

ANNUAL REPORT FY 2022 - 2023

October 1, 2022 through
September 30, 2023



Florida Head Start Association
Excellence. Advocacy. Leadership.

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Message from FHSA President & Executive Director

Dear Members, Partners, and Friends of the Florida Head Start Association,

We are pleased to present the Florida Head Start Association's (FHSA) Annual Report for the fiscal year October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023. This past year has been one of significant growth, challenges, and success for our community. Together, we have worked diligently to ensure that Florida's children and families receive the support, education, and opportunities they need to thrive.

At the core of our mission is the belief that every child, regardless of background or circumstance, deserves the opportunity to build a strong foundation for future success. This is why FHSA is focused on providing the resources and support needed for Head Start/Early Head Start programs across the state to be successful.

During this year, Head Start programs faced significant challenges due to a shortage of qualified staff. The early childhood workforce, which includes Head Start, is among the lowest 10% of professions in terms of compensation. This poses a threat to the stability and effectiveness of Head Start programs. The situation is further compounded by inflation, which means that the Head Start workforce is losing ground, leading to unprecedented turnover. However, the resilience of our Head Start programs and the families we serve has been genuinely inspiring. Thanks to our network's collective effort and our organization's support, Head Start programs in Florida have continued to deliver high-quality early childhood education, health, and family support services to over 40,000 children and families across the state.

Our accomplishments would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our community partners, advocates, and donors. Your contributions, whether through funding, volunteerism, or advocacy, have been the backbone of our success. We extend our deepest gratitude to each of you for your commitment, which has been instrumental in helping us create meaningful change in the lives of Florida's children.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on prioritizing innovation, collaboration, and advocacy. We are determined to address the evolving needs of our communities and ensure that every child has access to the comprehensive services that Head Start provides. Together, we can continue to make a lasting impact, and I invite you to join us in this vital work.

With your continued support and dedication, we are optimistic about the future of the Florida Head Start Association. We look forward to another year of progress, partnership, and exciting new initiatives.

In partnership,



Maria T. Riestra
FHSA President



Wanda Minick
FHSA Executive Director

FHSA Vision Statement

We envision a future where all Head Start families thrive.

FHSA Mission Statement

Empower members to advocate, lead, and enhance the education, health, and social services provided to families by Head Start.

FHSA Purpose

- To provide high-quality professional development for Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start personnel, parents, and community members;
- To advocate for policies that address the needs of vulnerable families with young children; and,
- To provide a statewide forum for addressing the challenges faced by Head Start leaders in serving children from birth to age 5 and their families.

Who We Are & Who We Serve

The Florida Head Start Association, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit, nonpartisan organization, was founded to represent the interests of Florida's Head Start/Early Head Start, Migrant & Seasonal Head Start/Early Head Start, and Child Care Partnerships. Our commitment to elevating the Head Start voice is demonstrated through the programs, conferences, training, and events we have provided since 1999. These initiatives unite the Head Start Community, fostering a sense of connection and shared purpose as we strive to better serve the most at-risk families and children throughout our state.



FHSA Board of Directors 2022 - 2023

Executive Committee

President



Dr. Maria Riestra-Quintero, Directors Affiliate Group
Assistant Director Early Childhood Programs - Head Start and Early Head Start Division, Miami-Dade Community Action and Human Services Department

Vice President



Sonya Hill, Directors Affiliate Group
Division Manager Head Start Director, Orange County Head Start

Secretary



Mary Grace Romo, Staff Affiliate Group
Director, Paco County Head Start

Treasurer



Gloria Gonzalez, Staff Affiliate Group
Regional Director, Redlands Christian Migrant Association

Past President



Kymberly Cook, Friends Affiliate Group
Executive Director, Children's Home Society of Florida

Ex-Officio, FHSA Executive Director



Wanda Minick

Board of Directors

Akia Davis, Directors Affiliate Group
Director of Early Head Start, Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County, Inc.

Tanya Stanton, Directors Affiliate Group
Director of Early Learning Programs, You Thrive Florida

Brigette Davis, Staff Affiliate Group
Associate Director of Head Start/Early Head Start, Children First, Inc.

