



Minnesota Valley Action Council, Inc.

Head Start Program

05CH8395-000

Annual Report to Public
July 2019 – June 2020

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, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca and Watonwan counties.



MVAC

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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.

This report has been prepared in order to comply with the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007 Sec.644. 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."

COVID-19 Pandemic

In mid-March of 2020, a global pandemic entered our communities. It impacted us in ways we could never have imagined. For MVAC’s Head Start program, we shut down our offices & classrooms & sent our staff home to work remotely. We continued to stay connected to our families virtually and continued to provide services & resources as best we could amidst all the restrictions and health & safety guidance coming at us in all directions. We ended our program year on May 22, 2020 and took a break from services until we started a summer learning option in July for 3 weeks; that was also done virtually with 97 eligible children & families. The results of this year’s data reporting will look much different than in previous year due to program closures in March –May 2020 and community resources & services were also closed, preventing families to obtain needed & required Head Start services. With many unknowns still out there, we look forward to joining our Head Start children & families face to face for the new program year.

(A.) HEAD START FUNDING SOURCES for April 1, 2019 –June 30, 2020

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: 588 children (467 federal; 97 state; 7 CSBG, 34 MDE Pathway II)

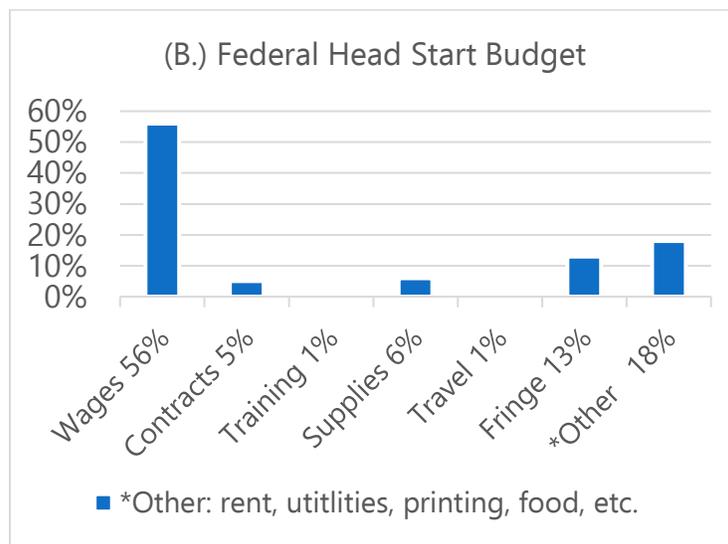
Federal Head Start Funds	\$4,038,176
Federal Training & Technical Assistance Funds	\$41,409
Minnesota Head Start Funds	\$780,286
CSBG (Community Services Block Grant)	\$50,000
MN Dept. of Education Early Learning Scholarships	\$165,000
Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP food Reimbursement)	<u>\$148,744</u>
Total \$\$	\$5,223,615

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

\$1,019,896 Required

\$1,021,439 Total collected

- Rent (\$608,347)
- Volunteer time (\$410,320)
- Goods/materials donated (\$2772)



Head Start Employees = 115

Program Volunteers = 1,243

(C.) ENROLLMENT

- Total actual enrollment for the year: 670 (including all adds & drops)
(532 federal kids, 138 state kids)
 - 77% of participants (516) were income eligible
 - 13% (90) of participants were over-income
 - Average monthly child attendance 83.75%
 - 5 pregnant women were served in 2019-20
 - Foster children: 23
 - Homeless children : 48

(D.) MONITORING REVIEWS

- Our program had one scheduled review in the past year from federal sources. Focus Area 1 occurred in April 2020. Results from that review included one area of concern regarding staff qualifications. One Teacher did not have Head Start Teacher qualifications. The Teacher is enrolled in college courses to complete a BS degree in early childhood education. We had four MN DHS Rule 3 Licensing annual site visits. Locations that were visited in fall 2019 included Le Center (10.21.19), Blue Earth (10.23.19), Fairmont (10.23.19), and Waseca (10.21.19). Those visits resulted in 6 citations at the Le Center location, 4 citations at Blue Earth, 4 citations at Fairmont and 8 citations at Waseca. The citations at all locations included annual training requirements, required documentation on forms, food menu requirements, and specific wording on health policies/forms. All citations were corrected within 30 days and documentation was submitted to DHS to fulfill the correction requirements.

