Montgomery County Head Start Community Assessment 2020

APPROVED BY COMMUNITY ACTION BOARD AND HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL

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1401 Rockville Pike, Suite 320, Rockville, Maryland 20852 (240) 777-1769 Muhammad, Charlene M.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Montgomery County Community Action (CAA), an agency of the Office of Community Affairs under the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), was established in 1965. Since then, CAA and its Board, have been charged with the responsibility of recommending programs to improve the lives of the County's poor, the development of leaders within low-income communities, and the development of systems to increase their self-sufficiency, self-esteem and gain more control over their own lives.[1] CAA serves as the Head Start grantee (non-federal entity) agency and the Community Action Board (CAB) serves as the governing body.

Beginning in 1965, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has served as the delegate (sub-recipient) agency for the County's Head Start Program. As the grantee (non-federal entity), CAA administers, monitors and provides technical assistance to the delegate (sub-recipient) agency MCPS. MCPS Head Start services include education, disability, parent engagement and social services. The County's Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) School Health Services team supports Head Start children and families' health and dental needs as well as provide income eligibility support/assistance for various programs. School Readiness for all enrolled children and family self-sufficiency are priorities of the County's Head Start Program. To assure that the goals of the federal Head Start program are met, CAA and MCPS coordinate an on-going monitoring system that follows the Head Start Act 2007, the Head Start Program Performance Standards, and all other federal, state, and county requirements.

The Head Start Program is committed to serving children and their families who are deemed eligible under the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The Family Income Guidelines published in the Federal Register and updated annually reflect revised poverty data and determine Head Start eligibility for low-income families. These federal guidelines specify income limits for the designation of "poverty": in 2019, a family of four is limited to $25,750 and a single mother with one child (a family of two) would be limited to $16,910 under the federal poverty guidelines.

The Montgomery County Community Action Board (CAB) which advocates for policies impacting low-income people in Montgomery County, found the Federal Poverty Guidelines to be an inadequate measure of low-income conditions of need in terms of the ability of families to meet their basic living expenses because of the high cost of living in Montgomery County. It has adopted the *Self-Sufficiency Standard* as a more realistic assessment of examining a family's ability to meet its needs. The median family income (in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars) in Montgomery County was $115,150 according to the *2014 US Census American Community Survey*. The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Maryland 2016[2] calculates the amount a family would need to live in Montgomery County at a basic needs level, incorporating *actual* regional and local cost variations, net effect of taxes and tax credits, and costs associated with employment, with no public or private assistance. The amount to live without public and private assistance, based on the Self Sufficiency Standard in 2016, for a family of four (2 adults, one preschooler and one school-age child) would be $91,252 per year, or $43.87 total per hour wages. A single mother and a preschooler would require $71,755, substantially above the 2019 federal poverty line of $16,910 for a family of two.

II. METHODOLOGY

In accordance with the federal Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) that require the grantee agency to conduct a comprehensive community assessment at least once over the five-year grant period[3], CAA conducted its comprehensive Community Assessment in the FY2020 program year. The Community Assessment supports the County Head Start program's strategic planning process and the establishment of the five-year project period program goals. The Community Assessment includes the latest information on relevant data and trends in the County's Head Start service area. This includes demographic information

about children and families eligible for Head Start services; strengths and challenges affecting the County's low-income families; other early care and education programs available in the County, data regarding the health, dental, nutritional and special education needs of the children; and resources in the community that may help address these needs.

a. Data Collection and Analysis

CAA conducted research of County and State data sources for the following topic areas:

- Demographic make-up of Head Start eligible children and their families, including their estimated number, racial, ethnic and linguistic composition
- Number of children experiencing homelessness in the County
- Number of children in foster care within the County
- Number of children with disabilities and relevant resources provided to children by community agencies
- Other early care and education programs/services that may serve Head Start eligible children, including public funded state and local preschool programs and the approximate number of eligible children served
- Number of three-year-old children aging out of the county's Early Head Start programs
- Education, health, nutrition and social services needs of eligible children and families
- Prevailing social or economic factors that impact children and families' well-being
- Work, school and training schedules of parents with eligible children
- Resources in the community that are available to address the needs of eligible children and families

In addition, national, state and local agencies' publications and reports were examined, and information analyzed for the trends that are important for future Head Start and early care and education planning (see References).

b. PIR Data Analysis with Community Partners

On November 7, 2019, CAA hosted a Community Assessment and Five-Year Project Grant Planning meeting with community partners that focused on a review and analysis of Montgomery County Head Start's annual Program Information Reports (PIR) over a five-year period: FY2015-FY2019 (see Appendix A). The planning meeting included a discussion on Montgomery County's ECE Initiative and County Executive Priorities, and in particular, aligning the Head Start program with the ***Thriving Youth and Families' Priority and Key Indicators*** for increasing the number of children in Montgomery County Ready for Kindergarten success. (See References)

Thriving Youth and Families

Getting all children off to a good start in life has innumerable long-term benefits for our community, including a stronger economy, lower poverty, and less crime. Children need healthy, supportive families, great schools, and caring communities.

c. Staff Survey

MCPS Head Start teachers and paraprofessional (Family Services Workers) staff participated in a survey developed to assess and gain their input on the changes within families and the community that impact enrolled families and children and how the program can better support the needs of children and families (see Appendix B).

d. Parent Survey

Annually, MCPS Head Start facilitates a *Parent School Readiness Survey*: (pre) at the beginning of the program year and (post) at the end of the program year to assess parents' understanding of the importance of School Readiness and the type and frequency of school readiness activities parents share with their children. (see Appendix C). In addition, parents received the opportunity to share their program experience as a whole in an annual *Parent Satisfaction Survey* (See Appendix D).

e. Governing Body

During the August 13, 2019 annual executive committee retreat, the CAB and PC reviewed the community assessment summary and data report, and discussed priority areas for meeting family needs.

III. OVERVIEW: MONTGOMERY COUNTY HEAD START

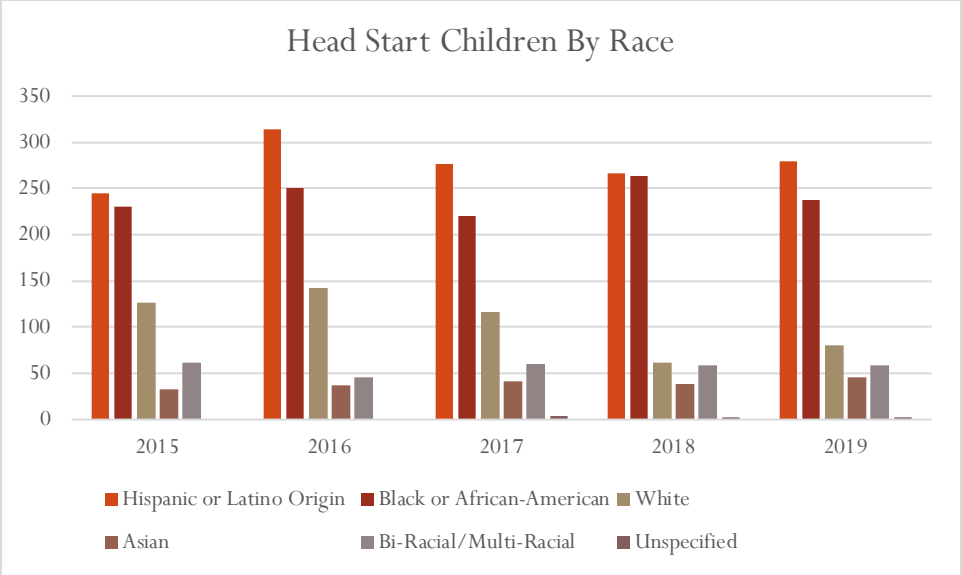
In the FY2019 program year, Montgomery County Head Start was funded to serve 648 children and their families. Montgomery County Public School's Head Start/Pre-K program provided direct services for a total of 714 Head Start-enrolled children and an additional 3,609 Pre-Kindergarten eligible children of which approximately 1,000 were also eligible for Head Start services. There are approximately 1,600 children eligible for Head Start living in the County. Montgomery County Head Start is currently serving 40% of all Head Start eligible children.

FY2018-2019	Number of Enrolled Children
Head Start 4-year-old enrolled children	643
Head Start 3-year-old enrolled children	71
Pre-Kindergarten enrolled	3609
Head Start eligible children enrolled in Pre-K	1000

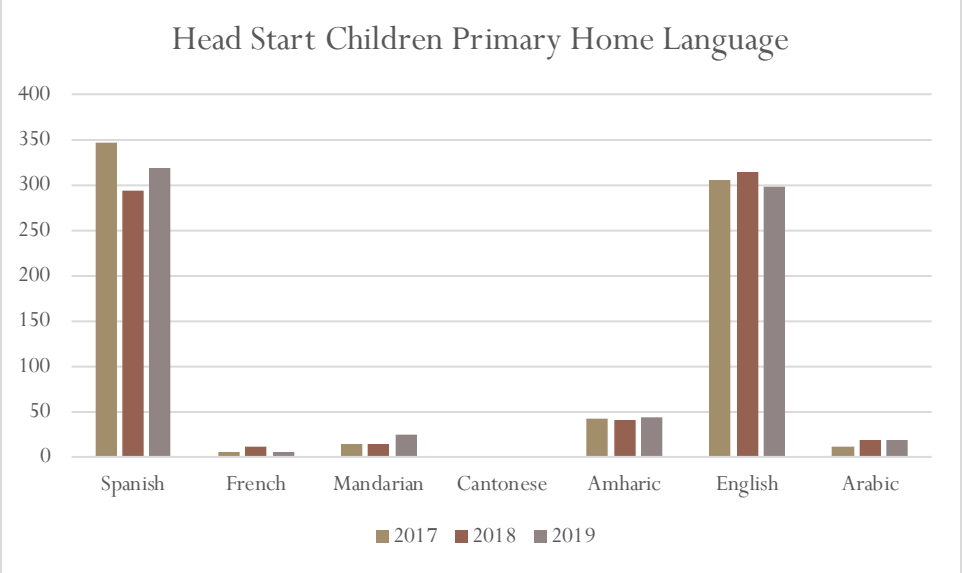
Montgomery County Head Start provides comprehensive services in a center- based option model. The program is located in 30 Montgomery County Public Schools throughout the County with a total of 34 classrooms. During the 2018-19 program year, 83% of children were enrolled in center-based full day classes (5 days per week, 6 hours per day) and 16% of children were enrolled in center-based part day classes (5 days per week, 3.5 hours per day).[4]

Montgomery County Public Schools is the largest school district in Maryland and the 17th largest school district in the nation. MCPS served 162,680 students in the 2018-2019 school year. Approximately 35% of all students are enrolled in the free and reduced-priced meal service (FARMS)[5].