Temple DePlato, Staff Affiliate Group
Chief Administrative Officer, Episcopal Children's Services

Bob Bialas, Friends Affiliate Group
Executive Vice President of Children and Head Start Services, Lutheran Services Florida

Nacole Guyton, Friends Affiliate Group
Executive Director, Florida Association for Community Action

Cindy Kaier, Friends Affiliate Group
Early Childhood Specialist, KaierECConsulting

Maritza Vazquez, Friends Affiliate Group
Emotional Support Specialist, Children's Home Network

FHSA Committees

Committees are the lifeblood of FHSA. They create training programs and evaluate member services to ensure the association stays vibrant and thriving. Committees work closely with staff to move our strategic initiatives forward, and they are our pipeline for emerging leaders in our association.

Advocacy Committee

The Advocacy Committee is responsible for supporting the association's mission, vision, purpose, and strategic plan. FHSA is dedicated to the issues that affect Head Start. As a state-level organization, we are a close-knit, collaborative community, and we celebrate daily the many successes that each Florida Head Start program provides for Florida's families.

Chair: Kimberly Cook, FHSA Past President

Awards Committee

The Awards Committee works in partnership with the Region IV Head Start Association (RIVHSA) on developing and implementing the annual awards program. The committee establishes a nomination and selection process and ratifies state nominations to RIVHSA.

Chair: Sean Murnane and Collette Thompson

By-Laws Committee

The By-Laws Committee is responsible for creating and maintaining the organization's bylaws, which are the set of rules that guide FHSA operations and activities.

Chair: Tim Center

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is responsible for an annual budget, recommend fees for membership dues, review the Association's financial status, and provide direction and leadership in fundraising efforts in conjunction with the Board of Directors and staff of the Association.

Chair: Gloria Gonzalez, FHSA Treasurer



FHSA Committees

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee provides direction and leadership to expand membership in the Association, develop and evaluate member services, and review and recommend changes to the Association's Bylaws in conjunction with the Board of Directors and staff.

Chair: Sonya Hill, FHSA Vice President

Professional Development Committee

The Professional Development Committee works in partnership with Florida institutions to aid with articulation, identify funding streams for assisting staff with continuing education, and generally advocate for programs and staff to assist with meeting educational mandates. The Committee shall determine training and technical assistance needs and plan and implement training events in conjunction with The Board of Directors and staff of the Association.

Chairs: Francesca Brown and Michelle Toral

Research Committee

The Research Committee conducts, support, and disseminate high-quality research that informs policy and practices and promotes successful children, strong families, effective programs, and healthy communities.

Chairs: Dr. Maria Riestra-Quintero, FHSA President, and Kim Singer, HSCO Director



Strategic Plan

FHSA built a strategic plan to enhance and support the capability of Head Start programs in the delivery of high quality services for Florida's children and families.



Increase Membership

- Expand the FHSA value proposition for members
- Develop membership recruitment and retention plan to increase membership across all levels
- Increase member benefits by offering value-added services
- Develop value proposition for each level of the FHSA membership through peer-to-peer professional networks



Increase Funding

- Establish realistic revenue growth strategies for the organization
- Elevate FHSA advocacy efforts at the state and federal levels through raising awareness and increase funding for the Dollar per Child/Child Advocacy Fund



Expand & Improve Communication

- Increase the FHSA use of multi and social media to promote the brand value of Head Start Agencies
- Create a social media strategy to grow new followers and engagement
- Motivate Head Start and Early Head Start Programs to share informational content on their agencies successes and highlights with the FHSA



Enhance Advocacy Efforts

- Increase education, training, and awareness to effectively enhance advocacy at the local, state and federal levels
- Develop Local Advocacy Education Plan and Toolkit for Head Start agencies
- Host local/grassroots advocacy events/campaigns to promote FHSA and Head Start brand awareness

Strategic Plan

FHSA built a strategic plan to enhance and support the capability of Head Start programs in the delivery of high quality services for Florida's children and families.



