



Minnesota Valley Action Council, Inc. Head Start Program

05CH8395-000
Annual Report to Public
July 2015 - June 2016

MISSION STATEMENT

Minnesota Valley Action Council, Inc. (MVAC) is a community action agency. We are for communities, not for profit. We have served the people of south central Minnesota since 1965. We believe that hard work should be valued and rewarded, that working people are struggling and that MVAC provides solutions. We develop resources and opportunities that empower people in low-wage work to secure affordable housing, viable transportation, employment, training for employment and educational opportunities for children. MVAC provides services in Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, LeSueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca and Watonwan counties. -



MVAC

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This report has been prepared in order to comply with the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007. The Act states that:

"Each Head Start agency shall make available to the public a report published at least once in each fiscal year that discloses the following information from the recently concluded fiscal year, except that reporting such information shall not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual child or parent:

- (A) *The total amount of public and private funds received and the amount from each source*
- (B) *An explanation of budgetary expenditures and proposed budget for the fiscal year.*
- (C) *The total number of children and families served, the average monthly enrollment (as percentage of funded enrollment), and the percentage of eligible children served.*
- (D) *The results of the most recent review by the Secretary and the financial audit.*
- (E) *The percentage of enrolled children that received medical and dental exams.*
- (F) *Information about parent involvement activities.*
- (G) *The agency's efforts to prepare children for kindergarten.*
- (H) *Any other information required by the "Secretary."*

Head Start Philosophy

The early education environment, whether in the home or in a school, should provide a rich variety of activities that will foster the child's physical, developmental, social and emotional growth. Families are encouraged to be equal partners in their child's learning and development. The potential for learning is greatest during the early years of a child's life; therefore, learning opportunities should be provided to children at the earliest age possible.

HEAD START FUNDING SOURCES for April 1, 2015 -June 30, 2016

Federal Head Start Grant April 1-March 31

State Head Start Grant July 1 - June 30

MN Dept of Education Pathway II Early Learning Scholarships July 1 - June 30

Total 562 children (467 federal; 81 state; 14 MDE Pathway II)

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Federal Head Start Funds - | \$2,925,846 |
| Federal Training & Technical Assistance Funds | \$41,409 |
| Minnesota Head Start Funds - | \$800,685 |
| MN Dept of Education Early Learning Scholarships | \$165,505.68 |
| Child & Adult Care Food Program - (CACFP food Reimbursement) | <u>\$129,065</u> |

Total \$4,103,919.68

Non- Federal Share (In-kind) 20% Match -

\$741,814 Required

\$806,165 Total collected

- Rent (\$499,020)
- Volunteer time (\$304,946)
- Goods/materials donated (\$2,199)

BUDGET

| | | | |
|----------|-----|--------------|--|
| Wages | 64% | Contracts | 2% |
| Training | 2% | Travel | 3% |
| Supplies | 3% | Fringe Total | 15% |
| | | Other | 11% (rent, utilities, cost ctrs, fees/dues, printing, ads, etc.) |

Head Start Employees = 104

ENROLLMENT

- In 2015-16, through all funding sources, MVAC was funded to serve 562 Head Start children. This number includes 467 federal slots, 81 infants, toddlers and pregnant women slots and 14 State Pathway II Early Learning Scholarship slots.
- We maintained 100% monthly enrollment of 562 throughout the program year.
- Total actual enrollment for the year was 667 (including all adds & drops). 526 were in regular Head Start & 141 were in our birth to 3 program.
- Average monthly attendance 87.63%
- 97% of the participants (648) were income eligible; 3% (19) were over-income.

MONITORING REVIEWS

- Our program participated in 3 federal Head Start monitoring events since October 2015. Environmental Health & Safety in October 2015, CLASS (CLassroom Assessment Scoring System) in December 2015, and Comprehensive Services/School Readiness in April 2016. All 3 monitoring events resulted in zero non-compliances, with no corrective actions needed.

