



Minnesota Valley Action Council, Inc. Head Start Program

05CH010868
Annual Report to Public
July 2020 – June 2021

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.

MVAC 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
706 North Victory Drive, Mankato, MN 56001-6803
507-345-6822 or 800-767-7139
Fax: 507-345-2414
www.mnvac.org

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 Updates

We are proud to share how we still delivered quality school readiness services to our Head Start families in the past year. We operated in fall 2020 with a hybrid of smaller in-person classes, mixed with virtual lessons and offered virtual and in-person home visiting. Throughout this program year, some families were still fearful of the potential spread of COVID-19 out in the community and at health facilities, thus preventing families to obtain needed & required Head Start health services. In June and July 2021 we provided 6 weeks of school readiness learning packets that were delivered to preschool families. They enjoyed a variety of themed activities and fresh produce taste test samples. With many unknowns still out there, we look forward to again joining our Head Start children & families face to face for the new program year.

(A.) HEAD START FUNDING SOURCES for April 1, 2020 –June 30, 2021

Federal Head Start Grant April 1-March 31

State Head Start Grant July 1 – June 30

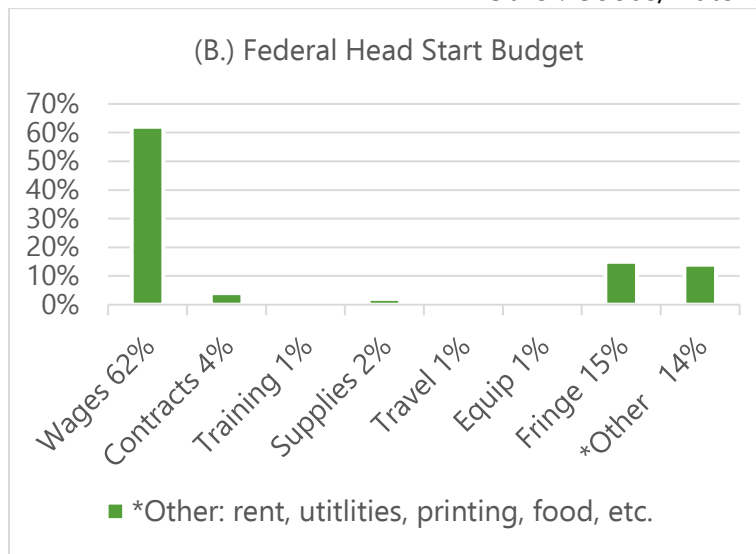
MN Dept. of Education Pathway II Early Learning Scholarships July 1 – June 30

Total: 562 children (467 federal; 88 state; 7 CSBG)

Federal Head Start Funds	\$3,996,058
Federal Training & Technical Assistance Funds	\$41,409
Minnesota Head Start Funds	\$707,633
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>\$91,097</u>
Federal COVID-19 funding to be fully utilized by March 2023	\$410,403 CARES \$140,553 CRRSA <u>\$558,766 ARP</u>
Grand Total \$\$	<u>\$6,160,919</u>

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

- \$959,332 Required**
- \$934,745 Total collected** based on grant \$ used
 - Rent (**\$657,917**)
 - Volunteer time (**\$269,631**)
 - Other: Goods/materials donated (**\$7,197**)



(C.) ENROLLMENT

- Total actual enrollment for the year: 589 (including all adds & drops)
(460 federal slots, 129 state slots)
 - 77% of participants (453) were income eligible
 - 15% (86) of participants were over-income
- Average monthly center child attendance 81.87%
- 8 pregnant women were served in 2020-21
 - Foster children: 24
 - Homeless children : 26

(D.) MONITORING REVIEWS

- * Our program did not have any scheduled federal reviews after April 2020. We had phone call monitoring discussions with MN DHS Licensors for our 9 center sites between September and December 2020– Mankato, Blue Earth, Waseca, Le Center, Fairmont, New Ulm, St. James and St. Peter. These were check-ins for health & safety and COVID-related questioning as the Licensors were not allowed to monitor in person due to COVID restrictions. These calls went well with no noted violations or issues to address. In May 2021, our Mankato Fitzgerald center site was visited in person by our DHS Licensor. One violation was noted –not having documentation of health consultant’s annual review of required health & safety policies. We immediately corrected this violation.