(D.) ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT

- Minnesota Valley Action Council, Inc. contracts for and receives a required annual audit. There were no findings from the July 2020 audit. MVAC is considered low risk & compliant with generally accepted accounting practices.

(E.) MEDICAL AND DENTAL EXAM RATE

- 47% children received a medical exam and 48% of the children received a dental exam. *Note: these numbers are unusually low due to program closures in March 2020 and local medical & dental clinics were closed for preventative care due to COVID-19.



HEALTH SERVICES

- Number of children at the end of enrollment year with health insurance: 619
- Number of children at the end of enrollment year up to date on all immunizations: 545
- 322 preschool children received preventative dental care

Ensured that
620 children
were
screened for
hearing and
vision

Mental Health Services:

25 children were referred by the program for mental health services outside of Head Start.

Disabilities:

110 total preschool children, or 21% of the children served in our Head Start program, had diagnosed disabilities.

Nutrition:

This last program year, MVAC Head Start promoted Farm to Early Care initiatives in the classroom and on home visits with planned taste testing of new foods and sending fun easy recipes to families through the Learning Genie app. We received a donated garden plot on the campus of School Sisters of Notre Dame in Mankato. Produce seeds were planted and will be harvested in fall 2020 to be given to Head Start families or used in a family activity.

(F.) PARENT & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES



- Head Start practices the “whole family” approach when working with children, parents and caregivers. We believe that the child will be more prepared for school and life if the whole family feels supported and welcome in Head Start classrooms and at Parent Connect activities.
- Our staff meet with parents to listen to their family story, needs, dreams and ambitions. The staff help families develop achievement plans in all areas of life: housing, transportation, health, higher education, their child’s education and nutrition, parenting skills, financial security and many other areas that are determined to be important to each family.
- Parent Connect activities are planned throughout the year to connect parents with the Head Start staff, other Head Start parents and to interact with their child in a school setting. *Make Parenting a Pleasure* is our research & evidence-based parenting curriculum used with parents throughout the school months; modules are focused on self-care, stress & anger management, understanding child development, communication skills, and positive discipline.

- Parent & family engagement is the cornerstone of Head Start. It is our philosophy that the *Parent* is the first *Teacher* of their child.
- MVAC functions under the Head Start Parent, Family & Community Engagement Framework (PFCE) which emphasizes 7 family outcomes which results in positive & goal-oriented relationships. Staff help the family be successful as parents & to achieve goals, dreams & ambitions.



1. Family Well-Being

Parents and families are safe, healthy, and have increased financial security.



2. Positive Parent-Child Relationships

Beginning with transitions to parenthood, parents and families develop warm relationships that nurture their child's learning and development.



3. Families as Lifelong Educators

Parents and families observe, guide, promote, and participate in the everyday learning of their children at home, school and in their communities.



4. Families as Learners

Parents and families advance their own learning interests through education, training and other experiences that support their parenting, careers, and life goals.



5. Family Engagement in Transitions

Parents and families support and advocate for their child's learning and development as they transition to a new learning environment, including Early Head Start (EHS) to Head Start, EHS/Head Start to other early learning environments, and Head Start to Kindergarten through elementary school.

7. Families as Advocates and Leaders

Parents and families participate in leadership development, decision-making, program policy development, or community and state organizing activities to improve children's development and learning experiences.



6. Family Connections to Peers and Community

Parents and families form connections with peers and mentors in formal or informal social networks that are supportive and/or educational and that enhance social well-being and community life.