The racial and linguistic make-up of the children enrolled in Montgomery County Head Start has remained consistent over the past five years, with Hispanic/Latino families being the highest number of enrolled children and Spanish being the second highest primary home language after English. Montgomery County Head Start enrolled families include recent immigrants from Central and South America, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa.

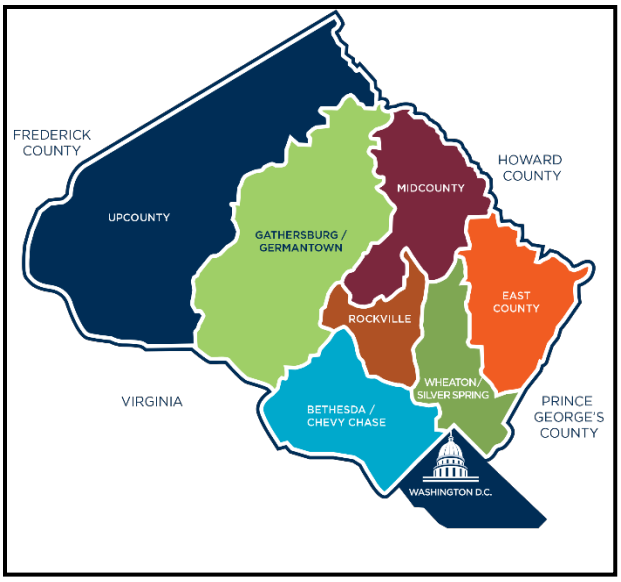


Head Start Children Primary Home Language



IV. DEMOGRAPHICS

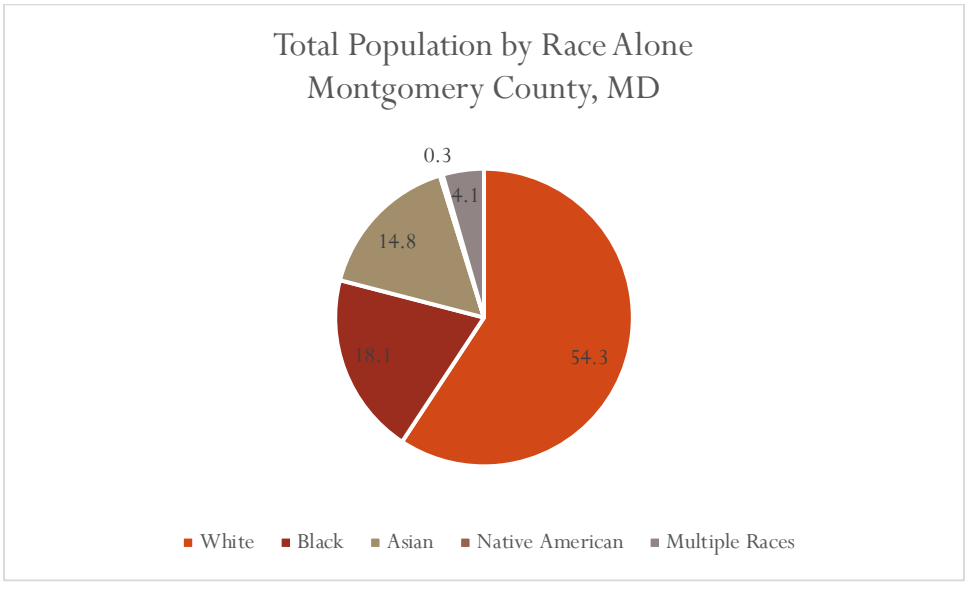
Montgomery County, Maryland, encompasses an area of 497 square miles adjacent to Washington DC's northwest boundary. The County is bounded on the west by the Potomac River and connected to Northern Virginia by the Capital Beltway. Prince George's County, Maryland, is to the east; to the northwest is Frederick County, Maryland, and to the northeast is Howard County, Maryland. A magnificent geography with extensive park and water areas, the County contains various types of communities, ranging from suburban to urban with some remaining rural areas.



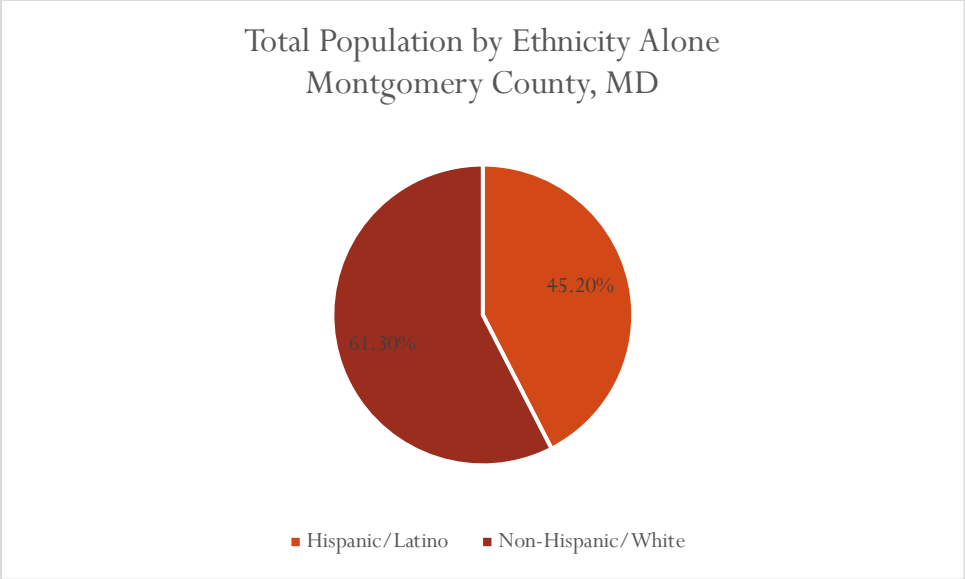
As the most populous county in Maryland, Montgomery County is the home to an estimated population of 1,039,198[6]. Montgomery County's younger population is growing; over 23% are persons under 18 years of age, and 6.4% of the population are children under five years old. The largest source of population growth in the area was *births*, not domestic or international migration. Furthermore, this increasing rate of population growth is seen as ongoing in the future. It is projected to remain the most populous Maryland jurisdiction for the next 20 years or more.

a) ETHNICITY, RACE, CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

A pride of Montgomery County is the diversity of its citizenry.



*Source: Community Commons, pg. 3.



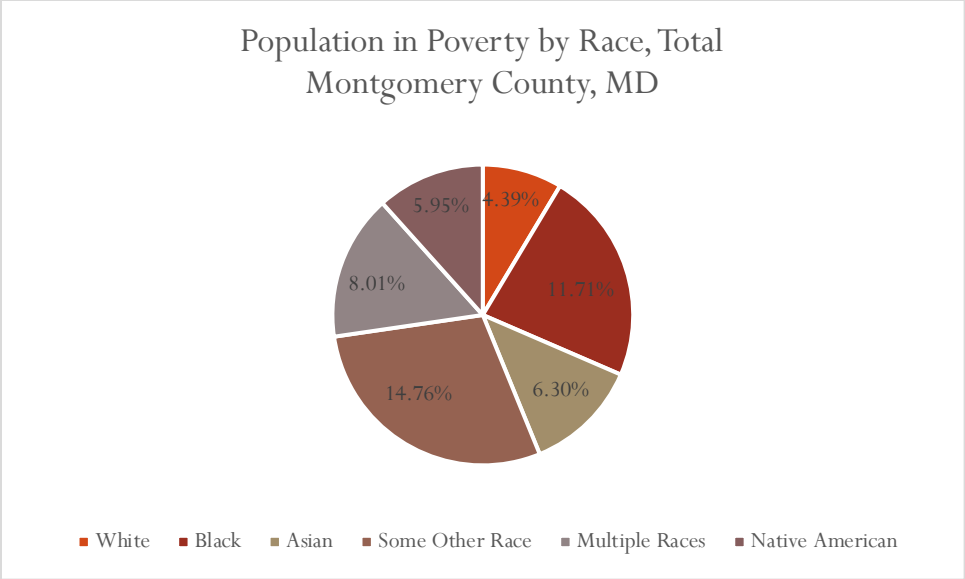
According to the 2017 *US Census American Community Survey*, 31.6% of the total population in Montgomery County were foreign born. It is estimated that over half of the immigrants in the state of Maryland reside in Montgomery County. Asia and Latin America are the two predominant regions of birth; 36.2% of the local immigrant residents indicate their region of birth as Asia, 35.9% Latin America, 17.6% Africa and 9.2% Europe. Immigrants from different parts of the world tend to settle in different areas of the County: Asian immigrants are more likely to reside outside the Capital Beltway, or in the more suburban areas of the County, while Latin American and African immigrants tend to live within the Beltway: the more urban areas of the County.

The diversity of languages spoken throughout the County reflects the population. According to Montgomery County Public Schools, the 2018-2019 student population originate from 157 countries and speak over 150 languages.[7]

b) ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FACTORS IMPACTING FAMILIES

One of the wealthiest counties in the United States[8], Montgomery County's average estimated 2017 median household income was $103,178. 32% of all households have incomes above $100,000; 19.8% families of which have incomes above $200,000.

In the midst of this affluence, Montgomery County is also home to a substantial population of low-income families and children.



According to the 017 American Community Survey, while only 6.9% of people living in Montgomery County were in poverty, 29% of families living in poverty include children under 5. Among female-headed households living in poverty, 32% included a child under the age of 5.

This economic climate of wealth creates conditions that exert special stresses and hardships for low-income families, which are characterized by low-wages, underemployed and unemployed workers. The Self-Sufficiency amount required to live in Montgomery County in 2016 -- without public and private assistance -- for a family of four (2 adults, one preschooler and one school-age child) would be $91,252 per year, or $43.87 total per hour wages: approximately 4 times higher than the Head Start federal poverty level of $25,750 for a family of 4.