(D.) ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT

- * Minnesota Valley Action Council, Inc. contracts for and receives a required annual agency audit. There were no findings from the July 2021 audit. MVAC is considered low risk & compliant with generally accepted accounting practices.

(E.) MEDICAL AND DENTAL EXAM RATE

- * 70% children received a medical exam and 48% of the children received a dental exam. *Note: these numbers are unusually low due to local medical & dental clinics were closed, had long wait list times for appointments or had very limited hours for preventative care due to COVID-19.

A HEALTHY
OUTSIDE
STARTS FROM
THE INSIDE.

- Robert Ulrich -

(F.) 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.

- 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.

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

2. Positive Parent-Child Relationships



3. Families as Lifelong Educators



4. Families as Learners



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.

6. Family Connections to Peers and Community



7. Families as Advocates and Leaders



(G.) AGENCY’S EFFORTS TO PREPARE CHILDREN FOR KINDERGARTEN

- ✚ Program Long Range Goal: 80% of Head Start children will meet the target score in all domain areas of the Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment (TSG) tool and 100% of children will make progress towards the target score in all domain areas.
- ✚ MVAC is a Four-Star Accelerated MN Parent Aware Rated program for all our center/combo licensed classroom sites. ☆☆☆☆☆
- ✚ Growing Great Kids, Inc., The Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers, and Teaching Strategies GOLD online assessment tool are the curriculums we use 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
Birth-5 years
2020-2021

Long Range Goal: 80% of children will meet the target score in all domain areas of the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment and 100% of children will make progress towards the target score in all domain areas.

Short Term Objectives:

1. Approaches to Learning

- Children will demonstrate persistence and the ability to recall information to extend their learning.

2. Social and Emotional Development

- Children will develop healthy relationships and maintain positive interactions with peers.

3. Language and Literacy

- Children will repeat and generate rhyming words.
- Children who are dual language learners will demonstrate progress in the ability to listen, understand and speak English and home language.
- Children will make marks/write to represent objects or actions with increasingly sophisticated marks.

4. Cognition

- Children will develop a sense of number and quantity.

5. Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development

- Children will demonstrate increasing control, strength and coordination of small muscles for manipulation and exploring.