Enhance Opportunities for Networking & Education at FHSA Events

- Establish a buddy program for new directors and managers building capacity through partnerships and supporting Head Start agencies
- Boost member engagement at FHSA events by identifying and developing strategies to increase participation
- Provide enhanced year-round educational training and credentialing opportunities



Expand Collaborative Efforts within Florida for Head Start Programs

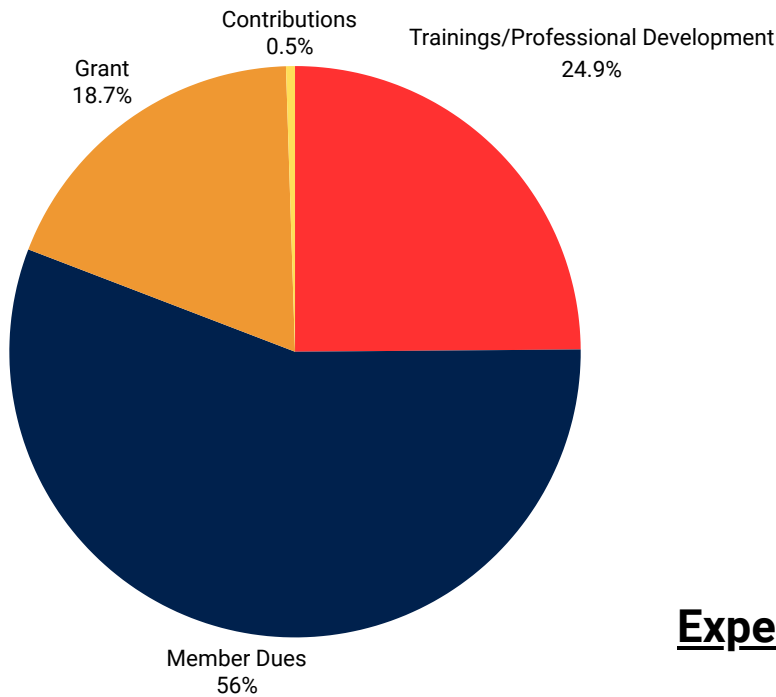
- Maintain ongoing relationships with the Department of Children and Families, Department of Education, and Office of Early Learning
- Explore the possibility of MOU's with external nonprofit partners and state agencies
- Establish partnerships between FHSA and Colleges, Universities, State University Systems, and Individual Colleges and Universities



Financials

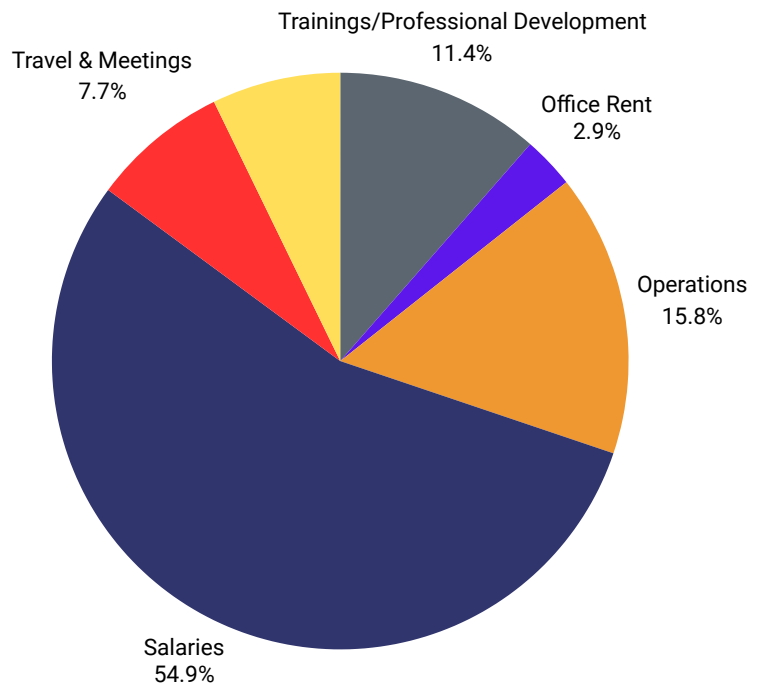
Our achievements this year reflect the dedication of our members. With their support, the Florida Head Start Association continued serving Head Start/Early Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start/Early Head Start and Child Care Partnerships, connecting them with peers statewide and providing updates on early care and education. Though we didn't host an annual conference, we held the Annual Leadership Training, SSCBT certification course, webinars, and virtual professional development opportunities. FHSA saw a 55% membership increase in 2022-2023, ending with 128 Grantee Recipients, 14 Corporate Friends, and 9 Individual Friends—evidence of our growing influence and impact.