EARLY LEARNING

- MVAC offers Head Start home-based programming, along with center and combination- based options in our 9 county service area.
- MVAC's Head Start program uses The Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) child assessment tool.
- MVAC received funding (\$165,000) from the MN Dept. of Education to serve children with Pathway II Early Learning Scholarships at our licensed center-based locations in Mankato, St. Peter, New Ulm, Le Center, Fairmont, Blue Earth, Waseca & St. James. These scholarships allowed us to provide enhancements such as extra support staff in the classrooms, bussing, and mental health consultation services.
- Our full day classroom sites include New Ulm, Le Center, Blue Earth, St. James and Mankato. Children come 5 days per week for 6 ½ hours per day.
- MVAC utilized the staff-child interaction observation tools CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) and HOVRS (HOMe Visiting Rating Scale) to assess quality staff-child interactions.
- There were 256 kindergarten-aged children that transitioned out of Head Start in May 2020
- MVAC also provided 3 weeks of summer learning in July 2020 for 97 children moving on to kindergarten or those on IEP's (Individual Education Plan). The Office of Head Start provided one-time supplemental COVID-19 emergency funds to help support those eligible children who missed out on in-person services during March –May 2020.

FAMILY & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- 212 fathers/father figures were actively involved in their child's Head Start experiences such as home visits, and/or parent-teacher conferences.
- 435 families received referrals & follow up services throughout the program year with emergency/crisis intervention, housing assistance, health education, substance abuse prevention/treatment, child abuse/neglect, domestic violence, child support assistance, parenting education, marriage education, mental health services, adult education/GED/ESL, job training, asset building, etc.
- During the program year, 25 parents completed high school or were awarded their GED, 10 parents completed an associates degree, and 6 parents completed a bachelor's or advanced degree.

TRANSPORTATION



- MVAC offered bussing to 143 Head Start children in the last school year

HOME BASE – Birth to 5

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

- MVAC receives State monies to operate a Birth to 5 mixed-age Home Base option in all our service counties. We served 97 slots for pregnant women, infants and toddlers in our service area, with a total accumulative enrollment of 138 children, including 5 pregnant women.
- 16 children served were considered homeless; 6 children served were in foster care.
- 31 children were served with a diagnosed disability or 23% of the total enrollment.
- We also served an additional 7 slots of birth -3 aged children in a mixed-age home base model in Sibley and Faribault counties with CSBG (Community Services Block Grant) funds. These 3 Home Visitors had a caseload that included birth- 5 year old children, some being siblings from the same family.
- This program option uses Teaching Strategies GOLD online assessment tool to monitor appropriate child growth & progress for school readiness of the infants & toddlers served and uses Growing Great Kids curriculum on home visits.

HEAR WHAT OUR PARENTS SAY ABOUT MVAC'S HEAD START:

In spring 2020, all Head Start parents were asked to fill out an online Parent Survey via Survey Monkey. 564 evaluations were sent out, however, we had a very low response rate of 11% due COVID stay at home orders. Some comments that were collected by our Head Start families:

"I was well informed of how my son was doing and things that I could work on in order to excel. There was specific lesson plans set for me that worked well."

"There was never a time when my son did not want to see his Head Start teacher and was always excited to attend classroom days."

"The staff are very helpful, friendly and very respectful."

"My Head Start teacher was very helpful in teaching me new ways that I can help my son learn, her lessons will stick with me forever."

"My Head Start teacher always kept me well informed and made sure I knew how to keep my son involved and learning new things."

"I have some difficulty with distance learning and my Head Start teacher made sure I had all the tools and information to make it much easier."

"Routine is very important and my Head Start teacher stressed the importance of attendance. She even scheduled some classroom days around all of her students schedules for better attendance."

"My son learned about gardening and tried new foods that he would never try for me."