Housing and Childcare Costs

In the entire Washington, DC Greater Metropolitan Area including Montgomery County, the average household has a higher income than the national average; several counties that rank higher in income nationally are in the Washington, DC suburban community. These regional high incomes bring inflated costs of rent and housing, transportation, food and clothing which cannot be easily abated by moving a short distance away. Lower income families spend a greater percentage of their income on housing and childcare than do wealthy families.

Housing costs in 2017: the median mortgage cost in the County was $2,460 (65.6% of all County residents) with 23.3% of residents paying 30% of their monthly income on mortgages. The average rental cost was $1,500 (34.4% of all County residents). 49.5% of County residents spending 30% of their monthly income on rent. Because of the high cost of rent, 4.4% of families live in overcrowded housing.[9]

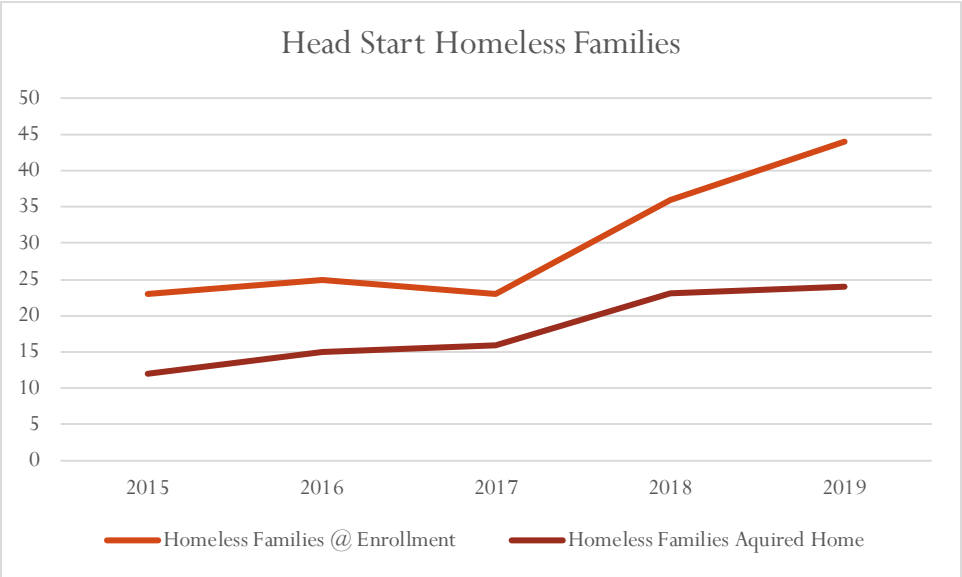
72% of children in Montgomery County live in households where both parents work.[10] The cost for child-care for one pre-school child in a licensed day-care facility in 2019 for full-day, full-year was on average $15,007, or about $283.39 a week, in Montgomery County[11].

Homelessness

Montgomery County is committed to making the experience of homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring. In 2017, the county launched the *Inside Not Outside* campaign that includes a range of strategies including: homeless prevention, street outreach, temporary shelter, rental assistance and permanent housing with support.

The success of this campaign is evident. According to the *Homeless Point-In-Time* survey conducted January 23, 2019, homelessness decreased 23% from the previous year. A total of 647 homeless persons were counted in Montgomery County.[12] 61 were considered homeless families. 130 of the people counted were children, a decrease by 30% from the previous year.

The number of homeless children and families served by Montgomery County Head Start increased proportionally with the County's homeless statistics. In 2016, 3.8% of MCPS Head Start enrolled families began the school year as homeless. 75% of these families acquired homes by the end of the program year.

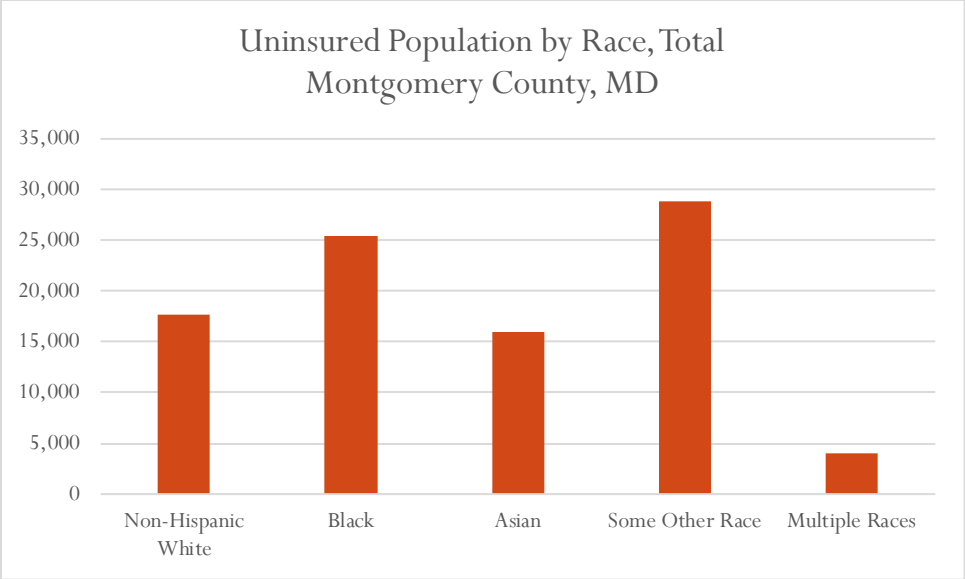


Foster Care

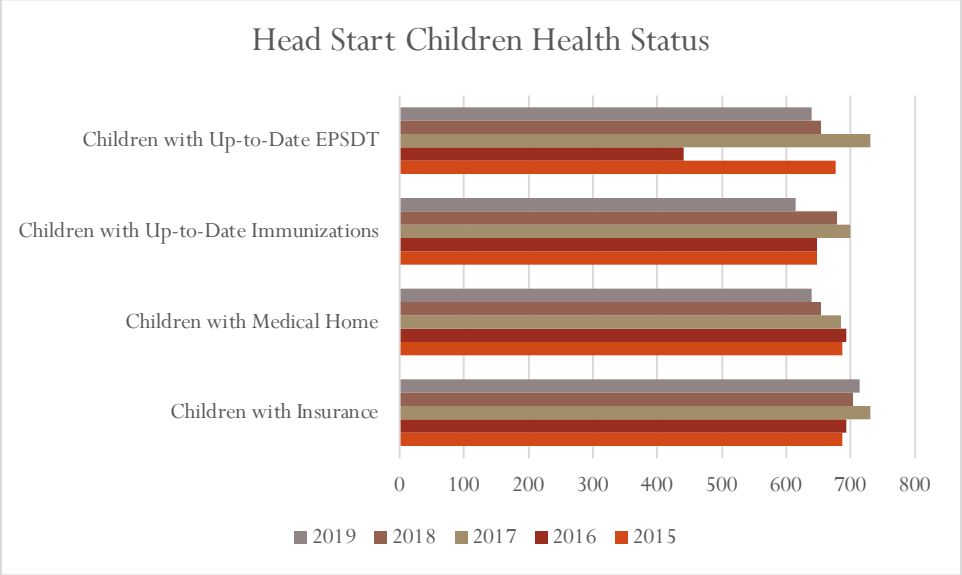
In 2018, a total of 400 youth in Montgomery County entered out-of-home care settings. 105 children (27% of the total) were 0-5-year-olds. These settings included both foster and kinship care with family. Of the 105 children ages 0-5, 36 were placed with relatives or kinship care.[13]

Health and Well-Being

The lack of health insurance is considered a key driver of health status.[14] 7.1% of the County's population remained uninsured in 2017. 3.9% or approximately 10,009 are uninsured children under 18 years old.



Montgomery County Head Start children fared better than the overall County's uninsured children's population. Because of Head Start's mission to support children and families in a comprehensive services model including health services, all enrolled children had medical insurance and an identified medical home from 2014-2018.



The Food Insecurity rate in Montgomery County is proportional with its poverty rate. 7% (approximately 77,780 people) of the County's total population is food insecure. Lack of access to healthy, nourishing food undermines the health and well-being of children and families. Children are especially vulnerable to families economic status. Nearly 13.9% of the County's children are estimated to be food insecure, representing 33,000 children. This number of food insecure children is higher than any other County in the state[15].

Montgomery County Public Schools reports that 35% students were receiving free & reduced meals (FARMS) in FY2019: one out of every four students are participating in the program.

V. OTHER CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

County-Wide Regulated Early Childhood Programs and Education [16]

Program Type	Total # of Programs	Capacity
Family Child Care Providers	848	6587
Licensed Group Care*	491	36,110
8-12 Hour Child Care Centers	291	23,161
Infant/Toddler	154	2,724
Part-Day	67	N/A
Before/After School (School & Center-based)	312	N/A
Employer Sponsored centers	10	1,132
Youth Camps	111	N/A
Nursery Schools	153	N/A
Kindergarten (non MCPS)	84	N/A
Early Head Start	3	221

Note: numbers do not total because facilities may have more than one type of program.

Montgomery County has over 250 licensed childcare centers and approximately 840 family childcare providers. Low-income families have difficulty using licensed providers due in part to their high cost of services. Montgomery County offers two sources of funding to assist families in gaining licensed family care: Child Care Scholarships (CCS) and Working Parents Assistance (WPA). The federally funded Child Care Development Fund's Child Care Scholarships program, administered by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), helps limited-income families pay for childcare while parents work, attend school or job training. Families receive a voucher for each child needing care; a sliding scale, based on household income, is used to determine the amount of the voucher and the amount of the co-payment, which the parents must pay. The Working Parents Assistance program (WPA) is funded through County local resources. The WPA commits County funds with the goal of helping low-income parents meet the costs of childcare and allows more Montgomery County families to receive a childcare subsidy. WPA targets working families, providing financial assistance and assistance for the pursuit of child support. Parents may use the provided funding to purchase any type of care, including informal care.

The County is home to three **Early Head Start program**s. A companion program to Head Start, Early Head Start (EHS) is also a federally funded comprehensive health, education, parent engagement and social services program for low-income families with children birth to 3 years of age and pregnant women.