Revenue



FY 22-23 Total Revenue
\$294,700.78

Expenses



FY 22-23 Total Expenses
\$229,178.02

Advocacy

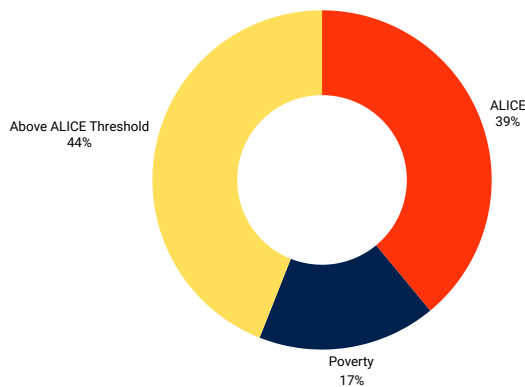
Advocacy and Leadership in Early Learning

FHSA represents the Head Start community’s interests at both state and federal levels. The Executive Director of FHSA serves as a key member of the Early Learning Consortium, a group of influential early learning leaders who collaborate to improve Florida’s early learning system. This partnership benefits the hundreds of thousands of children served annually. The Consortium, which includes provider associations, funders, and subject-matter experts, offers recommendations to state leaders and policymakers to enhance the system and improve outcomes for children. Members of the Consortium include:

- Association of Early Learning Coalitions (AELC)
- Florida Alliance of Children’s Councils & Trusts
- Florida Association for the Education of Young Children (FLAEYC)
- Florida Family Child Care Home Association (FFCCHA)
- Florida Head Start Association (FHSA)
- The Children’s Forum
- The Children’s Movement of Florida
- United Way of Florida

ALICE IN FOCUS

Children by Household, Florida, 2019
 Number of Children in Florida = 4.2 Million



Who Are ALICE Children?


In 2019, 17% of children below the ALICE Threshold in Florida were infants (0–2 years), 12% were preschool-age (3–4 years), and 71% were school-age (5–17 years). Children in Florida’s struggling households are from all demographic groups; they include children born in the U.S. and abroad, of all abilities and races/ethnicities, living with parents or guardians who are married or single, working or not working.

Advocacy

National Advocacy and Program Development

FHSA participated in the National Head Start Association’s Fall Leadership Institute (FLI) and Winter Leadership Institute (WLI), where representatives engaged in 50 Hill visits, with 45 attendees participating in these advocacy efforts. Additionally, FHSA created a Head Start Dashboard, offering a visual overview of the statewide presence of Florida’s Head Start and Early Head Start programs. This dashboard highlights the impact of federal-to-local funding and illustrates the need for additional support to further strengthen early care and education in the state.

Additionally, the National Head Start Association awarded Representative Federica Wilson (D-FL-24) with the PROMISE (Protecting Our Most Important Students Early) Award for her continued support of Head Start.



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 24, 2023

CONTACT:
Wanda Minick
Executive Director,
Florida Head Start Association
wanda@fheadstart.org

Head Start Recognizes Rep. Federica Wilson as Congressional Champion for Children and Families PROMISE Award presented during Head Start Hill Event

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The National Head Start Association (NHSA) awarded Rep. Federica Wilson (D-FL-24) with the PROMISE (Protecting Our Most Important Students Early) Award for her continued support of Head Start.