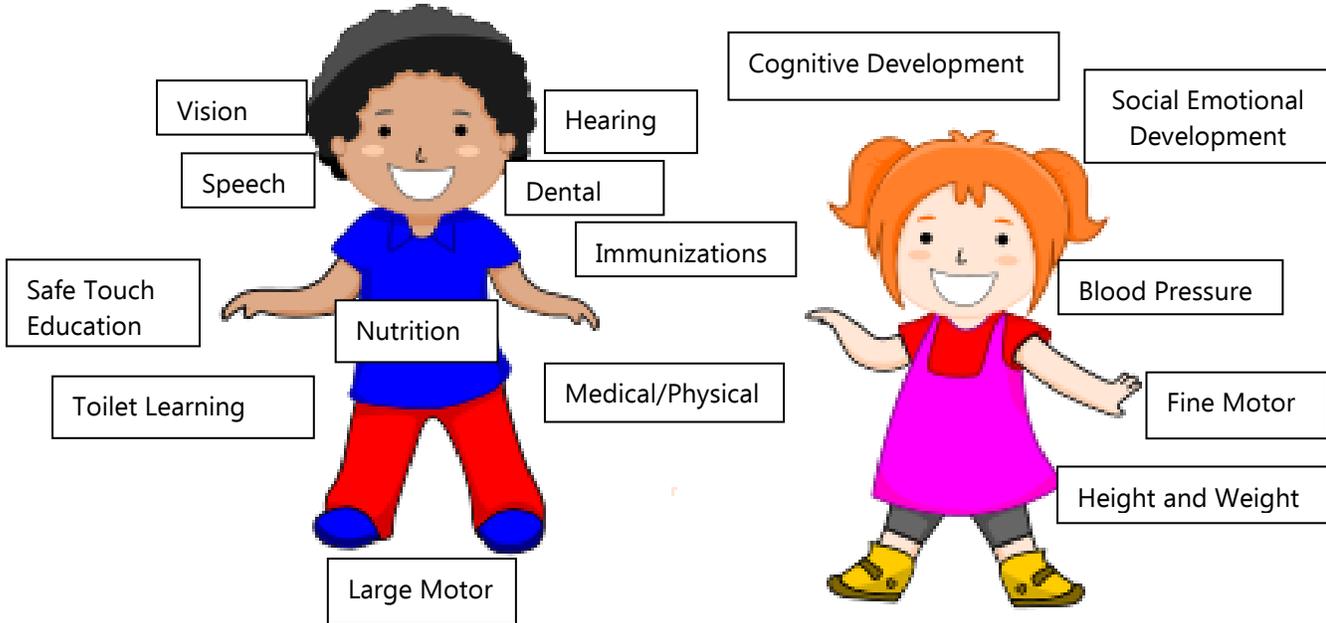
"I don't think I could have done it during distance learning without Head Starts help."

"Head Start was very supportive during Covid-19, they called and offered help at all times. Thank you so much."

"I really enjoyed the parent meetings. The tips I received there were very helpful. My son was always so excited for dad's night."



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.

*Head Start programs prepare America’s most vulnerable young children
to succeed in school and in life beyond school.*

*To achieve this, MVAC delivers Head Start comprehensive services to children and families
in core areas of early learning, health, and family well-being while engaging parents
as partners every step of the way.*

*Head Start’s comprehensive approach to school readiness has been proven successful
for the past 50+ years and ensures the services to the child & family include much more
than just education and sets us apart from other early learning environments.*



(G.) 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 by spring observation period.
- MVAC continues to maintain its Four-Star Accelerated MN Parent Aware Rating for all our center/combo licensed classroom sites.
- The Head Start program uses Growing Great Kids, Inc., The Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers, and Teaching Strategies GOLD online assessment tool 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.
- MVAC uses the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five and is designed to represent the continuum of learning for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. This 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

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	Mathematics Development	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
			Literacy	Scientific Reasoning	



MVAC's Head Start School Readiness Goals 2019-2020

MVAC's Head Start School Readiness Goals for Ages birth-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

