

2023 - 2024 SCHOOL YEAR

Annual Report



Family Development Services

— A Head Start Organization —

A Letter from Family Development Services Executive Director, Kim Rhodes

This past year has shown me that the creative effort and trial and error of our staff, board of directors, parent policy council, and committed partners and stakeholders used to combat the challenges of the effects of COVID-19 on early childhood education have paid off.

As I read through the following annual report, I am struck by what has been achieved in the past year. However, it is not our accomplishment alone. We thank all who have contributed to our success. One of the biggest and most rewarding accomplishments was our program undergoing an FA2 review and receiving no findings. The federal reviewers were very complimentary of our program. Again, this is a testament to the hard work of our staff, board of directors, parent policy council, parents, and children. It has been a challenging 3 years of recovery, but despite it all we have learned to adapt and to be resilient.

As you read through the annual report you will learn about several new partnerships and initiatives, but what has not changed and will always remain true is that we could not do it without our staff, board of directors, parent policy council, parents, community partners, and funders.

We thank you all for your support. Moving forward, we will continue to find new and innovative ways to serve our children, parents, and community in an ever-changing environment.

Sincerely,

Kim Rhodes

Kim Rhodes
Executive Director



Community Assessment

During the 2023-24 school year, our agency continued to analyze data in our community and identified the following specific areas that affect our families and the communities they live in:

- Increase of Haitian Creole families on the east side of Indianapolis
- Food Insecurity
- Gun Violence
- Affordable Housing
- Mental Health



Early Initiative Grant

Family Development Services (FDS) was awarded a grant from Early Learning Indiana, supported by Lilly Endowment, to fund our LENA Grow program with Early Head Start staff, infants and toddlers, and their families. We thank Early Learning Indiana and Lilly Endowment for funding our proposal which enables us to train our teachers on new strategies to increase language and brain development and growth for infants and toddlers and, in turn, promote lifelong learning.

We will use CLASS to assess the growth in language and literacy and work with parents and staff to assess increases in classroom and home language.

FDS launched the first cohort of LENA Grow in five Early Head Start classrooms at four sites from May 13 to June 14.



ARTS FOR LEARNING

Put the Beat in Your Feet!

In February 2024, FDS Southeast Early Head Start program joined Arts for Learning and Wolf Trap at the early childhood gallery at the Children's Museum (known as the Playscape area). Anne Sidney, a seasoned Wolf Trap artist, skillfully facilitated two family engagement workshops. The purpose of these sessions was to lead parents and children in movement activities, highlighting the significance of movement in a child's developmental journey. The session was full of music and movement experiences designed for infants and young children. The families enjoyed chanting, singing, and dancing to stories. This impactful program was made possible through the collaborative efforts of FDS and Arts for Learning, generously supported by the Early Years Initiative.





Indiana State Museum

The Indiana State Museum has partnered with FDS Head Start Centers since 2020. The museum offers high-quality, research-based STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) programming for young children. The programming is based on the Reggio Emilia philosophy, which focuses on important early learning skills such as literacy, creative thinking, and social-emotional development. Through outreach lessons provided by the early childhood team, the children and teachers experience the philosophy in their classrooms.



During the 4-year partnership, the Early Head Start and Head Start programs have participated in high-quality learning experiences that support their cognitive, social, and emotional development. As part of the program, children are given books and accompanying activities to expand their learning at home and in their classrooms. Additionally, the classroom staff learns how to choose books that can be tied into their current lessons. Each classroom receives a kit with materials for extension STEAM-based activities, tailored to the age group. For the preschool classrooms, the kit provides a STEAM activity with a literacy connection, and for the toddler classrooms, the kits contain tools for sensory play.

An important outcome of the partnership is that all families enrolled in the Early Head Start/Head Start programs can visit the museum for free. This provides an opportunity for families to explore, discover, and learn together. We appreciate this opportunity and look forward to continuing our learning journey together.

FROG Fatherhood Program

Our Annual Fatherhood Pumpkin Patch event was a success with over 300 father figures and children participating. It was a great opportunity to learn about family-friendly activities in the community that make lifelong memories for children and parents.



Fatherhood Conference

FROG held its annual Fatherhood and Families Conference at the Indianapolis Zoo on Saturday, April 20th. Sean Stevenson, Assistant Director of Information Technology Services at FDS, coordinates and leads the fatherhood initiative and is pictured with the presenter Kobie Da Wiz. Kobie shared some important information on mental health through a workshop called "Utilizing Practical Strategies to Move Life Forward". He focused not only on parent's mental health but children's as well. He had an excellent

segment on "How to Nurture a Child's Mental Health", during which the parents were given an informative handout and had the opportunity to take notes to take with them as a resource.