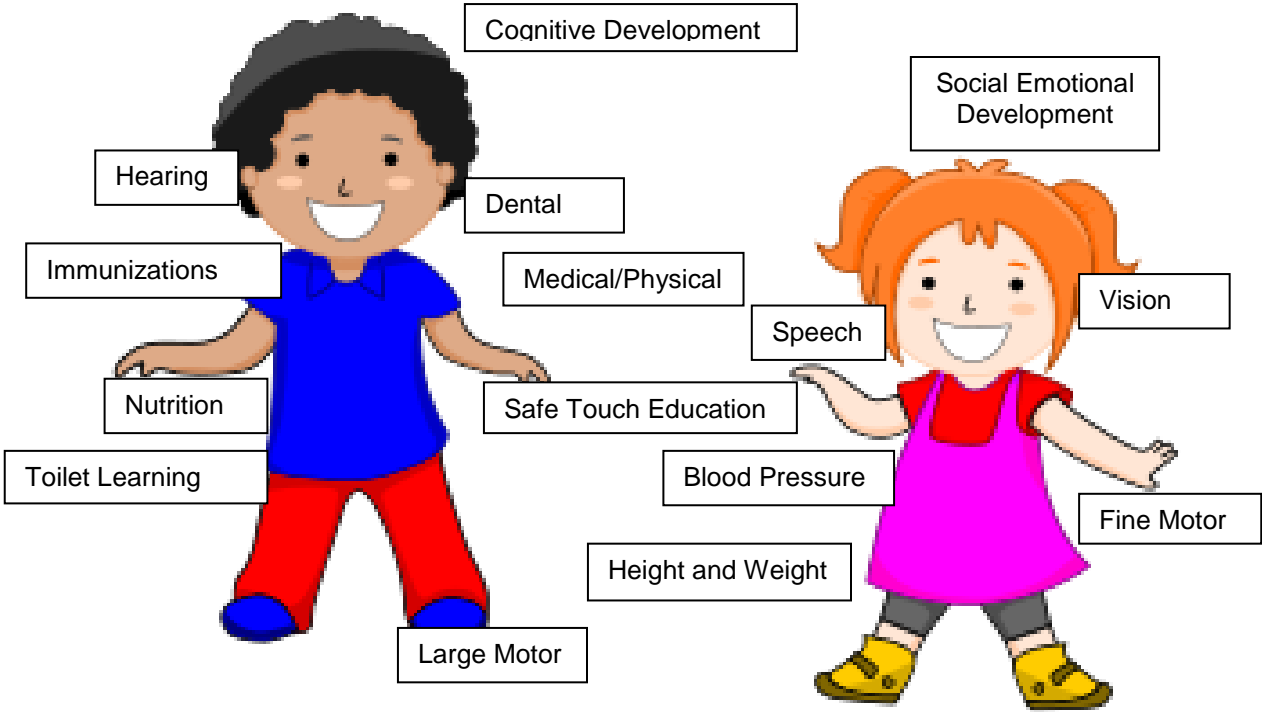
ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT

- Minnesota Valley Action Council, Inc. contracts for and receives a required annual audit. There were no findings from the July 2015 audit. MVAC is considered low risk & compliant with generally accepted accounting practices.

MEDICAL AND DENTAL EXAM RATE

- 90% children received a medical exam and 72% of the children received a dental exam.

MVAC Head Start's Whole Child Approach



Head Start has adopted the “whole child” approach to school readiness. School readiness includes five developmental areas that are important to a child’s readiness for school: approaches to learning, social and emotional development, language and literacy, cognition and perceptual, motor and physical development. Our staff will be looking at any area that could affect a child’s normal development towards school readiness - including but not limited to medical & dental conditions, nutritional needs, vision & hearing results, and the home environment. By providing support to the family, Head Start can help prepare each child for school success by recognizing that all these areas are connected and help shape a child and their family for future success even beyond school.

In addition to **parent & family engagement** and **education** services, MVAC also provides Head Start services in **health, disabilities, mental health, social services, nutrition and transportation** to prepare families & children for school readiness.