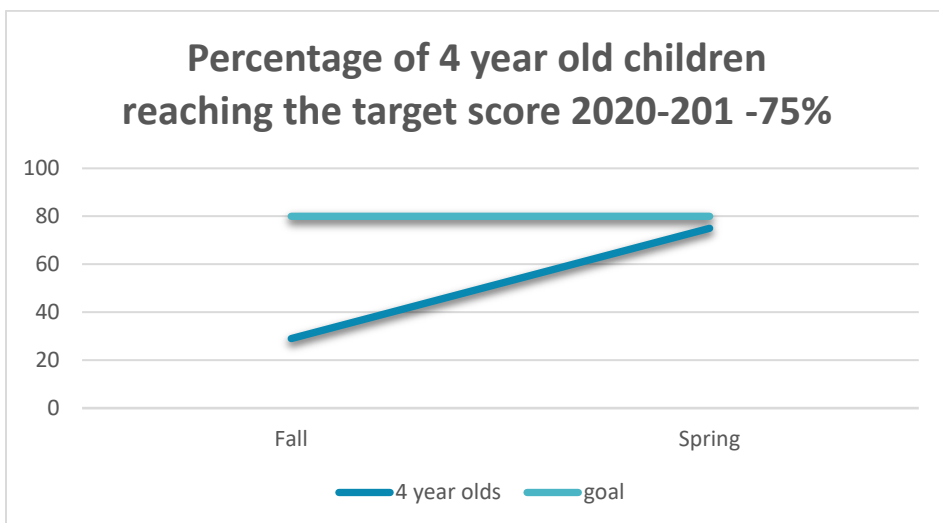
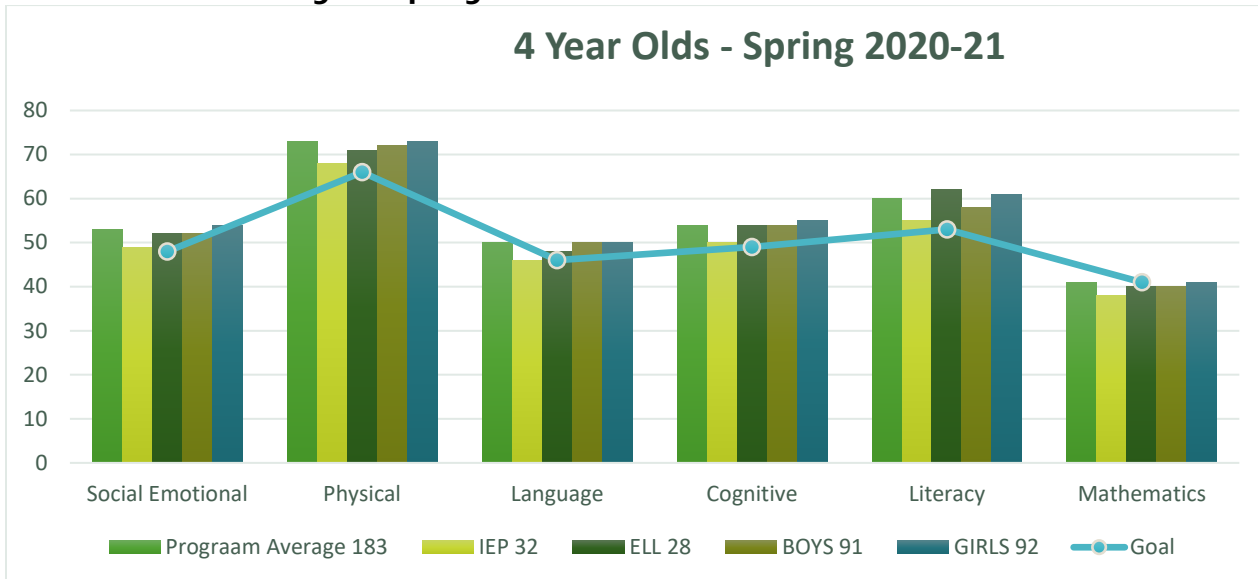
**Teaching Strategies GOLD Child Outcomes Assessment Data
MVAC Head Start 2020-2021 School Year
Agency Efforts to Prepare Children for School**

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, our program completed 2 assessment data checkpoints on children instead of 3. There were 183 four-year old children served in MVAC's Head Start program by the winter of 2020-21 year. 137 (75%) of those children met the Target Score.

	Fall 2020	*Winter	Spring 2021
Social Emotional	42%	NA	77%
Physical	51%	NA	79%
Language	44%	NA	77%
Cognitive	38%	NA	77%
Literacy	25%	NA	67%
Math	14%	NA	49%