Ms. Froggy Blanca Leca entertained the children with her dancing and hugs, and Brian Fairbanks has continued to support the FROG program through photography and videography of the event. Thank you to the FROG committee, volunteers and staff that supported the event!



Making a Splash with Southport Police

Southeast Early Head Start and the Level Up summer camp program's children had the opportunity to celebrate summer with the Southport Police.

In a combined effort between police and community programs, the Southport Police Department and their teen volunteers came together during a Water Play Day celebration. The police department hopes that coordination with community programs can help engage children and families with police in a positive way.

Too often, many children meet the police during challenging situations, and sometimes they fear the police after these interactions. The Southport Police hopes to help build positive relationships within the community by participating in events like Police vs. Kids water fights. These interactions help the children get to know the police in a fun and friendly way.



Southeast had multiple activities for families including sprinklers, water tables with squirters, music, and dancing. The police came with their cruisers and children could hear the siren and see the lights. They also brought their therapy dog and their mascot, Justice the Police Dog, to meet the children as well.

The children had so much fun playing in the water – many were wet from head to toe by the end – and surprisingly, the police ended the day soaked, too! The

Police Chief even had water poured on him by some of the children as well as some of his fellow police officers. No matter how wet everyone was, they all had a bright smile on their faces at the end of the day!

Our first annual Police vs. Kids Water Play Day was truly fun and engaging for both the Southport Police and the families. We really look forward to doing it again next year!



Sewa Diwali Food Drive and Drop-off

Sewa means service and Diwali is the festive occasion marked by lighting lamps - symbolically removing ignorance through enlightenment. Sewa Diwali is a nationwide effort in over 34 states. Last year over 660,000 pounds of food were donated to food banks and pantries in need throughout the United States.

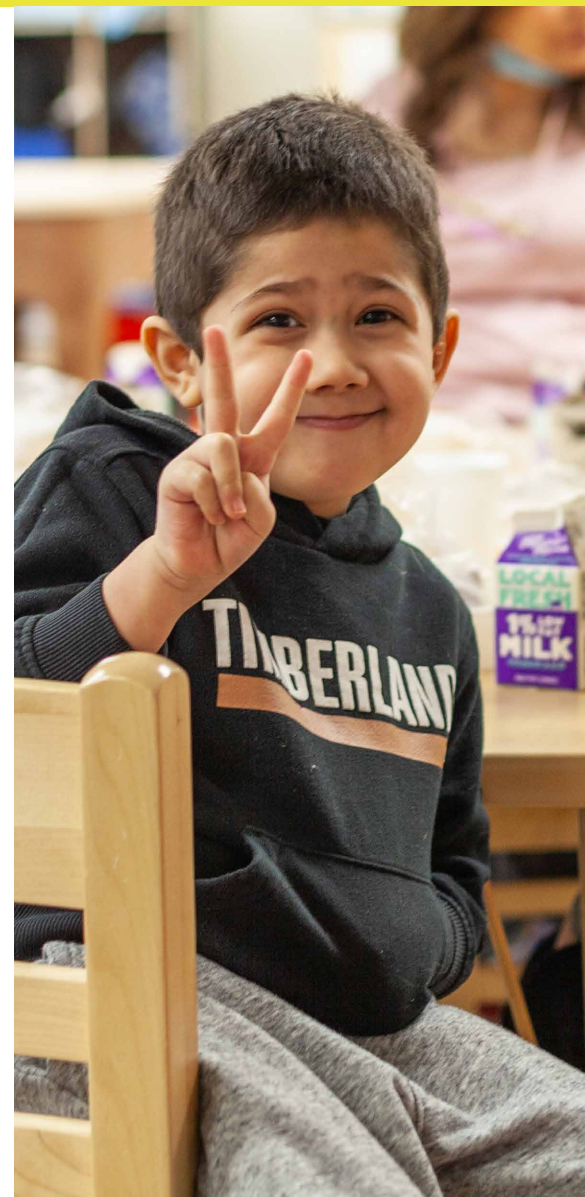
In November 2023, the Sewa Diwali team donated over 2,000 pounds of food to FDS, and we participated in distributing the food to families at our Pike Plaza center.

More information on this food drive can be found at sewadiwali.org. Thank you to Anand Bemra and team for their efforts.

Level Up for Education Program

Below are updates on the accomplishments of our Level Up for Education program, funded by the Lilly Endowment:

- Summer Care expanded to 135 children at 3 locations.
- Fedcap worked specifically on recruiting and supporting staff and helping FDS develop and grow usage of Single Stop, which provides citywide wraparound resources for families and employees.
- Ivy Tech partnership grew and currently includes 7 apprentices working on associates degrees in early childhood education.
- Apprenticeship program has seen 11 apprentices graduate from the program.
- We look forward to the new school year and continued implementation of this very important initiative.