PARENT & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

- Parent & family engagement is the cornerstone of Head Start. It is our philosophy that the *Parent* is the first *Teacher* of their child.
- In March 2016, MVAC was awarded a *2016 MN Community Action Partnership Promising Practice Award* for our positive father engagement programming. The Strong Fathers-Strong Families curriculum continues to be a strong component of involving males in our Head Start program. Five specially planned events throughout the year involving the significant male figures in the children's lives provided fun & engaging, interactive activities such as Bring Your Dad to Head Start, play night, science night, book night, and math night. MVAC is partnering with the Fairmont Area Schools to provide support in implementing the Strong Fathers-Strong Families approach in their school system with families.

EDUCATION

- MVAC's Head Start program uses The Creative Curriculum and incorporates monthly 'Studies Approach' vs. 'Themes' into the lesson plans. The Study Approach is a method of integrating content learning through children's in-depth investigation of a meaningful topic. Children raise questions about the topic and find answers to their questions. Each Study guides Teachers through the process of conducting 6-week long investigations with children. The study is integrated throughout the day and in all interest areas. Learning experiences involve many content areas and skills.
- MVAC received funding (\$165,505.68) from the MN Dept of Education to serve children with Pathway II Early Learning Scholarships. These scholarships allowed us to serve extra children from off our wait list, provide enhancements such as extra support staff in the classrooms, bussing, and special parent & family events.
- There were 267 kindergarten-aged children that transitioned out of Head Start in May 2016.

HEALTH

- Ensured that 520 children were screened for hearing and vision through our Head Start program.
- At the spring Parent-Teacher conference, the parents are provided with an End of Year Health Summary that includes information on their child's immunizations, screening results, and the date of the most recent developmental, physical and dental exam. An individual Educational Portfolio is given to each family that can be shared with the child's next educational setting.

MENTAL HEALTH

- MVAC was again awarded Social/Emotional AmeriCorps LEAP Volunteer Members (through Southern MN Initiative Foundation) to serve in the Mankato, Waseca, St. James and St. Peter Head Start classrooms. These LEAP (Learning Early Achieves Potential) members helped support the Head Start teaching staff by providing individual social emotional support to the children in these classrooms.
- MVAC partners with Counseling Services of Southern MN (CSSM) to provide mental health consultation services to Head Start parents and staff. CSSM staff are co-located at our Mankato Head Start site to provide family counseling services. Mental Health Consultants also observe children in our classrooms and offer regular reflective consultation to our home base staff.

SOCIAL SERVICES

- Each year, a variety of goals are set with all families based on the needs of the parent such as obtaining a GED and post secondary education, finding a medical home, finding better housing, and setting dental and/or medical appointments. Family Partnership Agreements were planned with all families to help develop trusting relationships with the families, & to use the family strengths to develop their particular goals. We use our ChildPlus database system to track the progress of the Family Outcomes.
- This year we placed Foster Grandparents in our Mankato, Blue Earth, New Ulm & St. Peter Head Start classrooms. The Foster Grandparent program, part of Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota Senior Corps. The four assigned volunteers we had helped the children, serving as tutors and mentors. The children get the extra attention they need to succeed and schools expand their capacity to provide the support kids need to learn. The added benefit is that the children develop relationships with caring adults that extend out in to the community.

NUTRITION & TRANSPORTATION

- Many Head Start families benefitted from the local, healthy, fresh food offered through MVAC's own Food Hub. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares were donated to families and they received weekly summer fruits and vegetables to bring home to their families. Many tried new & different foods for the very first time; and enjoyed them!
- MVAC was again a recipient of 10 child passenger safety car seats in February through a grant from the MN Office of Traffic Safety. The types of car seats included: convertible, combination, high back booster and low back booster. The conditions of the grant were that the car seats must go to low income families. Each seat distributed required a one-on-one or group presentation that includes a thorough educational component. Delivery of this educational piece and distribution of the seat was done by a person who is current in Child Passenger Safety certification. The car seats were given to families that did not have a car seat, were using an expired car seat or were in need of the next size/type of car seat.