“Over her entire career in Congress, Rep. Wilson has worked to provide early childhood educational opportunities to all families, regardless of income or zip code, in Florida and beyond,” said Dr. Maria T. Riestra, president of the Florida Head Start Association. “Rep. Wilson is a former Head Start teacher and coordinator who spent many years in the classroom in the Miami-Dade school district. She understands—first hand—that affordable, safe, and high-quality child care is not only important to working families, it’s important for the children who are our future leaders.

“Congresswoman Wilson is a lifelong champion for children, from her days as teacher, principal, school board member and in the nation’s Capitol,” said Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava. “She has been relentless in her support for early childhood education and improving the health and wellness of children and families through the Head Start Program. We are grateful for her unwavering advocacy.”

PROMISE stands for Protecting Our Most Important Students Early. Every year, NHSA’s PROMISE Awards honor members of the Congress who have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to Head Start and to serving our nation’s most vulnerable children and their families.

“The Head Start community is grateful for Rep. Wilson’s ongoing work to ensure America’s underserved children receive the high-quality education and care they need for a bright future,” said NHSA’s Executive Director Yasmina Vincl. “We are grateful for our champions in Congress and thank them for keeping the commitment to Head Start in both their words and their deeds.”



Advocacy

Children's Week and Advocacy

FHSA sponsored Children's Week and facilitated participation in Hill Day meetings during this week-long event in Tallahassee. Representatives from programs throughout the state met with legislators to advocate for early learning issues. Participating programs included:

- Children First
- Children's Home Society
- Lutheran Services Florida
- Mid-Florida Community Services Inc. Head Start & Early Head Start
- North Florida Child Development, Inc.
- Orange County Head Start

Head Start/Early Head Start programs sent children's hand artwork, which was displayed at the Capitol during the week.



Advocacy

Leadership Development

Bridgette Davis, a member of the FHSA Board of Directors, was selected for the inaugural class of the Early Childhood Policy WORKS Advocacy Fellowship (ECPWAF). This fellowship brought together a diverse group of teachers, parents, directors, and early childhood stakeholders who were trained to serve as advocates and leaders in local, state, and national conversations about early childhood education and workforce issues.

Commitment to Child Safety

Head Start programs adhere to strict standards of conduct related to reporting child abuse and neglect. The Head Start Program Performance Standards set high benchmarks for ensuring children's health and safety, which remain central to FHSA's mission. In alignment with other states, FHSA actively participates in April's Prevent Child Abuse Month to raise awareness and promote child safety.

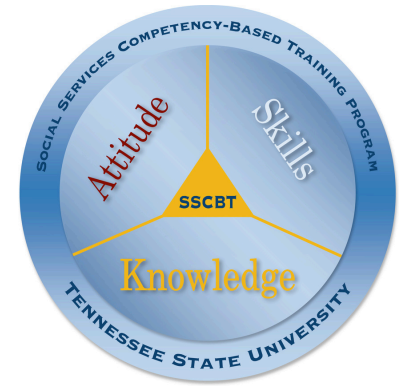
Congressional Engagement

FHSA assisted various programs in arranging visits with Congressional Members in their local districts, fostering direct communication between lawmakers and early childhood advocates.



Training Events

The 2023 Leadership Training and Awards Luncheon was held on February 8 - 9, 2023, in Daytona Beach, FL. The following attendees earned the Social Skills Competency Based Training (SSCBT) family service worker credentials through Tennessee State University:



- Janice Archie, *Lutheran Services Florida Head Start - Duval County*
- Debbie Brooks, *Lutheran Services Florida*
- Carline Cherry, *Lutheran Services Florida Palm Beach Children and Head Start Services*
- Lacey Comer, *Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA)*
- Nichole Curry, *Lutheran Services Florida*
- Miranda Cutter, *Lutheran Services of Florida Head Start/Early Head Start*
- Jocelyne Dagher, *Brevard County Head Start*
- Bettsy Delgado, *Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA)*
- April Dexter, *Lutheran Services Florida*
- Sharon Fairclough, *Brevard Public Schools - Head Start*
- Betty Flores, *Lutheran Services Florida*
- Shaunta Gordon, *Lutheran Services Florida Head Start - Duval County*
- Aisha Holden, *Redlands Christian Migrant Association*
- Ernesta Jordan, *Brevard Public Schools - Head Start*
- Patricia Mainor, *Lutheran Services Florida*
- Lillian Martinez, *Broward County School Board Head Start/Early Head Start*
- Ashley McEachern, *Lutheran Services of Florida Head Start/Early Head Start*
- Beth McManus, *Tri County Head Start*
- Dianeli Mendez, *Redlands Christian Migrant Association*
- Angela Narcisse, *Brevard County Head Start*
- Mineria Reese, *Lutheran Services Florida Palm Beach Children and Head Start Services*
- Sandra Simmons, *Brevard County Head Start*
- Jilles Walker, *Lutheran Services of Florida Head Start/Early Head Start*

In addition, FHSA delivered value to our members through the following ways:

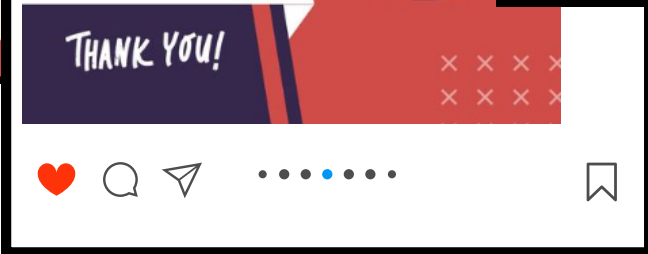
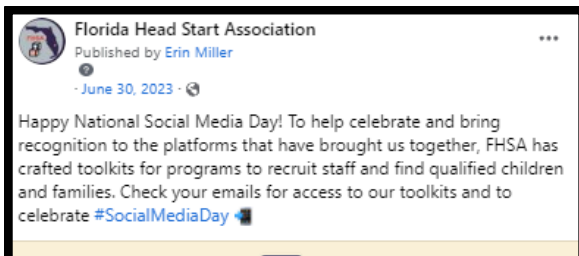
- Partnering with Teachstone to provide FHSA members with discounted trainings to access Teachstone's on-demand courses and facilitated the CDA with the CLASS® program.
- Partnering with Nick the Music Man at PlayMotion Music to offer complimentary, live music and movement classes to educators and their classrooms for 5 months, with over 500 classrooms participating throughout Florida.
- Sponsoring the 36th Annual One Goal Summer Conference, bringing together Florida's early education and care providers and leaders from around the state to provide professional development sessions, and nominating Wanda Minick, FHSA Executive Director, to serve on the planning committee.

Member Engagement

FHSA partners with the Florida Head Start Collaboration Office (HSCO) to focus on finding solutions with government agencies and partner organizations to ensure that Florida’s most vulnerable young children and families receive high quality, locally designed, comprehensive services and support. Every three years, FHSA and HSCO produce a Statewide Needs Assessment that provides programs with tools to evaluate and set fair compensation rates for supporting compliance with Section 653 of the Head Start Act.

In addition, FHSA delivered member engagement initiatives to our members through the following ways:

- **Member Spotlight Campaign:** An initiative lead by the FHSA Membership Committee, a social media campaign titled #ThankfulThursday was an opportunity for Head Start/Early Head Start members, corporate friends, or individual friend members to recognize the work being done to help elevate the Head Start voice throughout Florida.
- **Recruitment Tools:** FHSA developed Family Enrollment & Staff Enrollment Recruitment toolkits to assist programs with recruiting staff and finding qualified children and families.
- **Head Start Awareness Month:** Every October, FHSA joins the Office of Head Start, Head Start Associations, and programs nationwide to celebrate Head Start Awareness Month by sharing videos, stories, photos, and testimonials about the impact Head Start has made on the millions of children and families who have benefitted from this program nationwide.



FHSA Awards Program

Each year, FHSA partners with the Region IV Head Start Association (RIVHSA) and the National Head Start Association (NHSA) to honor and recognize our Head Start and Early Head Start employees, parents, alumni, volunteers, and community partners who do the vital work necessary to keep the program and their teams thriving.

