain in compliance.

**Family & Community Engagement:** All areas were in compliance. We were commended for our family and community engagement programs and documentation.



**Child Health & Safety:** All areas were in compliance. We were commended on our outstanding facilities, noting the number of facilities that have been obtained with CDBG grants through partnerships with local governments. We did have a couple of areas of concern, including some minor repairs which were completed during the review.

**Child Development & Education:** All areas were in compliance. We were commended for our Disabilities component. We had a concern in the area of teacher qualifications, but have developed professional development plans and resubmitted transcripts to alleviate the concern.

**CLASS:** This area was not in compliance due to CLASS scores falling in the bottom 10% of scores for programs reviewed during 2014. The program entered the Designated Renewal System as a part of Cohort 4 and re-competed for the Head Start grant.

### **Emergent & Family Literacy**

Emergent and Family Literacy was and continues to be a priority at Head Start. Programs and special events such as the Pajama (P.J.) Reading Party, National Play Doh Day, Read Across America, Family Reading Night, Read to a Child Program, Library Card Sign-Up Month, JumpStart Read for the Record, Georgia Read Aloud Day, and others were held. Special parent literacy workshops are also offered. These programs and events help to reinforce the need to read aloud to children, increase children's vocabulary and family literacy. The Parent:Child home activities also have a focus on family literacy, and the program incorporates additional parent/child literacy activities into our special events.

Family Reading Nights have continued to draw large crowds and children and their families have the opportunity to read together and participate in several hands-on activities. Seeing families participate together, many times bringing the entire family along, has been a great benefit of the event.

The program was honored to receive a Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) matching which allowed for two book distributions during the year. Centers held special reading motivational activities at each distribution and every child was allowed to choose a book to add or start their own home library. Community partners, organizations and businesses provided the matching grant funds.

Parents are encouraged to complete their high school education, and family advocate staff refer families to their local adult education centers. Next year plans are to offer a ESL (English as a Second Language) class at our largest center for Spanish speaking families. The class will be taught by one of our own Family Advocate staff.



## **Professional Development**

**Action pact** Head Start continues to be very proactive in the area of staff development and training. The program has a DECAL (Department of Early Care and Learning) approved trainer, one CLASS certified trainer (Pre-School and Toddler); two American Heart Association CPR and First Aid trainers; two certified Family Development Credential trainers; one nationally certified playground inspector; and one Darkness to Light instructor. Pre-service and in-service trainings are approved for state approved hours, and staff received trainings throughout the year. Staff have also been able to take advantage of several online state-approved trainings. The program's Training Specialist has presented training at state and regional conferences as well as to other Head Start and child-care programs.

Staff members are able to take advantage of DECAL incentives and scholarship funds which were available to assist them in attending college and advancing their professional development. Changes to the incentive/scholarship program have included the eligibility of all Head Start Centers as well as the *Awards for Early Educators Program*, which is a limited time program intended to encourage individuals who pursue higher credentials and degrees. The program will award a single bonus at each level to eligible applicants who earn a CDA, TCC, ECE Diploma, AA, BA or MA degree. A number of staff have been able to take advantage of this program. In addition, DECAL has also increased the number of payments to eligible staff.



**All action pact** Head Start teachers have an AA degree or higher and meet the Federal mandate. Additionally, over 70% of Head Start teachers have a BA degree or higher, exceeding the 50% requirement. Statistics of interest for the 2017-2018 program year (from August, 2017 - July, 2018):

- ❖ Over **1,700** hours of college.
- ❖ Over **6,000** hours of total training..
- ❖ Over **3,200** hours DECAL approved training.
- ❖ All Early Head Start teachers have a minimum CDA in infant/toddler or higher credential.

## **Health Services Advisory Committee**

The Head Start program has a very active Health Services Advisory Committee that meets three times a year: February, June, and September. Members have included: an audiologist, a first responder, representatives from our local Health Department and Southeast Health District, Babies Can't Wait, Children's Medical Services, Children First, Family Connection directors, CMO representatives, and representatives from other community agencies or related businesses. Parents and family members are also encouraged to attend the meetings. There is a brief training at the meetings on a health topic, then program staff discuss successes and challenges that they are working on concerning the health, nutrition, disabilities, and mental health components. Advice from the HSAC is often requested from staff to help with different matters. Community updates and parent comments/questions are also part of each meeting. Topics discussed at the HSAC meetings have included: Toxic Stress; Emergency Preparedness; Heart Attack Symptoms/Prevention; cancer awareness; vehicle safety for children; Zika virus; as well as other timely topics.

## **Policy Council**

Head Start grantees must ensure they have an established Policy Council and a well-functioning governing body which shares the responsibility for the oversight of the program while following the Performance Standards. Program governance in Head Start is a shared responsibility. Board members and Policy Council members are critical to the success of our program.

The Policy Council also shares responsibility with the management team to ensure there are effective systems, policies and procedures that strengthen the quality of the program. Their role helps the management team deliver high quality services to the children and families.

The Policy Council is responsible for reviewing and approving the Head Start budget, personnel hiring/terminations, grant applications, procedure changes, monthly financial statements and credit card expenditures, and other important items. Parent Policy Council members serve as a link between parents and the Parent Committee. By reporting back to their center's Parent Committee, they help the parents they represent better understand the role and functioning of the Policy Council and keep them updated on what's going on within the program.

Currently, **action pact's** Head Start Policy Council is made up of twenty-one members: fourteen parent representatives and seven community representatives. There is a Head Start parent representative and alternate from each of our twelve-county service area. There are additionally two at-large Early Head Start parents. Currently the at-large Early Head Start representatives have been elected from Appling and Pierce Counties.

The seven at-large community members represent the following counties: Appling – Public Health Nurse from the Appling County Health Department; Bacon – retired educator; Brantley – School Superintendent; Coffee – retired from SEHD, Infectious Disease Department; Pierce – Family Connections Director, Toombs – Family Connection Director; and Ware – Health Promotion Coordinator for Southeast Health District. Members may serve up to a maximum of five years on the Policy Council.

## **Fantastic Families**

Parents enjoy volunteering and taking part in special events at the center. We hope you enjoy just a few pictures of our amazing families in action.