DISABILITIES

- Head Start partners with many local school districts to offer the Head Start classroom as a child's IEP (Individual Education Plan) placement. District Para's and Special Education staff work directly in the Head Start classroom with assigned children.
- 135 total preschool children, or 26% of the children served in our Head Start program, had diagnosed disabilities.

BIRTH-3 HOME BASE

- MVAC receives State monies to operate a Birth-3 Home Base program. On July 1, 2015, the program expanded to serve 81 slots and includes the counties of Blue Earth, Le Sueur, Nicollet and Watonwan Counties.
- This innovative program has focused specifically on providing supportive Head Start home visiting services to those that are homeless or in transitional housing, teen parents, child protection cases, county human services referrals, school district referrals, refugees/immigrants, and/or those in abuse shelters. Home Visitors work on building a strong, trusting relationship with each parent using the Growing Great Kids Curriculum model.
- This program option uses Teaching Strategies GOLD online assessment tool to monitor appropriate child growth & progress for school readiness of the infants & toddlers served.
- The Birth-3 program served 22 children with a diagnosed disability or 18% of the total enrollment.

“Early childhood education begins early, even before birth.”

WHAT PARENTS SAY ABOUT HEAD START

In spring 2016, Head Start parents were asked to fill out a Parent Program Evaluation. 559 evaluations were given out and 345 (62%) families responded. Some comments that were written by Head Start families:

“I love our Home Visitor, she was a huge influence on my son’s learning and development. It was nice to get some one-on-one home attention; builds strong bonds.”

“Head Start has helped my child so much; he started preschool with an IEP and will enter Kindergarten without an IEP!”

“Amazing help for our family this year; they have helped us grow as a family!”

“We love Head Start and have come a long way since we started. I love how much Head Start helps remind me to be the best parent I can be.”

“Gives my child time to spend with other kids her age and make friends.”

“This program is wonderful, my Home Visitor has been the best thing that has happened to my daughter, she really helped her blossom into a bright smart girl.”

“Thank you! Head Start has made me a better parent.”



AGENCY'S EFFORTS TO PREPARE CHILDREN FOR KINDERGARTEN

- Program Long Range Goal: 80% of Head Start children will meet the targeted score for School Readiness in the Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment (TSG) tool
- MVAC continues to maintain its 4-Star Accelerated MN Parent Aware Rating for all our center/combo licensed classroom sites.
- The Head Start program uses the Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers, Teaching Strategies GOLD online assessment tool, and IGDI's (Individual Growth & Development Indicators) to show growth & progress of an individual child, classroom and the overall program.
- We collect & report outcomes data on all children 3 times per year, have conferences with each parent and submit the data to our funding sources and community partners.
- The Office of Head Start released a newly revised Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five in 2015. It is designed to represent the continuum of learning for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. This Framework replaces the old Head Start Development and Early Learning Framework for 3-5 year olds, issued in 2010. This new Framework is grounded in a comprehensive body of research regarding what young children should know and be able to do during these formative years.

Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework 2015

| | CENTRAL DOMAINS | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| | APPROACHES TO LEARNING | SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT | LANGUAGE AND LITERACY | COGNITION | PERCEPTUAL, MOTOR, AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT |
| ▲ INFANT/TODDLER DOMAINS | Approaches to Learning | Social and Emotional Development | Language and Communication | Cognition | Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development |
| ● PRESCHOOLER DOMAINS | Approaches to Learning | Social and Emotional Development | Language and Communication Literacy | Mathematics Development Scientific Reasoning | Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development |



Experts tell us that 90% of all brain development occurs by the age of five. If we don't begin thinking about education in the early years, our children are at risk of falling behind by the time they start Kindergarten."

- Robert. L. Ehrlich

MVAC's Head Start School Readiness Goals 2015-2016

MVAC's Head Start School Readiness Goals for Ages 0-5

Physical Development and Health

- Children will control small muscles for manipulation and exploring.
- Children will control large muscles for movement, navigation and balance.
- Children will learn and demonstrate appropriate self-health, nutrition and safety habits.