Sheppard Pratt Health Systems' Family Services, Inc. (FSI) located in Gaithersburg, promotes the resilience, recovery and independence of individuals and families across the life span through integrated mental and physical health, social services and education programs with a goal of strengthening communities. FSI's early childhood programs promote early childhood health, education and development in the home, school and community. In 2019, FSI's Early Head Start program serves upper Montgomery County, offers both home-based and center-based child development services. In 2018, FSI EHS served a total of 124 pregnant women and children. [17]

The Lourie Center for Children's Social & Emotional Wellness is a private, non-profit agency with a mission to improve the social and emotional health of young children and their families through

prevention, early intervention, education, research and training. The agency's Head Start/Early Head Start program, provides comprehensive, year-round, child and family development services to 352 low income families with children, prenatal to five years old in both Montgomery and Prince George's County. The Lourie Center EHS model provides services to families and children in home-based, center-based family childcare, and in EHS-Child care partnership sites. Services in Montgomery County include childcare center and family childcare partnerships and home-based models.

CentroNia is a private, non-profit educational organization that provides family support services and affordable, quality education, professional development to educators in a bilingual and multicultural environment for more than 2,400 low-income children and families. CentroNia EHS provides services to 144 children and families in the District of Columbia, and both Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties in Maryland. Currently, CentroNia provides both center-based and home-based services to 72 children in Maryland, 43 of which are enrolled children and families living in Montgomery County. CentroNia also has a contract with Montgomery County through DHHS for 20 pre-school age children in one full day classroom at its child development center.

CHALLENGES FOR EHS 3 YEAR OLDs

- In 2018: 2 of the 45 FSI EHS three-year-old children who aged out of the program transitioned to Head Start. Only 18 children total transitioned to another early childhood environment.
- 0 of the 35 CentroNia EHS three-year-old children transition to Head Start. NOTE: CentroNia currently receives MSDE Pre K + funding. The state has allowed CentroNia to serve some three-year old's in this program.
- MCPS Head Start three-year-old classes are limited. During the FY2018 school year, MCPS provided seven three-year-old Head Start part-day classes.
- MCPS Head Start three-year-old classes are in schools outside of the EHS families communities and families reside outside of MCPS transportation zones.
- EHS families make progress towards self-sufficiency, increasing their income which makes them ineligible for Head Start's federal poverty levels.
- 50-60% of three-year old's at FSI and 30% of three's at CentroNia do not continue in early care and education after aging out of EHS. Children fall back in language and social-emotional development.
- FSI teen parents may face dropping out of High School as their three-year old's age out of EHS while they are still in High School. With no childcare, parents are challenged with finishing school.

County-Wide Public Support Services

The Montgomery County **Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)** assures the provision of integrated services addressing the health and human services needs of County residents. DHHS provides crisis invention services (including homelessness); disability services, housing benefits (including financial services, food, and energy); health services (including medical coverage, mental health/substance abuse; school-based and community health); and older adult services (including caregiver support).

School Health Services (SHS)

Under HHS, School Health Services assures and promotes the health, safety, and well-being of students enrolled in all Montgomery County Public Schools. Basic services include: First aid/emergency care, medication and treatment administration, hearing and vision screenings, case management of students with chronic health conditions, health promotion/education, and linking students to health care providers and other resources.

Children, Youth, and Family Services (CYF)

Under DHHS, the mission of Children, Youth, and Family Services (CYF) is to promote opportunities for children to grow up safe, healthy, ready for school, and for families and individuals to be self-sufficient. Departments within CYF include:

- Child and Adolescent Services and Community Based Services
- Early Childhood Services
- Childcare Subsidy Programs and Office of Eligibility and Support Services
- Child Welfare Services
- Positive Youth Development

Below highlights some of the services and resources available for low-income families with young children provided by the various departments within CYF.

Child Welfare Services provides protective, rehabilitative, and supportive services for children who are maltreated and for their families. This program also provides supportive and financial help to relatives, foster, and adoptive parents. Investigations, protective services, kinship care, foster care, adoption, and in-home aide services are provided through this system. Family Preservation Services provide social services to families with children who are at risk of removal from home due to neglect or abuse.

Linkages to Learning is a program under DHHS CYF Child and Adolescent and Community Based Services. Linkages collaborates with MCPS and local public and private human service agencies to provide school-based prevention and early intervention services to students and families of elementary and middle school communities with the highest indicators of poverty. These integrated social, health, mental health and educational support services are designed to address the non-academic issues that may interfere with a child's success in school.

Early Childhood Services focuses on increasing the quality of early care and education programs available to young children throughout Montgomery County through technical assistance, consultation, and training for childcare providers. This program includes the development of strategies to increase the supply of quality early care and education programs and services.

The Montgomery County Child Care Resource and Referral Center (MCCCRRC) works with parents, childcare providers, businesses, and community members to help promote the availability of and accessibility of high-quality childcare services in the County. Families who need childcare services are given free childcare referrals and information on evaluating quality childcare available; parents can call LOCATE by telephone to receive individualized counseling and referrals to childcare providers who might meet their needs. Training for childcare providers to establish and improve their programs is offered for free or at low cost, including training for the Maryland Child Care Credential, voluntary state program which recognizes

childcare providers who go beyond the requirements of State licensing and registration regulations. Special recruitment efforts are targeted to providers who serve low-income families and immigrant communities.

ChildLink provides parents and caregivers with resources and information about services and linkages to programs that are available to assist them with their children, from birth to age five. It serves as an entry point to services for young children, and functions as a triage system for assistance. Callers may receive simple referrals-such as referrals to Head Start- consultation on child development or parenting issues, or linkages and follow up for families presenting more complex or at-risk situations which would require early intervention services.

Child Care Scholarships are support for eligible low-income families who work or are in a work activity, and for families receiving Temporary Cash Assistance (TANF), and actively participating in job search or job preparation, or another work activity. In 2019, the Maryland State Department of Education increased the eligibility to serve families up to 300% of FPL.

The Income Supports Program serves low-income families and individuals facing significant challenges by providing basic resources of cash assistance, food supplements, and medical assistance. This program determines eligibility for: Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA); Temporary Disability Assistance Program (TDAP); Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA); Food Supplement Program (FSP); Community Medical Assistance (MA); and Refugee Medical Assistance. The Income Support Program also manages a required employment program for applicants and recipients of TCA.

Child and Adolescent School and Community Based Services include respite care, community empowerment efforts, single-parent family services, family services, youth services, and family outreach efforts. The program also provides for the coordination, planning and implementation of several key interagency initiatives among public and private agencies in the community to meet the needs of children, youth and their families.

Judith P. Hoyer Centers Early Child Care and Family Education Centers

Judy Centers offer a wide range of services to children age birth through Kindergarten and their low-income families. The goal of Judy Centers is to support School Readiness. In Montgomery County, services are provided at Title I schools. Judy Centers use a "whole child" approach in addressing the many variables that can impact young children's readiness for Kindergarten.

The Judy Centers were founded in Maryland and are named in honor of the foundational work in early care and education of the late Judy Hoyer, the wife of Maryland Senator Steny Hoyer. There are 48 Judy Centers throughout the state of Maryland. In Montgomery County, there are currently two Judy Centers administered by MCPS:

- Rolling Terrace Elementary School, Takoma Park
- Summit Hall Elementary School, Gaithersburg which also serves students and families at Washington Grove Elementary School

The County Judy Centers provide enrichment activities for preschool age children, parent-child activities for all families, and parent education and support for children to attend high quality childcare, and accreditation support for childcare, Head Start, Pre-K and Kindergarten classes.

Disability Services

Montgomery County Infants & Toddlers Program (MCITP)

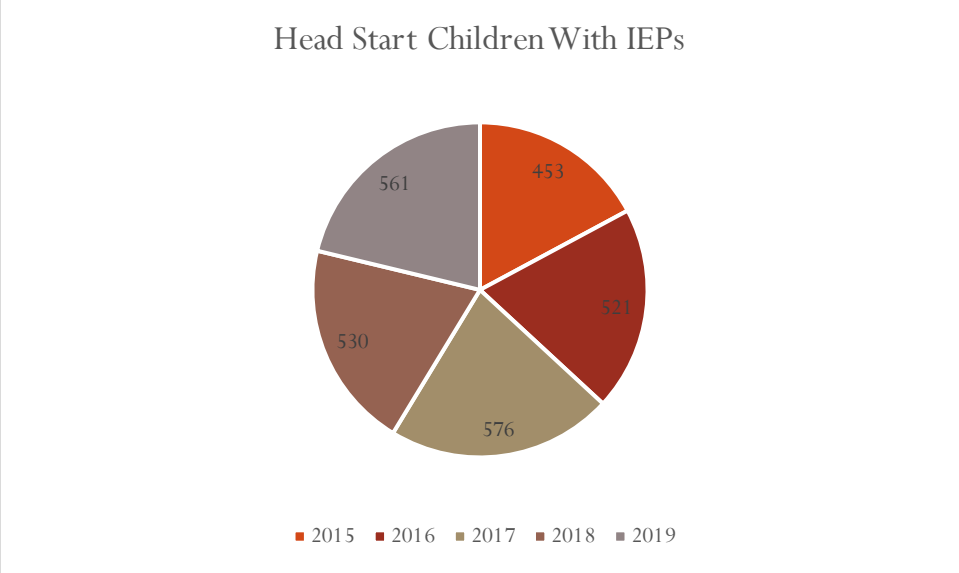
MCITP provides evaluation, assessment, family support and early intervention services to families with children birth to 5 when there is a concern about development, or when a developmental delay is documented. The services are delivered using a family-centered approach and are provided by staff employed by MCPS, HHS and private community service providers. MCITP assists families with their child's developmental and special needs, serving children birth to three years old and their families who reside in Montgomery County if eligibility criteria are met. Children who are eligible for services receive ongoing early intervention services through an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) designed to achieve outcomes determined by the early intervention team which includes the family as well as other providers. Early intervention services may include family centered interventions from a speech/ language therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, special educator, social worker, interim and on-going service coordinator, infant/adult mental health specialist, and psychologist.

Eligibility is determined by residency AND if the child exhibits either a 25% delay in at least one area of development (motor, language, cognition, self-help, social/emotional), or atypical development, or a high probability of delay due to a diagnosed medical condition.