4 Year olds - Child Progress Spring 2021



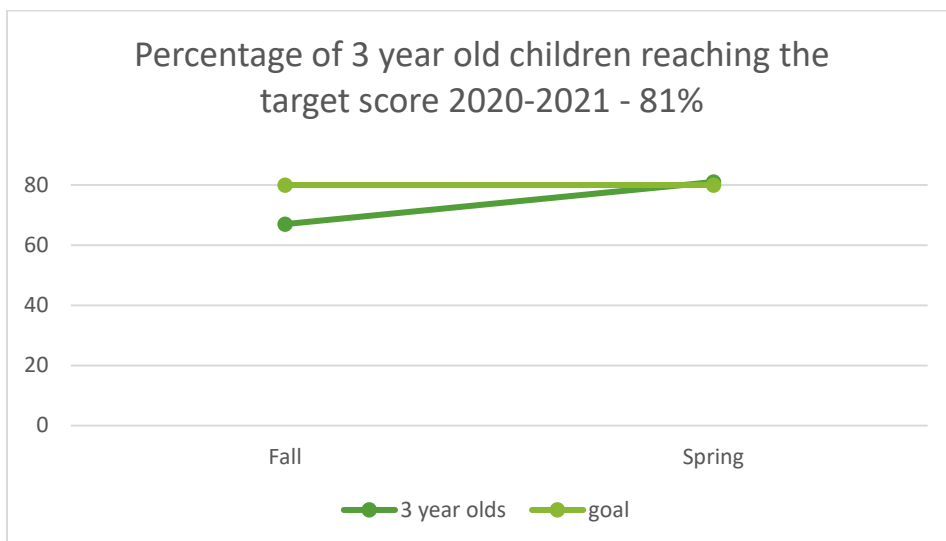
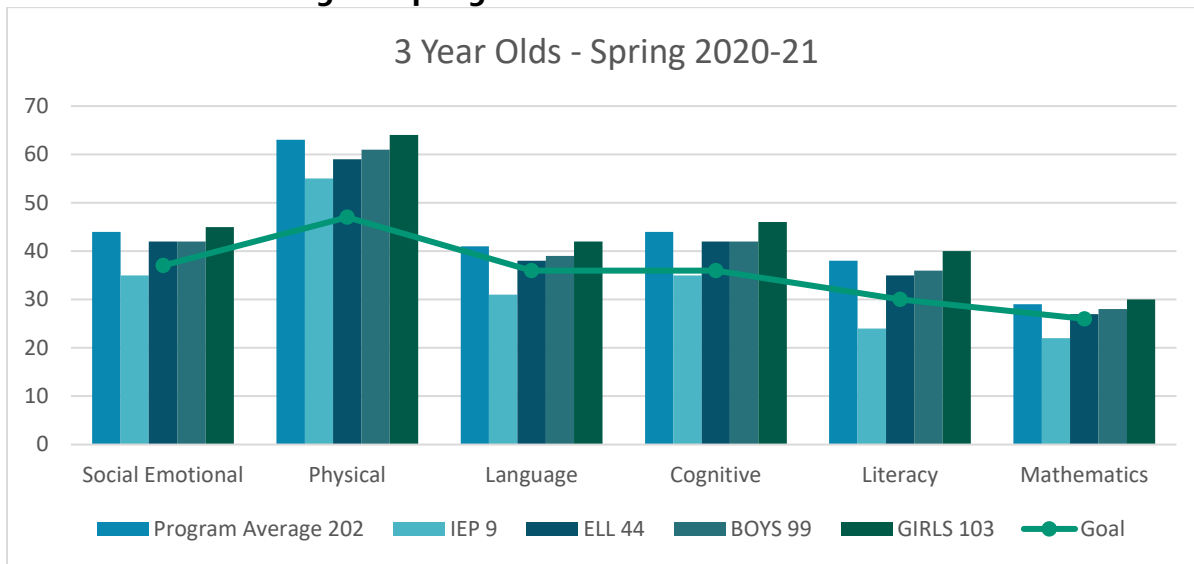
"Our task is to
HELP children
 communicate
 with the **WORLD**
 using all their
 potential, **STRENGTHS**
 and **languages**,
 and to overcome
 any **OBSTACLE**
 presented
 by our **culture**"
 Loris Malaguzzi

Assessment data continued....