Social and Emotional Development

- Children will develop healthy relationships and interactions with adults and peers.
- Children will participate cooperatively in groups, display self-regulation skills and internalize classroom rules, routines and directions.

Approaches to Learning

- Children will use curiosity, engagement and persistence to extend their learning.
- Children will engage in diverse approaches to learning that reflects social and cultural contexts such as biology, family history, culture and individual learning styles.
- Children will learn and use words to describe what they are thinking and doing.

Language and Literacy

- Children will listen to and understand language. (receptive)
- Children will use increasingly complex and varied vocabulary when speaking. (expressive)
- Children who are dual language learners will demonstrate progress in the ability to listen, understand and speak English and home language.
- Children will engage appropriately with stories and books and show an appreciation and knowledge of how print works.

Cognition and General Knowledge

- Children will use math in everyday routines and experiences.
- Children will engage in exploring their environment through observation and manipulation to gain a better understanding of information and activities in their surroundings.
Children will use their skills in remembering information and connecting new and known experiences and information.



"Teaching... we're not in it for the income; we're in it for the outcome."

Teaching Strategies GOLD Child Outcomes Assessment Data MVAC 2015-2016 School Year

Agency Efforts to Prepare Children for School

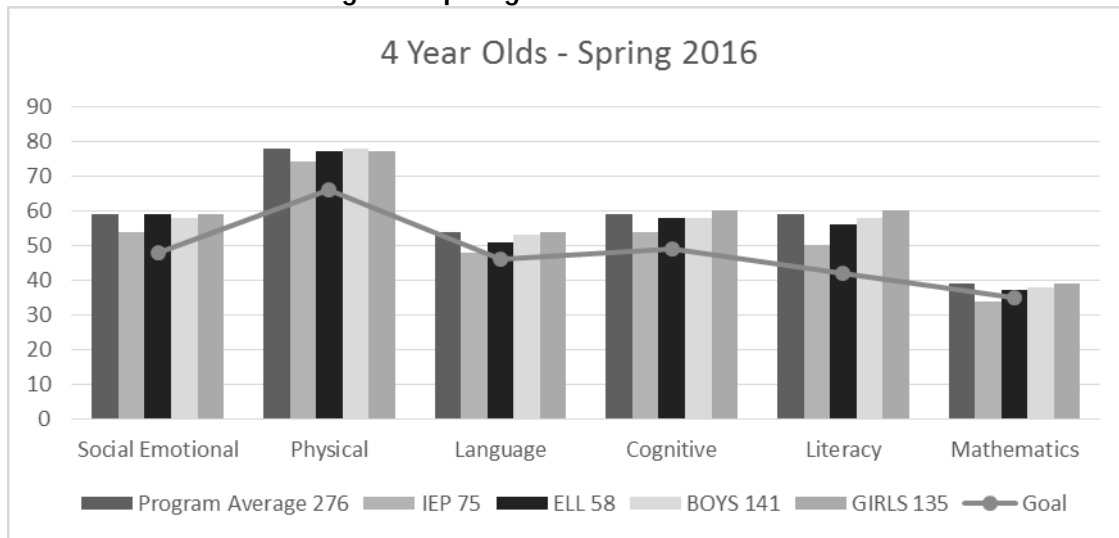
Program Long Range Goal: 80% of Head Start children will meet the targeted score for School Readiness in the Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment (TSG) tool

The 4 year old children (276) served in MVAC's Head Start programs in the spring of the 2015-16 year that met the Target Score in each area:

| | Fall | Spring | |
|------------------|------|--------|-----------------|
| Social Emotional | 42% | 89% | Increase of 47% |
| Physical | 53% | 93% | Increase of 40% |
| Language | 51% | 88% | Increase of 37% |
| Cognitive | 44% | 91% | Increase of 47% |
| Literacy | 45% | 90% | Increase of 45% |
| Math | 24% | 71% | Increase of 47% |