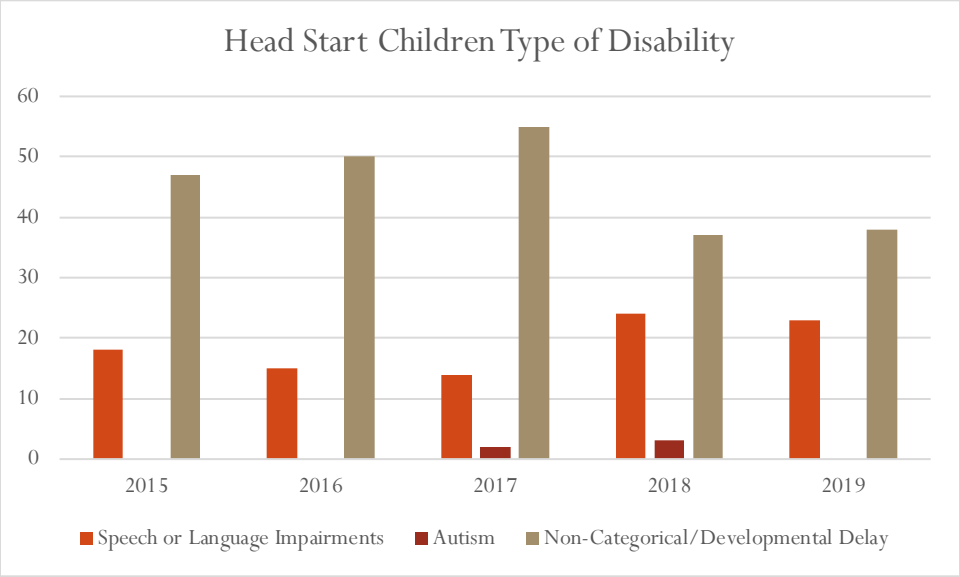
Local Educational Agency (LEA)

MCPS serves as the County's Local Educational Agency (LEA) and maintains the requirements for Part B of the federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). MCPS is committed to promoting improved academic achievement for all students with disabilities. All decisions regarding the placement of a child with a disability in a special education service delivery model is made by the Individual Education Program (IEP) Team with consultation with parents.

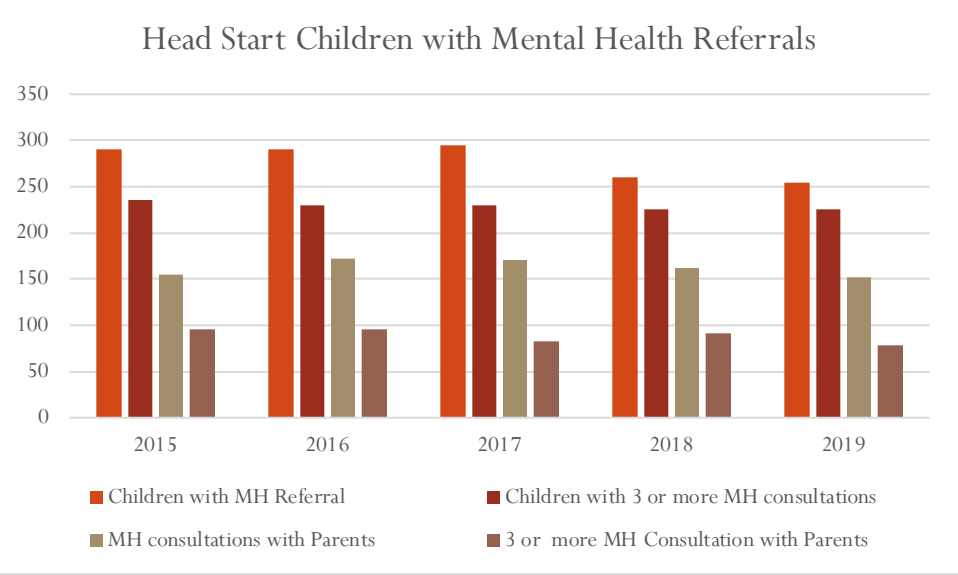
Over the past five years, at least 10% of Montgomery County Head Start's annual enrollment included children with disabilities.



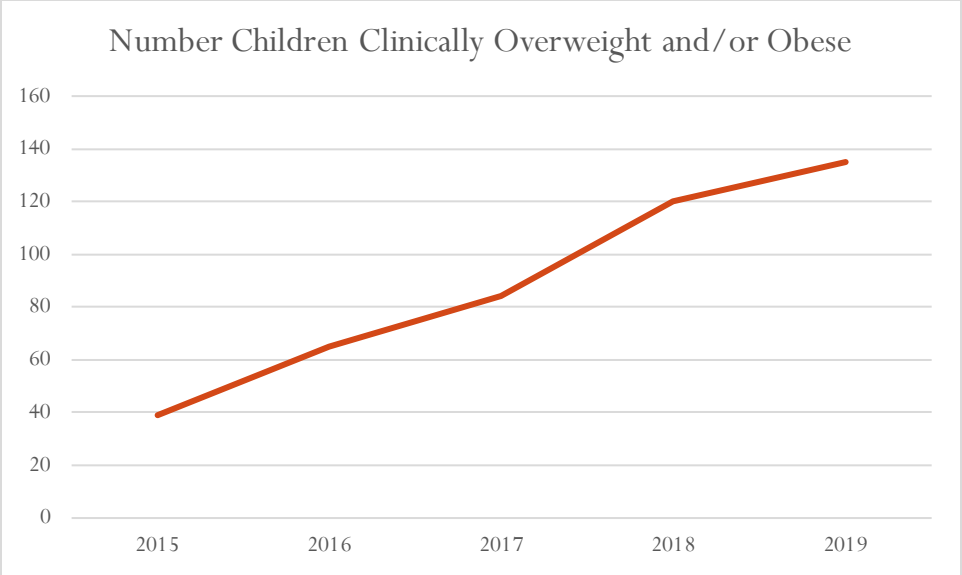
Of the Head Start children with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) Non-Categorical/Developmental Delay remains the most consistent diagnosis. Typically, pre-school age children who receive individualized special instruction and attention can evolve overtime and "catch up" in their overall development.



Head Start children in need of continuing Mental Health support remain steady with 44% of enrolled children receiving at least one mental health referral during the program year. Of these 44%, 79% received three or more consultations and 57% consultations with parents.



Additional health challenges Head Start children are facing is in the area of nutrition and diet. Approximately 20% of all Head Start children are clinically overweight and/or obese.



Preschool Special Education Programs (PEP)

For children with more severe disabilities, MCPS' Preschool Education Program (PEP) provides a variety of preschool literacy –based educational and support services for children with disabilities, ages 3 to 5, with serious developmental delays, students with intensive needs, and the medically fragile. Children between three and five years of age may be eligible for PEP if they have a developmental delay or disability as determined through assessment, meet the criteria for one or more educational disabilities as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), and/or need special education services. A child is placed in PEP through a centralized special education placement process following assessment in any area of disability. Referrals for evaluation are usually through Montgomery County Infants and Toddlers Program (for children under the age of 3 years) or the Child Find Unit (for children between 3 and 5 years of age).

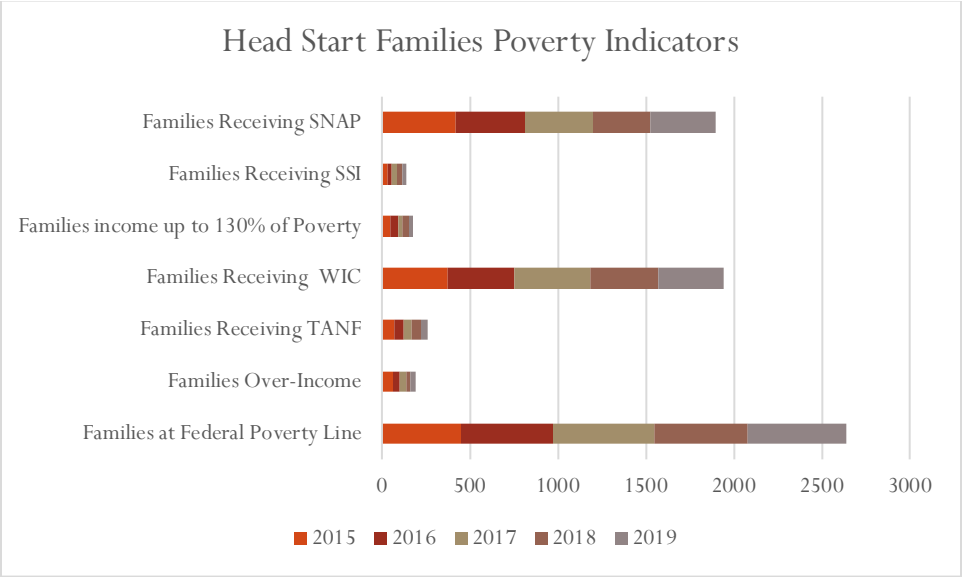
PEP services address the same early learning skills fostered in MCPS prekindergarten classrooms, and include art and music, with mandated services such as: speech, occupational and/or physical therapy, and parental involvement. Wherever possible, classes are taught collaboratively with MCPS Prekindergarten classes. Services range from itinerant in community preschools to five hours per day of intensive, low- ratio classroom programming for children with multiple severe disabilities.

The PEP programs also serve children with sensory disabilities, autism, or physical disabilities. These students usually require more specialized instruction and programming, including daily programs ranging from 2.5 to 6 hours daily. Mandated related services such as speech, occupational, and/or physical therapy, and parent involvement are included. Their classroom instruction addresses the special needs of the child, while supporting the same early learning goals as the Prekindergarten and Head Start program. Children participate in physical education, art, and music, and wherever possible, classes are taught with MCPS prekindergarten classes.

VI. MONTGOMERY COUNTY HEAD START: FIVE-YEAR TRENDS (2016- 2019)

Between the 2016 and 2019 program years, the overall demographic makeup of children enrolled in Head Start remained consistent. At least 85% of enrolled families are between 100- 135% of the federal poverty guidelines. However, other than SNAP and WIC, most enrolled families did not receive other public assistance such as TANF and SSI. This may reflect a family's immigrant status and underemployment (aka "working poor"). Moreover, MCPS staff noted in a survey that four main changes in the community that enrolled Head Start families face are: (1) fears for their personal safety; (2) severe financial stress; (3) lack of

affordable housing that often leads to housing instability and homelessness; and (4) lack of affordable child care. These changes are increasing families' reliance on social services (See Appendix B).



During the five-year period, parents consistently indicated specific resources needed to support their families. Emergency or crisis intervention (such as food, clothing or shelter) were overwhelmingly requested by approximately 98% of families each year. Approximately 27% of families requested English Language classes, and approximately 66% of families requested Parenting Education.