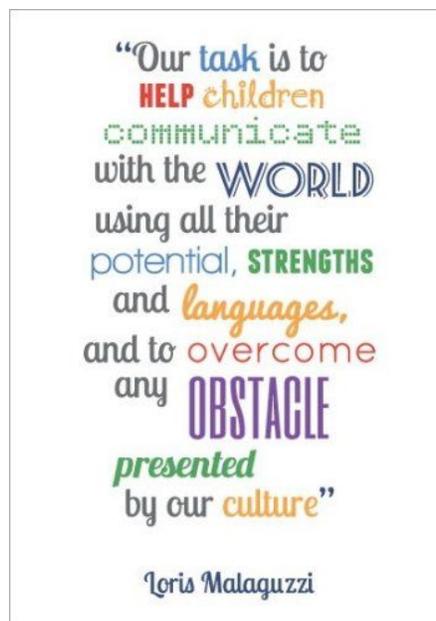
- Children will use curiosity, engagement and persistence to extend their learning.
- Children will engage in diverse approaches to learning that reflects social and cultural contexts such as biology, family history, culture and individual learning styles.
- Children will learn and use words to describe 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 Strategies GOLD Child Outcomes Assessment Data

MVAC Head Start 2019-2020 School Year

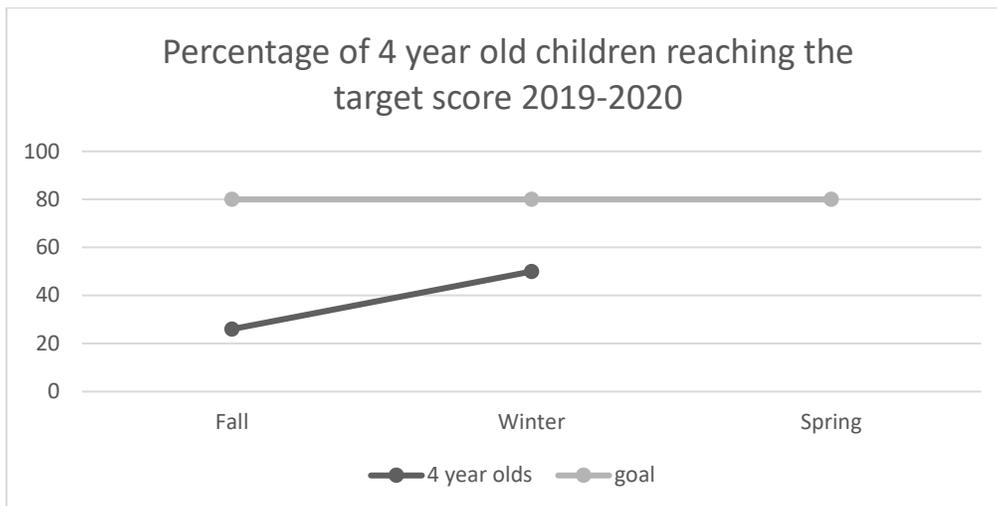
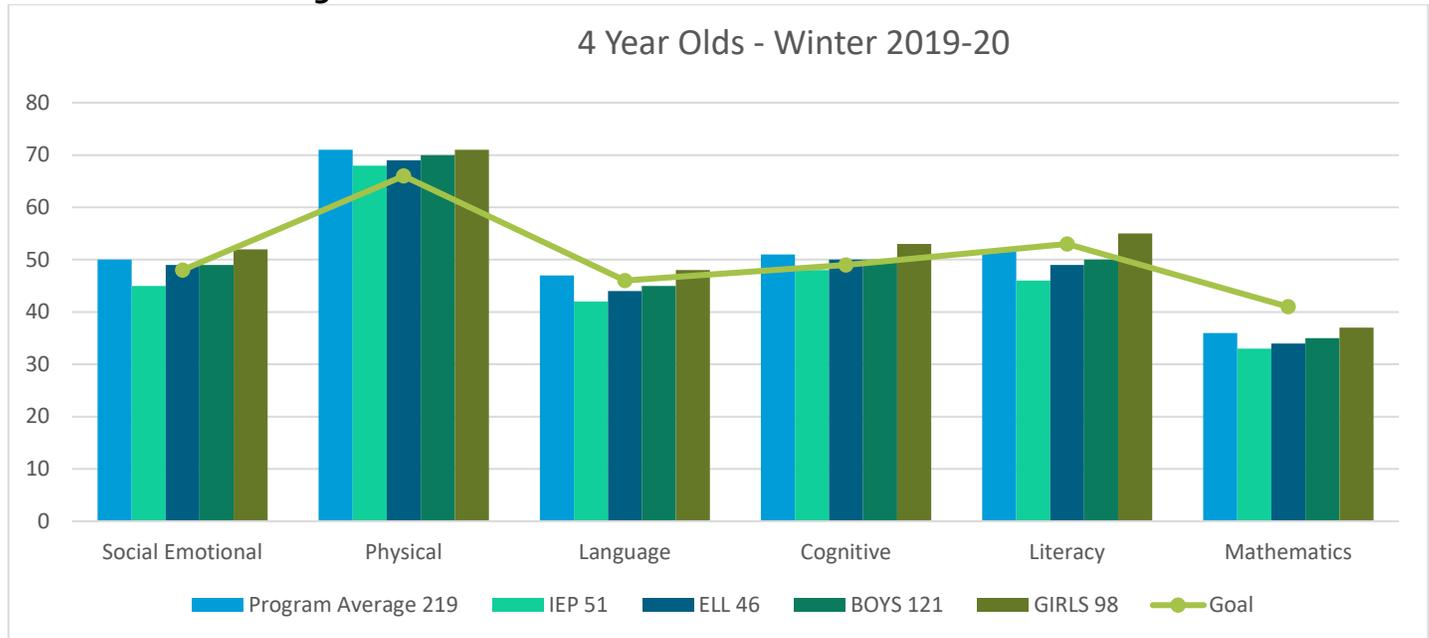
Agency Efforts to Prepare Children for School