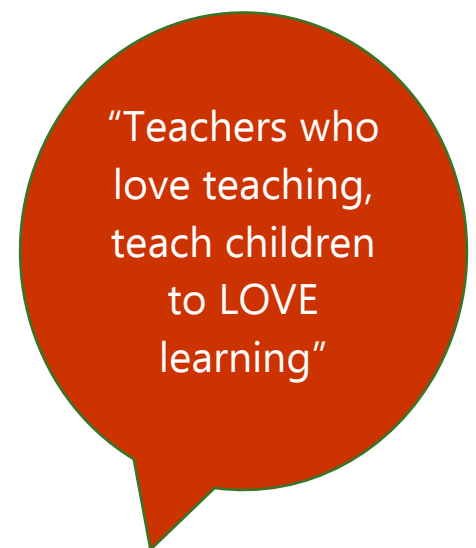
There were 202 three-year old children served in MVAC's Head Start program by winter of the 2019-20 year. 164 (81%) children met the Target Score:

	Fall 2020	Winter	*Spring 2021
Social Emotional	66%	NA	80%
Physical	86%	NA	92%
Language	66%	NA	79%
Cognitive	78%	NA	82%
Literacy	36%	NA	74%
Math	35%	NA	65%

3 Year olds – Child Progress Spring 2021



*Data collected from Teaching Strategies GOLD online assessment tool



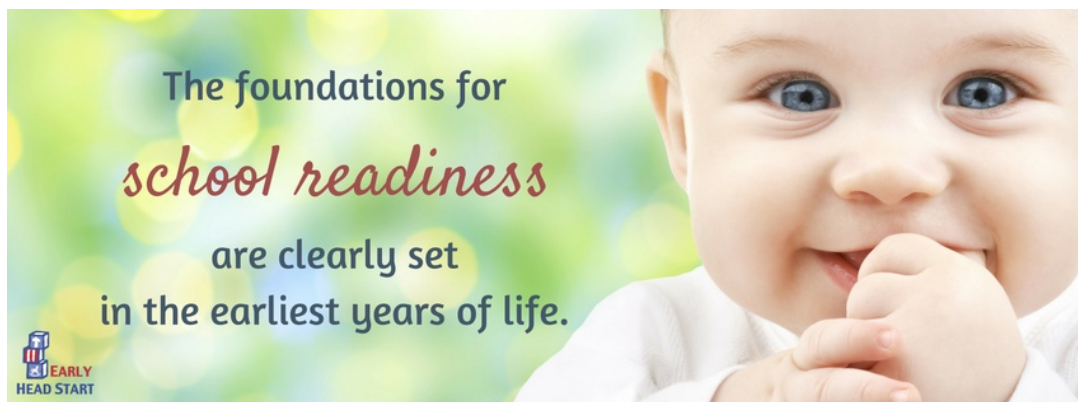
EARLY EDUCATION & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- MVAC offers Head Start home-based programming, along with center-based and a locally designed option referred to as combination. In the combination option, children get a mix of center days and home visits.
- 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. 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.
- Our part day classroom sites include: Waseca, Fairmont, St. Peter and Mankato. Children come 4 days per week for 3 ½ hours per day.
- Due to COVID-19, the 2020-21 school year looked a little different with smaller class sizes, children coming less days per week, shorter bus routes with less children transported per route, virtual programming mixed with in-person services, Zoom & TEAMS trainings and meetings, extra cleaning, quarantining and the eventually addition of early availability of COVID-19 vaccinations to our Head Start staff as essential frontline workers.
- There were 182 kindergarten-aged children that transitioned out of Head Start in May 2021.
- MVAC provided 6 weeks of summer learning through school readiness themed activity packets in June - July 2021 for 416 preschool-aged children. The packets were delivered to families each week by Head Start staff. The Office of Head Start provided one-time supplemental COVID-19 emergency funds to help support children who missed out on full in-person services during the 2020-2021 school year.