Families Identified Need During the Program Year (Total = 648)	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Emergency or Crisis Intervention	96%	94.5%	100%	100%	100%
English (ESL) Training	36%	26.5%	24.3%	20.5%	23.1%
Job Training	29%	13.8%	13.1%	21.4%	16.5%
Parenting Classes	15%	94.5%	22.6%	100%	100%

MONGOMERY COUNTY'S VISION: A MORE EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE MONTGOMERY COUNTY

In 2019, Montgomery County's Executive established five priorities to support a more equitable and inclusive community for all county residents.[18]

In addition, Montgomery County's Council President, Council Members, County Executive, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), and Montgomery College (MC) have joined together in an initiative to increase the number of quality Early Care and Education (ECE) seats in a mixed-delivery system by certifying additional Family Child Care (FCC) providers, increasing resources to providers and families and identifying existing unused or underutilized classroom space in high need areas thus making quality early care and education more accessible to more families.[19]

Within the County Executive's Priorities, *Thriving Youth and Families* and *ECE Initiative*, Montgomery County Head Start identified the following strengths and needs of enrolled families.

County Executive's Priority 1: Thriving Youth and Families

Key Indicator II. Percent of Children Ready for Kindergarten

Montgomery County Head Start engages parents in developing and implementing the program's School Readiness Goals. In partnership with Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL), parents are encouraged to apply for library lending cards. MCPL hosts literacy activities for families with young children and provides literacy "backpacks" with books, an iPad and themed activity resources for a variety of learning topics.

In the 2018- 2019 program year, MCPS conducted its annual pre and post survey to assess Head Start parents understanding of School Readiness and what knowledge they must support developmental skills in their children. 108 parents participated in survey. By the end of the year, 54% of parents who responded, stated that they read to their child every day with 27% engaging in the reading activity for 25-30 minutes. Of the 78% of parents who responded that they speak a language other than English at home, 95% stated they speak to their child in their home language every day and 41% stated they read to their child in their home language every day (See Appendix C).

The majority of the parents who responded also noted that they engage in other learning development activities with their children everyday: 69% talk with their children and ask questions about colors, numbers and shapes; 58% draw, color, cut or write with their child; and 23% of parents responded that they visit parks, museums and other free activities offered in the community at least once a week with their child.

In addition, a satisfaction survey queried parents on their relationship with their child's teacher and comfortability in participating in the classroom. (See Appendix D).

76% of parents who responded stated they always feel welcome in the child's classroom to visit or volunteer. 90% responded that the teaching staff encourage them to share their thoughts about their child's interests, strengths and needs. 90% of parents who responded agreed that they received information or training on child behavior management strategies.

Kindergarten Readiness

Ready for Kindergarten (R4K)

Beginning in the FY2015 school year, MSDE implemented a new comprehensive school readiness system that includes: *Ready for Kindergarten: Maryland's Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System (R4K).* R4K aligns with Maryland's more rigorous PreK-12 College and Career-Ready Standards and establishes higher benchmarks for all children. R4K's assessment for children- Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) system- builds on and advances the MMSR yet adding more rigorous assessment indicators. This change in the kindergarten readiness assessment system had a significant impact on assessment scores, lowering the overall percentage of pre-school children demonstrating foundational skills and behaviors needed for kindergarten by nearly 30% in year one baseline results.

Readiness Matters: The 2018-2019 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Report[20], shares the school readiness results of Maryland's children – statewide, by subgroups, and for each of Maryland's 24 local jurisdictions. Based on the state's higher standards, the new baseline results for year two are:

• Nearly half of entering kindergarteners in school year 2018-2019 (47%) are demonstrating that they possess the foundational skills and behaviors that prepare them for the curriculum that is based on Maryland's new more rigorous kindergarten standards.

• 54% of female students are demonstrating readiness compared to 41% of the male students.

• More than half of Asian kindergartners (57%), and white kindergartners (58%), are demonstrating this new level of readiness. African American (44%), and Hispanic (29%) kindergartners are below the state average of kindergarteners (47%) demonstrating readiness.

• Kindergartners with disabilities, those learning the English Language, and those from low-income households have fewer students demonstrating readiness than Maryland kindergartners as a whole.

• Children who attended childcare centers (60%) and non-public nursery schools (71%) the year prior to entering kindergarten exceed the statewide readiness average.

The 2018-2019 Montgomery County Head Start results comparison to state aggregated assessment data is as follows:

2018-2019 KRA COMPOSITE	MONTGOMERY COUNTY HEAD START	MARYLAND STATE AGGREGATED DATA
Demonstrating	65%	47%
Approaching	30%	33%
Emerging	5%	20%

2018-2019 Montgomery County early care and education programs' KRA comparison data results are as follows:

2018-2019 KRA COMPOSITE	CHILDCARE CENTER	FAMILY CHILD CARE	HEAD START	HOME/ INFORMAL CARE	NON-PUBLIC NURSERY	PRE-K
Demonstrating	60%	41%	43%	43%	79%	40%

Maryland State Department of Education Quality Rating System: Maryland EXCELS

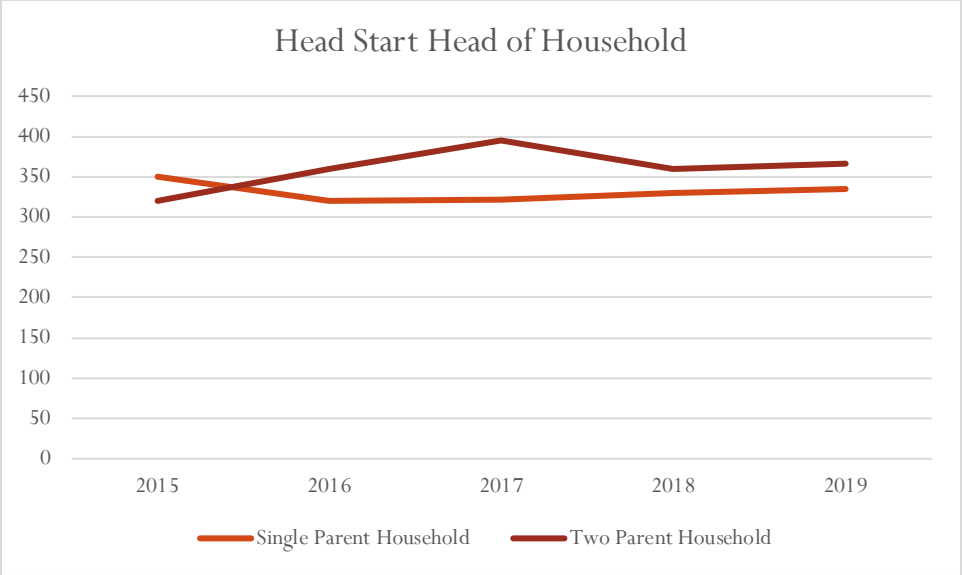
Maryland EXCELS is a quality rating and improvement system that awards ratings from 1 to 5 to childcare and early education programs based on nationally recognized standards and best practices. Maryland EXCELS gives programs and providers a road map that encourages and rewards those that improve their services offered to children and families, while providing support and incentives to programs that strive to make improvements. Maryland EXCELS provides information that families need to make informed decisions when choosing childcare and early education programs. Using a thorough but easy-to-understand rating system, Maryland EXCELS, sets a standard for increasing the availability of high-quality childcare and early education for children in Maryland.

In accordance with the federal Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) 1302.53 (b) Head Start programs must participate in its state or local Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS). MSDE requires all state early childhood programs that receive state funding to participate in Maryland EXCELS. In FY19, Montgomery County Head Start implemented a plan to publish the remaining 28 of 34 Head Start classes in Maryland EXCELS.

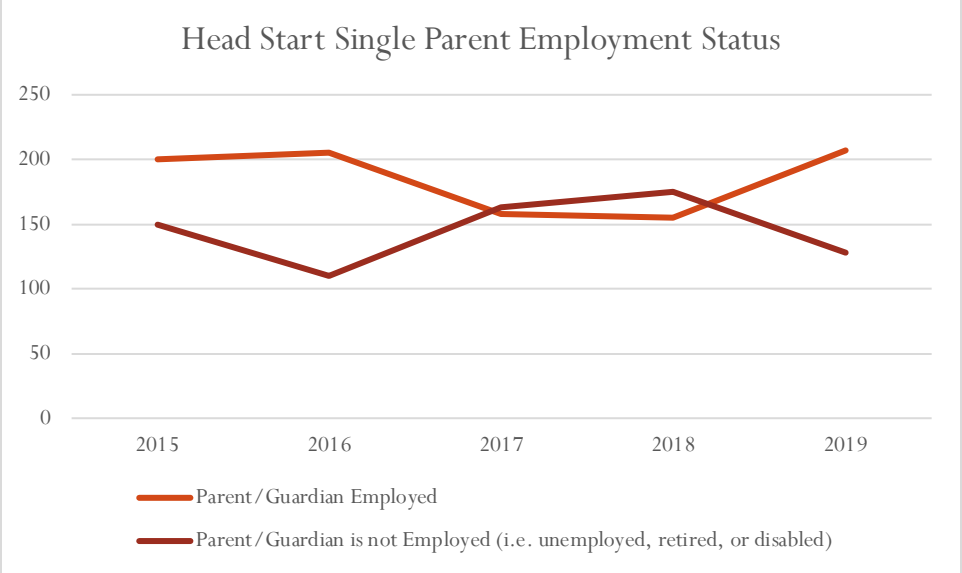
County Executive's Priority 1: Thriving Youth and Families

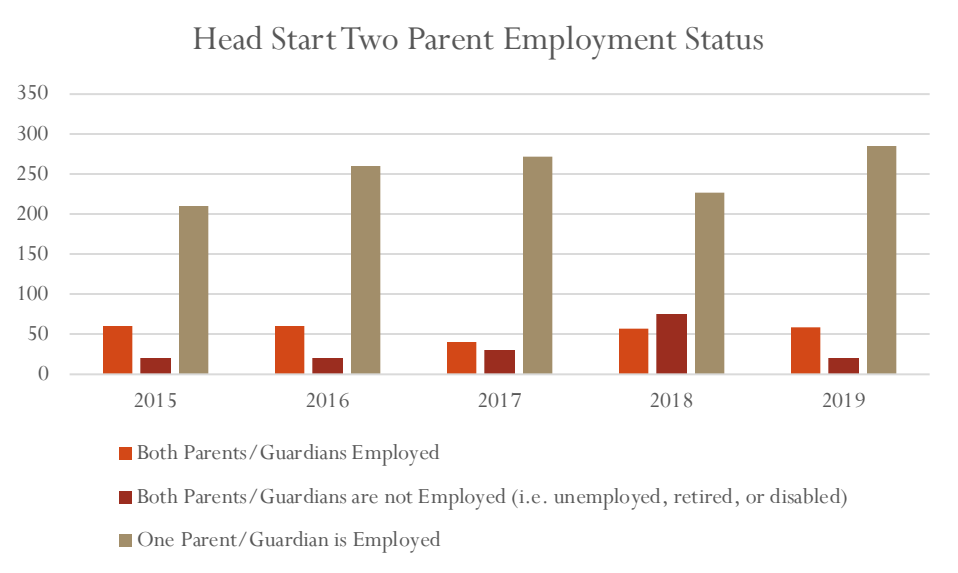
Key Indicator III. Life Expectancy and Gap

Over a five-year period, two-parent households continued to increase with 53% of families enrolled in Head Start are headed by two-parents in 2019.