FHSA recognized our eight-state award winners and three national finalists during our Leadership Training Annual Awards Luncheon in Daytona Beach, FL. Four FHSA state award recipients and all three national finalists advanced to the regionals, and two of our three national finalists received recognition from the National Head Start Association.



Administrator of the Year
Autumn Tomas
Episcopal Children’s Services



Teacher of the Year
Azza Tawadors
Hillsborough County Public
Schools Head Start Program*



Support Staff of the Year
Kenneth Davis
Episcopal Children’s Services



Beating the Odds
Erica Fernandez & Dillion Nations Family
Episcopal Children’s Services



Parent of the Year
Maria Somera
Children’s First, Inc.



Staff of the Year
Maria O'Donnell
Episcopal Children’s Services*



Corporate Award
Family Health Source
Mid Florida Community Services
Inc., Head Start & Early Head Start



Father of the Year
Anthony Ray
Episcopal Children’s Services*

The NHSA State Finalists



Edward Ziglar Innovation Award
Miami Dade County HS/EHS &
Reach Out and Read Florida**

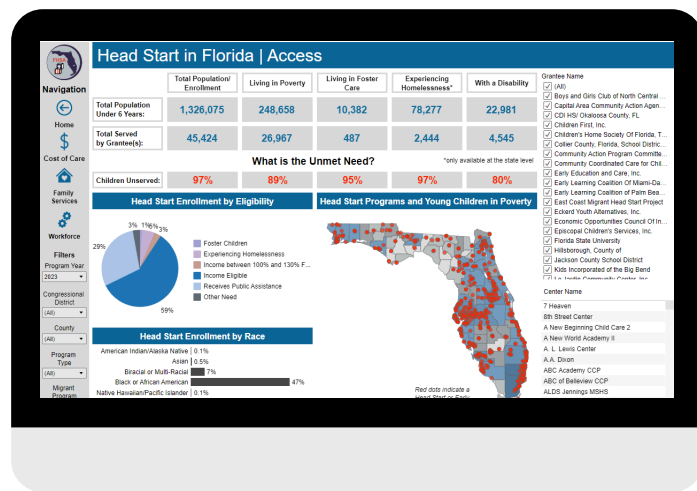
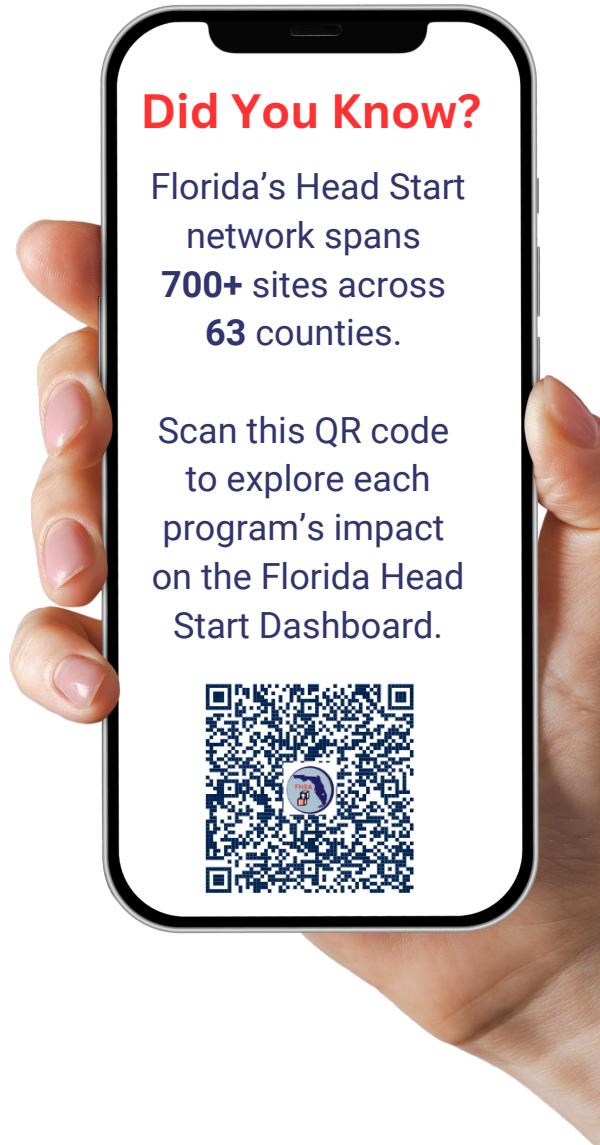
Aubrey Puckett Memorial Award
Shamella Harmon
Orange County Head Start*