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

*Due to COVID-19 restrictions, our program was unable to complete spring checkpoint assessment data on children. There were 219 four-year old children served in MVAC's Head Start program by the winter of 2019-20 year. 110 (50%) of those children met the Target Score.

	Fall 2019	Winter	*Spring 2020
Social Emotional	37%	64%	NA
Physical	51%	77%	NA
Language	40%	62%	NA
Cognitive	36%	65%	NA
Literacy	26%	47%	NA
Math	15%	36%	NA

4 Year olds - Child Progress Winter 2020

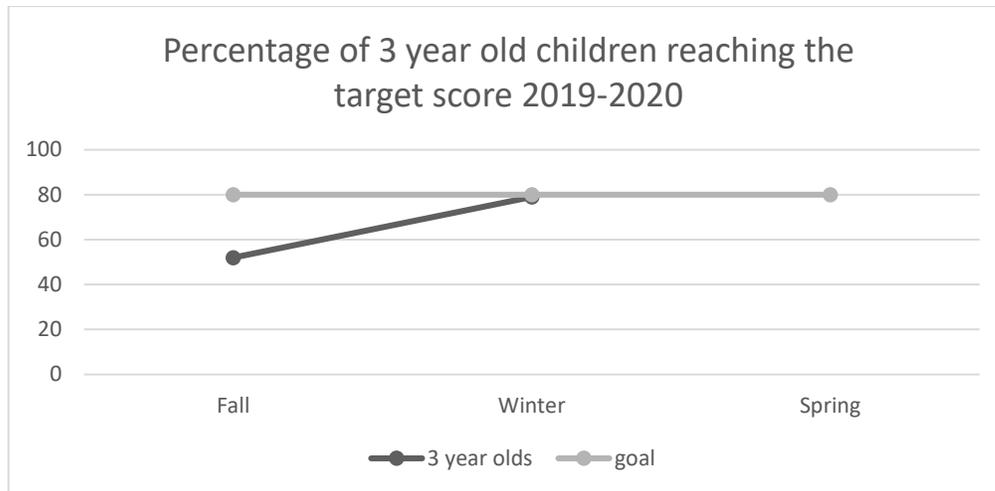
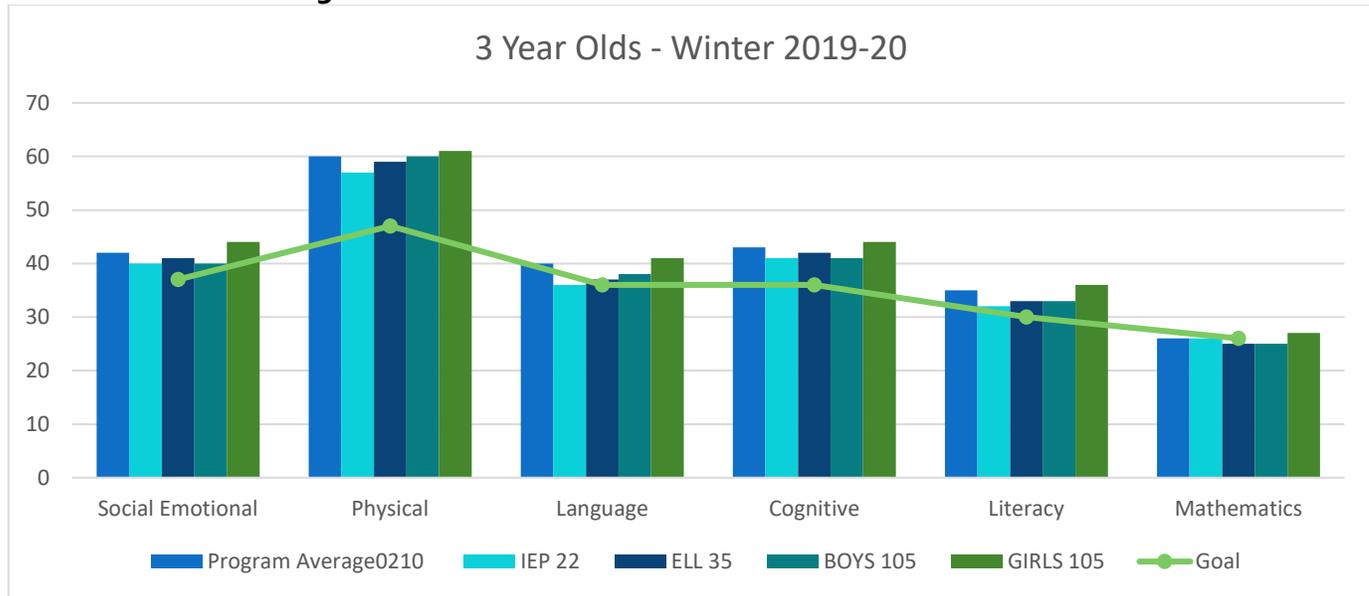


Assessment data continued....

*Due to COVID-19 restrictions, our program was unable to complete spring checkpoint assessment data on children. There were 211 three-year old children served in MVAC's Head Start program by winter of the 2019-20 year. 169 (80%) children met the Target Score:

	Fall 2019	Winter	*Spring 2020
Social Emotional	52%	78%	NA
Physical	82%	94%	NA
Language	49%	75%	NA
Cognitive	62%	87%	NA
Literacy	32%	64%	NA
Math	19%	49%	NA

3 Year olds – Child Progress Winter 2020



“Teaching children is an accomplishment; getting children excited about learning is an achievement”
-Robert John Meehan

*Data collected from Teaching Strategies GOLD online assessment tool

Head Start WORKS for children, families and communities!

Visit us at www.mnvac.org