Federal Review Success FA2

FDS received a monitoring review by a federal review team in April 2024 to determine performance and compliance with the requirements for the Head Start standards. It was a comprehensive review that looked at all centers, departments of the agency, reviewed files/documentation, conducted observations, and interviews.

FDS received no findings. The program was recognized for five areas of strong practice which is an activity or strategy that shows promise for long term sustainable impact. A strong practice has an objective basis for claiming effectiveness, potential for replication, and is shareable, among other organizations.

The five areas recognized as areas of strong practice are:

- Program Governance
- Family Partnerships: The grantee provides economic mobility support to help families with pathways out of poverty
- Budget Development, Implementation, and Oversight
- Eligibility
- Recruitment

The success of our program is due to our staff, board of directors, parents, children, community, partners, and funders, and the ability for trial and error. It has been a very challenging few years, but we are grateful for the support of all those named to help navigate us through those challenges.

The Office of Head Start's monitoring review process includes the use of a valid and reliable research based observational instrument called CLASS® (Classroom Assessment Scoring System). CLASS® assesses classroom quality, including assessing teacher-child interactions that are linked to positive child development.

CLASS® includes three domains or categories of teacher-child interactions that support children's learning and development: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. In the Spring of 2024 over 50% of our classrooms took part in this process, and the chart below shows how our results compared to the OHS Quality Threshold.

OHS Quality Threshold

ES	6.00
CO	6.00
IS	3.00

2024 FDS CLASS Review Scores

ES	6.1552
CO	5.9080
IS	2.7586



FIVE YEAR ACTION PLAN

Our Long-Term Program Goals



GOAL 1

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

FDS will provide culturally responsive practices that support diverse and inclusive environments with high-quality services that meet the needs of all learners, families, and staff to advance equity and equality.

GOAL 2

Family and Community

FDS will foster and advance strong partnerships with families, in collaboration with the community, to ensure family well-being and promote positive parent-child relationships that will drive child and family outcomes and increase quality of life.



GOAL 3

Culture

FDS will promote and maintain a data-informed culture that will drive continuous improvement and progress within the agency.

GOAL 4

Funding

FDS will secure additional funding streams to increase services to children, parents, and staff to increase education and career opportunities.



GOAL 5

School Readiness

To equip children with developmentally and age-appropriate skills to prepare them for the transition into kindergarten, promoting their success in school and life.

GOAL 6

Mental Health and Staff Wellness

To create a culture that promotes children and staff mental health, social and emotional well-being, and overall health.



School Readiness



At FDS, our approach to school readiness means children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children’s learning, and schools are ready for children. Family Development Services views school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and lifelong learning.

We have established school readiness goals that are appropriate for the development of all children enrolled in our program, ages 6 weeks to 5 years old. These goals align with the Indiana Early Learning Foundations and Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five, Creative Curriculum, and Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment.

We implement, assess, analyze, and measure progress toward school readiness goals by working with our teachers to plan and implement individualized activities to support each child’s individual needs and to prepare children for kindergarten. The results for areas of development are guided by our child outcomes data. Below you will see the results from our Fall 2023 - Spring 2024 school year.

	Approaches to Learning		Social & Emotional Development		Language & Literacy		Cognition		Perceptual, Motor, & Physical Development	
	FALL 2023	SPRING 2024	FALL 2023	SPRING 2024	FALL 2023	SPRING 2024	FALL 2023	SPRING 2024	FALL 2023	SPRING 2024
6 Weeks - 1 Year Olds	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
1 - 2 Year Olds	100.00%	92.61%	91.23%	94.44%	99.34%	78.41%	100.00%	100.00%	97.37%	86.37%
2 - 3 Year Olds	82.20%	83.72%	89.57%	90.65%	94.13%	88.78%	87.77%	88.02%	88.58%	92.06%
Early Head Start	94.06%	92.11%	93.05%	95.03%	97.82%	89.06%	95.92%	96.01%	95.32%	92.81%
3 Year Olds	81.77%	90.93%	82.20%	91.87%	81.50%	92.36%	79.84%	91.79%	90.85%	95.40%
4 Year Olds	61.39%	84.43%	61.98%	86.63%	65.25%	89.27%	53.39*%	85.64%	79.24%	93.00%
Head Start	71.58%	87.68%	72.09%	89.25%	73.37%	90.81%	66.61%	88.72%	85.05%	94.20%

Enrollment Numbers

242

Early Head Start
Cumulative

1,010

Head Start
Cumulative

71.09%

Physicals

72.87%

Dentals

98.91%

Immunizations

Early Head Start

88.14%

Well Child Exams
Completed

69%

Dental

93%

Immunization
Completed

CACFP Numbers

Early Head Start

Breakfast 17,361

Lunch 17,301

Snack 15,426

Head Start

Breakfast 106,573

Lunch 108,082

Snack 97,454