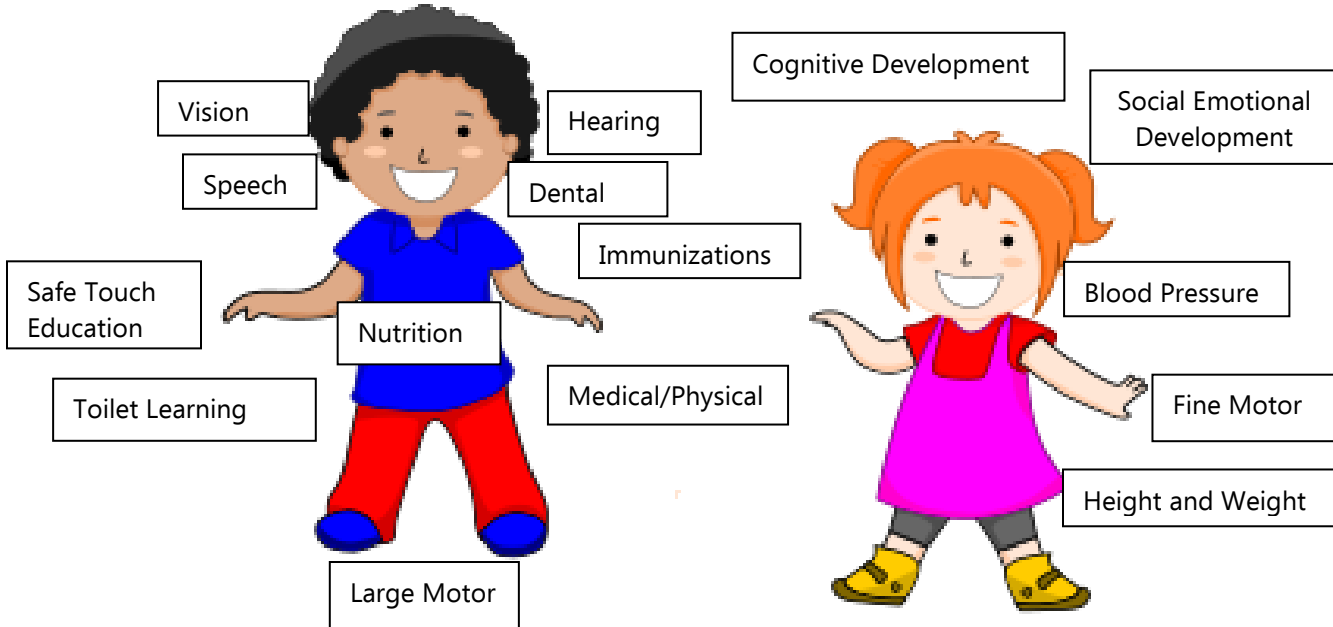
Birth to 5 services through Home Visiting

"Early childhood education begins early, even before birth."

- MVAC receives State grant money through the MN Dept of Education to operate a Birth to 5 mixed-age Home Base option in all our service counties. We were funded to serve 88 slots for pregnant women, infants and toddlers, with a total accumulative enrollment of 121 infants and toddlers, including 8 pregnant women.
- This home visiting program option uses Growing Great Kids curriculum on home visits and HOVRS observational tool.
- 8 infants and toddlers served were considered homeless; 13 were served in foster care.
- 32 infants and toddlers were served with a diagnosed disability or 26% 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. The 3 assigned Home Visitors had a caseload that included birth- 5 year old children, some being siblings from the same family.



MVAC Head Start's Whole Child Approach



MVAC Head Start uses 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.



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

In spring 2021, Head Start parents were asked to fill out an online survey on Learning Genie. Those not able to do it electronically were provided a paper copy. 367 surveys were sent out electronically, with 95 responding for a 26% return rate. 152 paper surveys were returned. Some comments were collected by our Head Start families:

- * "Great at working with you to get your kids where they need to be."
- * "It's been a wonderful program! Not only has my son loved going but we appreciate the help the center has given us!"
- * "The bus and the 2 different class times help. The home visit is great for our schedule. The school is always in contact with us and makes us feel like a part of the team."
- * "I just want to say thank you for allowing my daughter to have a chance to experience a wonderful, fun, place where she can make friends and learn as well."
- * "It has helped us as parents learn new things that will not only benefit us but also our children."

MVAC Head Start Employees = 118

MVAC Head Start Program Volunteers = 730 (574 were parent vols.)

*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.*



Head Start WORKS for children, families and communities!

Visit us at www.mnvac.org