Single parent households continued to increase in employment status. Two-parent households consistently reported at least one parent working and a steady decrease in the households with neither parent employed.





An analysis of Montgomery County Head Start's PIR Performance Indicator Reports from FY2016- FY2019 documents the efforts of the program's family engagement and social services components in meeting the needs of families. 100% of enrolled parents participated in developing a Family Partnership Agreement. MCPS Family Services staff support parents in establishing self-sufficiency goals for their families that often begins with parents identifying needs and/or barriers to meeting their goals. Of the four leading identified needs of parents over the 2016-2019 program years, 100% of parents who requested a support received it.

1/28/2020

TOTAL FAMILIES = 648	2014-15 Families Identified Need	Service Provided	2015-16 Families Identified Need	Service Provided	2016-17 Families Identified Need	Service Provided	2017-18 Families Identified Need	Service Provided	2018-19 Families Identified Need	Service Provided
Emergency or Crisis Intervention	648	96%	648	94%	628	100%	648	100%	648	100%
English (ESL) Training	246	100%	182	100%	158	100%	133	100%	150	100%
Adult GED	124	100%	95	100%	86	100%	139	100%	107	100%
Parenting Classes	101	100%	648	94%	147	100%	648	100%	648	100%

Each year, MCPS offers a variety of activities for families. A center committee is convened monthly at each of the 30 elementary school locations that house Head Start classrooms. Committee meetings are designed to support parents in getting acquainted with each other and staff, provides parents with a venue to assist in planning the program and serves as a two-way communication vehicle between the school and the Head Start program. During the FY2018-

Montgomery Cou

2019, monthly center committee parent education topics include: Child Growth and Development; Language & Literacy; Health and Nutrition; and Personal Safety. MCPS also hosted ESOL classes for parents, financial literacy and CAA's VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) services.

In accordance with the HSPPS, MCPS supports parents in facilitating the Head Start Policy Council. The Policy Council is a key stakeholder in the overall Head Start program governance system. Parents elect up to two members of the Policy Council to participate in CAA's governing board (CAB). These parent representatives are voting members of the CAB and give voice to legislative policies that the CAB advocates to support low-income families in the County.

The program governance structure for Montgomery County Head Start is a blend of both the federal HSPPS and Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Organizational Standards. Parent members of the policy council are elected to the CAA CAB. Both the CAB and PC's responsibilities include advocating on behalf of Head Start children and families. The PC supports the Head Start budget to MCPS school board. The CAB support the Head Start budget to the County Council. Members of the governing body are invited to participate in annual legislative advocacy days in Annapolis, Maryland's state capitol.

VII. PRIORITIES

The Montgomery County Head Start Policy Council's considers School Readiness a priority for County's Head Start/Pre-K program. Increasing parents' knowledge and understanding of:

- Child development;
- Key concepts of School Readiness including the central domains of learning outlined in the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework*;
- How to interpret child assessment data; and
- Strategies, resource and activities parents can use at home to support their child's development and readiness for kindergarten.

The Community Action Agency Board (CAB) considers developing a systematic approach to strengthening family self-sufficiency a priority for the County's Head Start families:

1. Immigration. The CAB advocates for the needs of immigrants living in the County and who make a large portion of the clients served by CAA- including Head Start eligible families.
2. Early Childhood Education. The need for high-quality affordable childcare remains an ongoing priority for the CAB. As the governing body for Head Start, this issue is of particular importance for board.
3. Food Security. Food Security is a longstanding priority issue for the CAB. The board has been active in the County's efforts to reduce food security and has advocated for numerous programs and policies that would reduce food insecurity for children, seniors and other vulnerable populations.
4. Financial Needs. VITA services, the Earned Income Tax Credit, financial education and other programs/services aimed at helping residents move towards self-sufficiency have been key priorities for the CAB.
5. Two-Gen. The CAB advocates for two-generation approaches to address poverty, like Head Start, pointing this strategy as best practice.

Montgomery County Head Start's five-year project period goals (2021-2026) are:

1. All Head Start parents and families are safe, healthy and have increased financial security; and

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

VIII. COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The momentum to strengthen and support families with young children in Montgomery County is high. The following are examples of local, regional and state-based organizations that are collaborating their efforts in early care and education.

Early Childhood Coordinating Council

Maryland's commitment to early childhood education was strengthened with the establishment of an Early Childhood Coordinating Council in 2000. Based on this early work in developing a readiness assessment system for K-12, Maryland was awarded a federal *Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge Grant* (RTT-ELC) in 2012. RTT-ELC required a statewide Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC). In Maryland, each county jurisdiction was charged with establishing a local ECAC.

Since 1998, Montgomery County included early childhood initiatives in its school readiness approach. As a partner in the State's RTT-ELC, the County's ECAC was initiated by the County Executive, and was established and executed in conjunction with the superintendent of schools. The ECAC worked collaboratively to plan, implement and assess activities focused on ensuring that all young children (birth through age 5) in Montgomery County arrive at school fully ready to learn. In 2015, Montgomery County Council passed Bill 13-15 that established the Early Childhood Coordinating Council (ECCC). Membership of the former ECAC has been transferred to the ECCC. Members are appointed or invited by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. ECCC membership is comprised of a variety of stakeholders and professionals with expertise in the early childhood field including: County parents, business and foundation representatives, childcare providers, Montgomery County Public School staff, Maryland State Department of Education staff, Montgomery County Libraries and County Government representatives.

Montgomery County's early Care and Education Strategic Plan 2017[21] includes the following goals:

Goal 1. High quality care from birth in all settings. *All infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in Montgomery County experience high quality early care and education in formal and informal settings.*

Goal 2. Affordable, accessible early care and education for all children and families. *Montgomery County provides adequate resources to ensure eligible families can afford early care and education that is high-quality, accessible and meets their needs.*

Goal 3. An educated, diverse, well-compensated early childhood workforce. *The Montgomery County early childhood workforce is diverse, professionalized, well-compensated, and has access to on-going professional learning supports.*

Goals 4. Transitions and continuity across ages and settings. *All infants, toddlers and preschoolers in Montgomery County experience continuity in transitions as children develop and continuity across settings and sectors.*

Goals 5. Leadership and Financing. *Montgomery County has the necessary infrastructure and funding to support a high-quality, affordable, accessible early care and education system.*

Montgomery Moving Forward / Nonprofit Montgomery

Nonprofit Montgomery is an alliance of leaders of nonprofit organizations serving Montgomery County. Nonprofit Montgomery's vision is to be a collective voice of nonprofits of all sizes and missions with government, philanthropic, and corporate partners. The organization's goal is to strengthen individual organizations, increase the visibility of their work, and advocate on behalf of nonprofits and the people they serve. *Montgomery Moving Forward* (MMF) is the organization's collective impact vehicle for change that brings cross-sector leaders from business, philanthropy, education/academia, government, and non-profits together to define a problem and embrace a common agenda.

In 2016, MMF launched its second focus issue: *Early Care and Education: A key building block for economic opportunity*. MMF's decision to embrace this issue was the result of a six-month community engagement process that gathered input from more than 500 residents and leaders. MMF's goal is to add value to the County's established early childhood initiatives, by fostering cross-section dialogue and advocating for alignment of all components of the system. MMF believes that a stronger, more equitable system will lay the foundation for more children to succeed in school, help reduce the achievement gap, and help build the workforce of the future.[22]

In January 2018, MMF issued a "call to action" for Early Care and Education in Montgomery County that envisions a coordinated, comprehensive system that will support two important goals: (1) attract and retain a talented workforce of today by supporting families with young children; and (2) ensure the skilled workforce of tomorrow by addressing the growing opportunity gap.[23] MMF's call to action includes six action steps that provide strategic direction for achieving the key outcomes. These independent strategies support a fully cohesive, coordinated ECE system.

MMF ECE Call to Action Steps	MMF ECE Call to Action Strategies
1. Break down silos and boldly reform the ECE system.	Align ECE services and providers to create a coherent, robust, accessible system.
2. Improve ECE Access for all families.	Reduce the barriers many families face in accessing ECE. Make ECE more affordable for families. Develop more ECE options for parents who don't work 9to 5. Promote and expand existing resources that support parents and young children.
3. Educate and engage our entire community.	Find creative ways to involve the whole community in ECE-all people and places that touch the lives of parents and young children. Conduct a public awareness campaign to bolster support for high-quality ECE as a community priority.
4. Facilitate strategic financing.	Address the inadequacy of funding for ECE. Facilitate and convene meetings of community stakeholders to address financing issues and solutions by looking at best practices and innovative models of ECE from around the country.

5. Strengthen ECE workforce and infrastructure.	Create affordable, accessible, integrated career pathways for ECE providers and support ECE workforce development strategies that improve education quality. Address the issue of high teacher turnover, which affects the quality of ECE. Advocate for changes at the state level to address barriers that currently impact ECE providers. Create coordinated ongoing support structures/networks informal providers in high-need neighborhoods. Develop the business acumen of ECE providers. Recruit more bilingual providers to work with Dual Language Learners (DLLs) in early education settings. Increase providers' understanding and preparation to work with children with developmental delays, disabilities or trauma in ECE settings. Work in concert with the Washington Region Early Care and Education Workforce Network.
6. Support and deepen family engagement.	Add or expand Parent Resource Centers and other proven family support programs. Provide parents with resources, education, and strategies to help nurture the development of their young children. Re-establish the Home Visiting Consortium to coordinate home visiting programs to include Head Start, Early Head Start, Family Support Network, Healthy Families, and Operation Smile. Build on existing programs that help low-income parents and children at the same time.