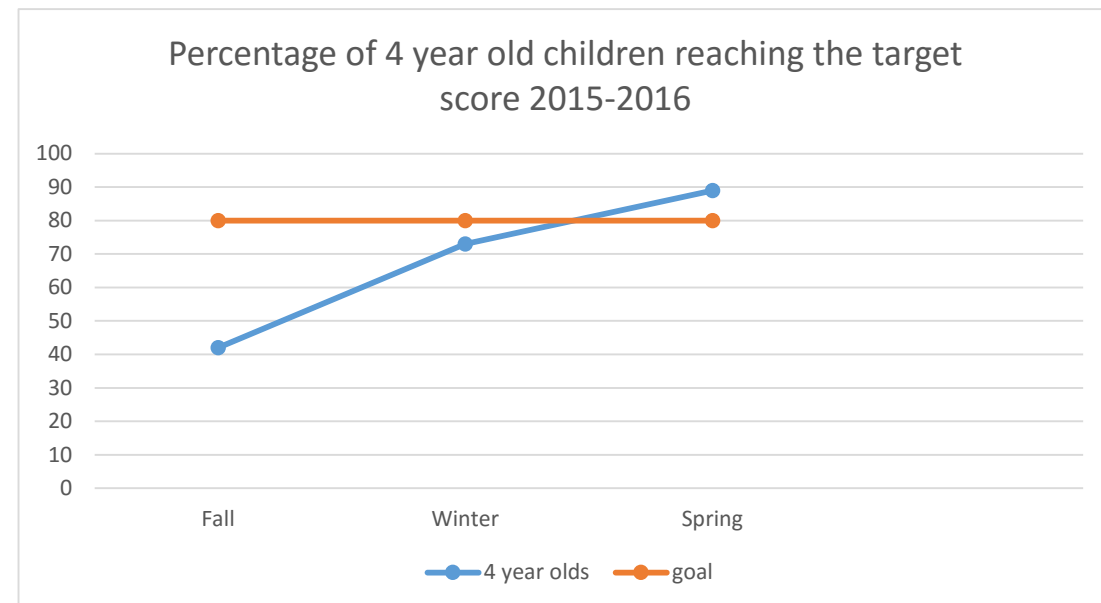
Total Average: 87%

4 Year olds - Child Progress Spring 2016



10 more children than winter; 4 boys, 6 girls, and 4 more children with an IEP

Social- Emotional increased by 6 points; Physical increased by 12 points; Language increased by 4 points; Cognitive increased by 4 points; Literacy increased by 9 points; Math increased by 5 points