*Sargent Shriver Excellence in
Community Service Award*
Phillip Tavill
Children’s First, Inc.**

*RIVHSA winner
**National winner

Head Start Grantee Members

- Capital Area Community Action Agency, Inc.
- Boys & Girls Club of North Central Florida
- Charlotte County School Board
- Children’s First, Inc.
- Children’s Home Society of Florida, The
- Community Action Program Committee, Inc.
- Community Coordinated Care for Children, Inc.
- Miami-Dade County Community Action & Human Services Department
- Early Education and Care, Inc.
- Early Learning Coalition Miami-Dade/Monroe County
- Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County, Inc.
- East Coast Migrant Head Start Project
- Episcopal Children’s Services, Inc.
- Florida State University
- Hillsborough, County of
- Indian River County Economic Opportunity, Inc.
- Jackson County School District
- Kids Incorporated of the Big Bend
- Le Jardin Community Center, Inc.
- Lutheran Services of Florida, Inc.
- Martin County School District
- Mid Florida Community Services, Inc.
- Monroe County School District
- North Florida Child Development, Inc.
- Orange County Head Start
- Pasco County Board of Public Education
- Redlands Christian Migrant Association
- Saint Johns County School Board
- Santa Rosa County School District
- School Board of Brevard County
- School Board of Broward County
- School Board of Lee County
- School Board of Polk County
- Step-Up Suncoast, Inc.
- Suwanee Valley Community Coordinated Child Care, Inc.
- The Agricultural & Labor Program, Inc.
- Tri-County Community Council, Inc.

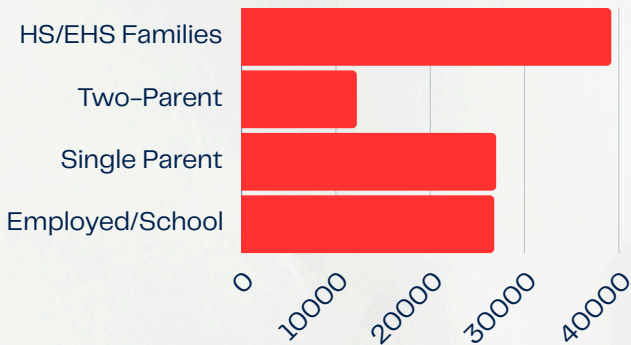
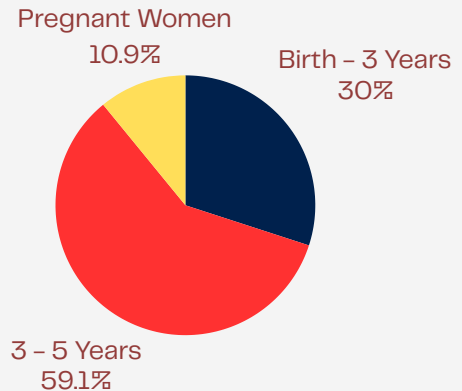


Florida Head Start Program Quick Facts

This data is representative of the 2022 Performance Information Report (PIR) from the Office of Head Start for the state of Florida.

STATEWIDE IMPACT

In 2022, Head Start programs served **43,189** children and pregnant women throughout Florida providing **39,205** families with valuable resources.



Head Start Family Profile

Head Start parents receive support for personal and family goal-setting and guidance on creating a stable and healthy home environment.



Head Start Helps Fuel Florida's Economy

Head Start's federal funding added **\$442,454,135** to Florida's economy.



Florida Head Start Association

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