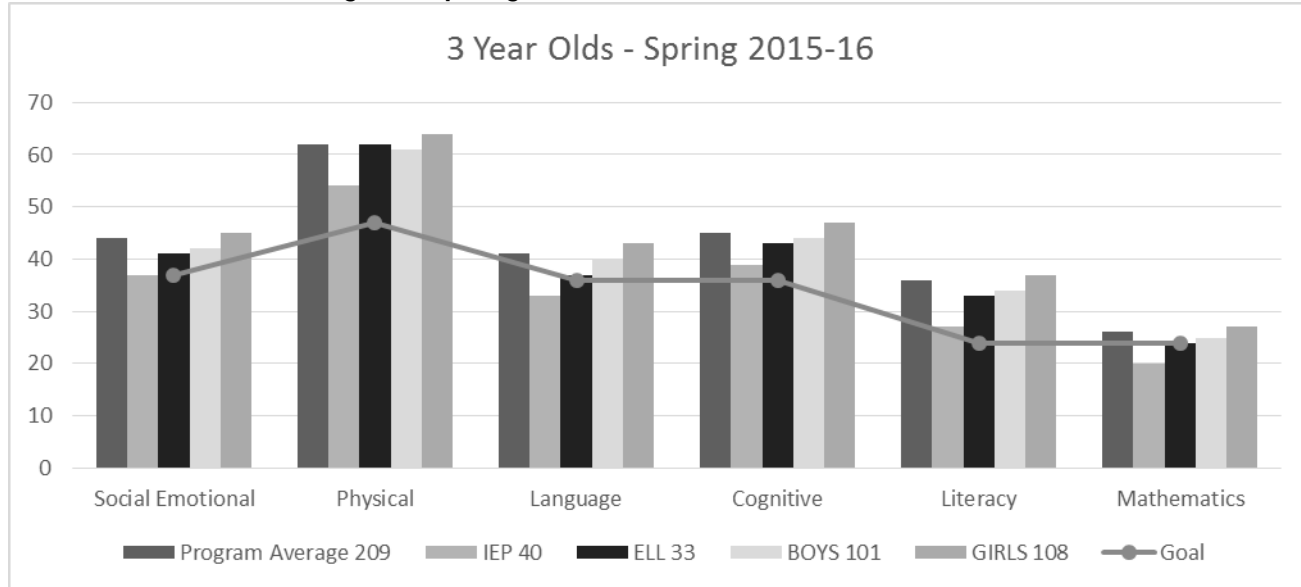


The 3 year old children (209) served in MVAC's Head Start programs in the spring of the 2015-16 year that met the Target Score:

| | Fall | Spring | |
|------------------|------|--------|-----------------|
| Social Emotional | 35% | 77% | Increase of 42% |
| Physical | 67% | 90% | Increase of 23% |
| Language | 49% | 76% | Increase of 27% |
| Cognitive | 57% | 84% | Increase of 27% |
| Literacy | 47% | 76% | Increase of 29% |
| Math | 19% | 65% | Increase of 46% |

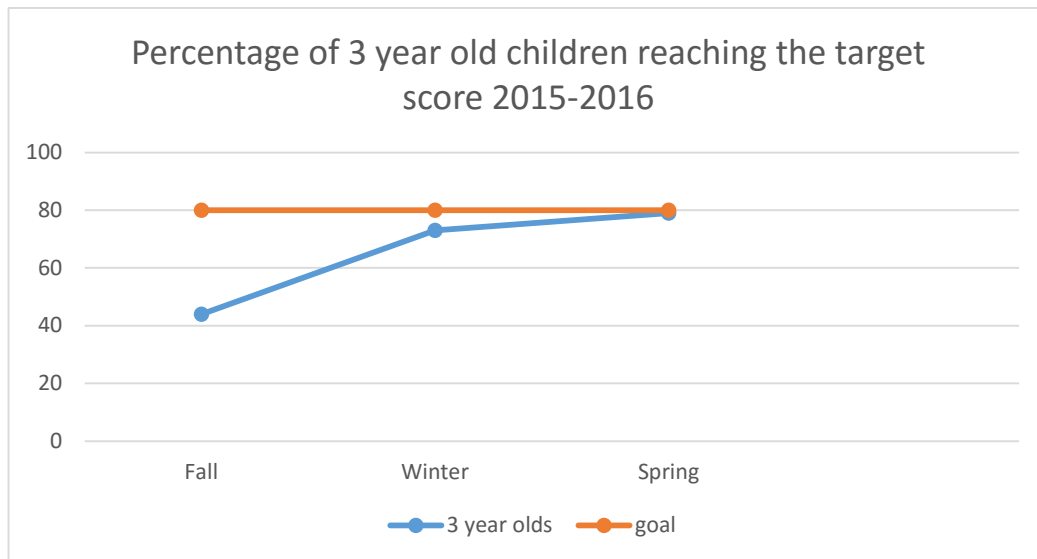
Total Average: 78%

3 Year olds - Child Progress Spring 2016



26 more children than winter; 13 boys and 13 girls and 11 more with an IEP

Social-Emotional increased by 4 points; Physical increased by 5 points; Language increased by 2 points; Cognitive increased by 3 points; Literacy increased by 6 points; Math increased by 4 points



*Data collected from Teaching Strategies GOLD online assessment tool

Head Start WORKS
for children, families and communities!