Montgomery County Early Care and Education Initiative

In an effort to support MMF's call to action, the County Council President and County Council members, the County Executive, the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and Montgomery College (MC) have joined together in an initiative to increase the number of quality Early Care and Education (ECE) seats in a mixed-delivery system by certifying additional Family Child Care (FCC) providers, increasing resources to providers and families and identifying existing unused or underutilized classroom space in high need areas thus making quality early care and education more accessible to more families.

Outcome 1 - Expand the availability of ECE seats for infants, toddlers and preschoolers by approximately 600.

Outcome 2 – Increase access to quality ECE to more children through increased utilization of Working Parents Assistance Program (WPA).

Outcome 3 – Ensure sustainability of existing family and center-based programs to reduce provider attrition and loss of available seats.

Outcome 4 - Establish a cross agency working group to immediately identify and resolve barriers to *expansion, access and sustainability* of quality childcare in the County, including but not limited to financing, services alignment, workforce supports, community engagement. The working group will explore the development and/or co-location of ECE programs in commercial, private, public, faith-based, and intergenerational settings. The work of this group will be guided by existing studies, plans and reports.

Outcome 5 – Monitor Kirwan Commission recommendations to ensure alignment and possible coordination with partners at the State level.

Montgomery County Food Council[24]

The Montgomery County Food Council is an independent council formed and led by individual community members and representatives of local businesses, government, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions that broadly represent the food system both substantively and geographically.

The Food Council's mission is to bring together a diverse representation of stakeholders in a public and private partnership to improve the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of the County through the creation of a robust, local, sustainable food system.

In 2016, Montgomery County Council unanimously passed *Bill 19-16, The Strategic Plan to Achieve Food Security* that initiated the process for developing a Food Security Plan. The focus of the Food Security Plan is to:

- Greatly enhance the level of food security in the County;
- Link County dollars spent on food assistance to the needs identified in the plan; and
- Guide non-profits who support County residents with food assistance to seek food assistance grant funding from the county.

Healthy Montgomery[25]

Healthy Montgomery is Montgomery County's community health improvement process. It is an ongoing effort that brings together County government agencies, County hospital systems, minority health programs/initiatives, advocacy groups, academic institutions, community-based service providers and other stakeholders to achieve optimal health and well-being for all Montgomery County residents. Healthy Montgomery's goals are:

- Improve access to health and social services
- Achieve health equity for all residents
- Enhance the physical and social environment to support optimal health and well being

Washington Region Early Care & Education Workforce Network[26]

The Washington Area Women's Foundation is organized to ensure that economically vulnerable women and girls in the Washington (District of Columbia) region have the resources they need to thrive. In 2008, the Foundation launched the Early Care & Education Funders Collaborative (ECEFC). ECEFC is a collective of foundation and corporate investors dedicated to supporting systemic approaches that increase quality, capacity and access to early care and education in the Washington region. The Washington region includes: The District of Columbia, Montgomery and Prince Georges' counties in Maryland; and Alexandria and Fairfax counties in Virginia.

ECEFC's goals are to:

- Improve the quality of early care and education for low-income children ages zero to five
- Expand access to affordable early care and education options
- Support professional development for early care and education professionals
- Encourage and strengthen partnerships among stakeholders that support positive changes in the early care and education system

IX. SUMMARY

Five-year trends in Montgomery County demographics continues to indicate more growth in the overall population by the increasing numbers of births, international immigrants and migrants from other counties within the State of Maryland. As the current availability of Head Start and other community based early care and education services do not meet the County's current need, the gap in services will continue to increase. In addition, The Self-Sufficiency Standard of 2016 highlights the impact of the increasing gap in economic diversity between low income families and those with more wealth. The inability of poor families to meet self-sufficiency will intensify, placing additional burdens on the County's social services structure.

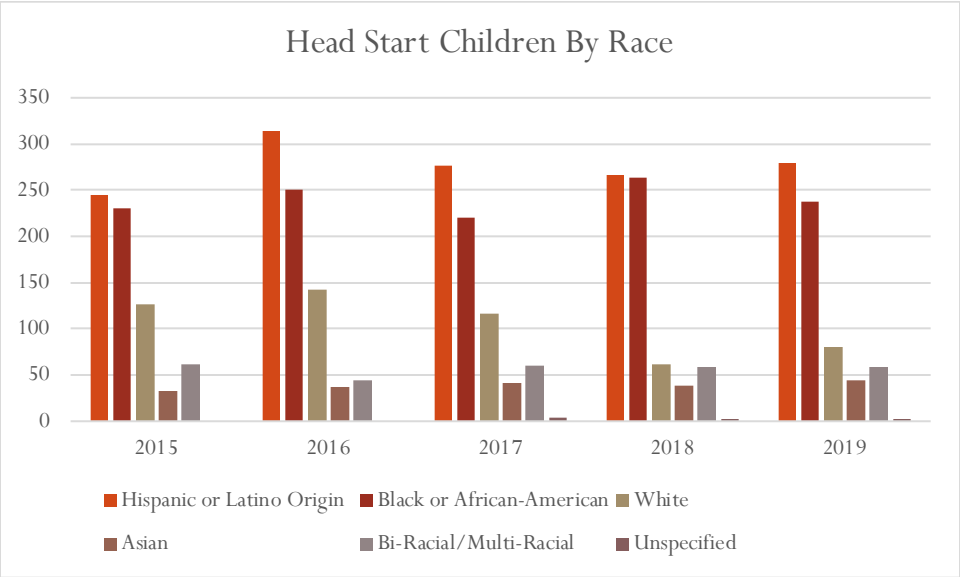
The goal of the County's DHHS is to provide an integrative service delivery approach that addresses the social determinants of the County residents' health and well-being. Montgomery County has a wealth of resources available to support family self-sufficiency. As the Head Start grantee agency, aligning these resources and strategies would strengthen the efforts of multi-agency approach and increase the impact and benefit to families in need.

HEAD START PRIOIRITY CONSIDERATIONS:

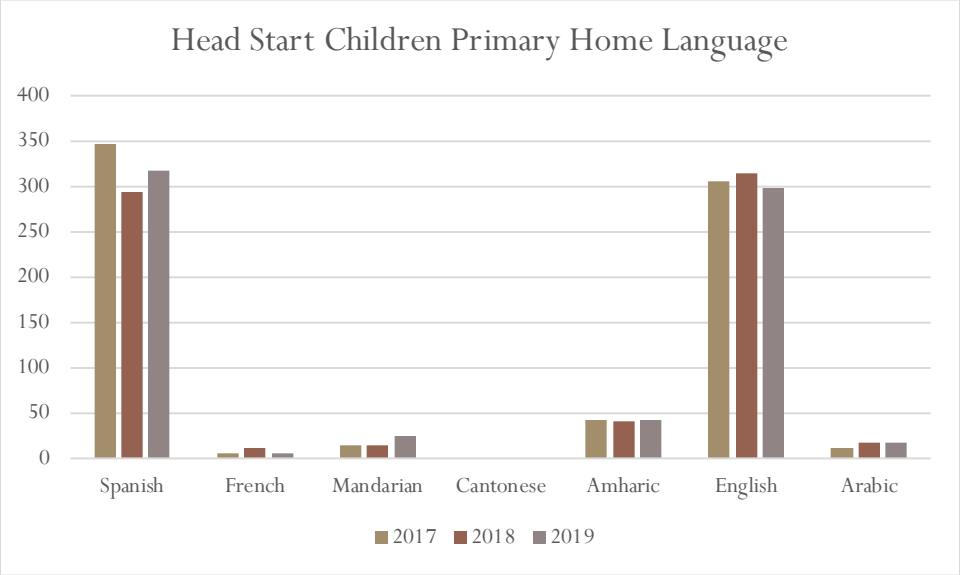
- Increase services to eligible three-year-old children, especially children aging out of the County's Early Head Start programs.
- Increase data analysis efficiency to meet the demands of the state Quality Rating System requirements.
- Align early childhood education support with the County's Early Childhood Services, Resource and Referral, School Health and other agencies within the County's Department of Health and Human Services.

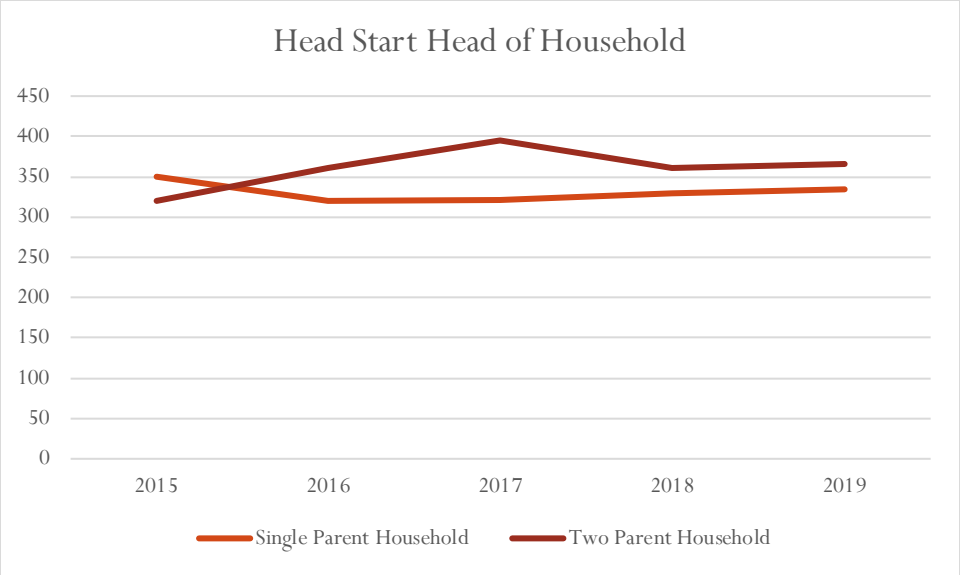
APPENDICES

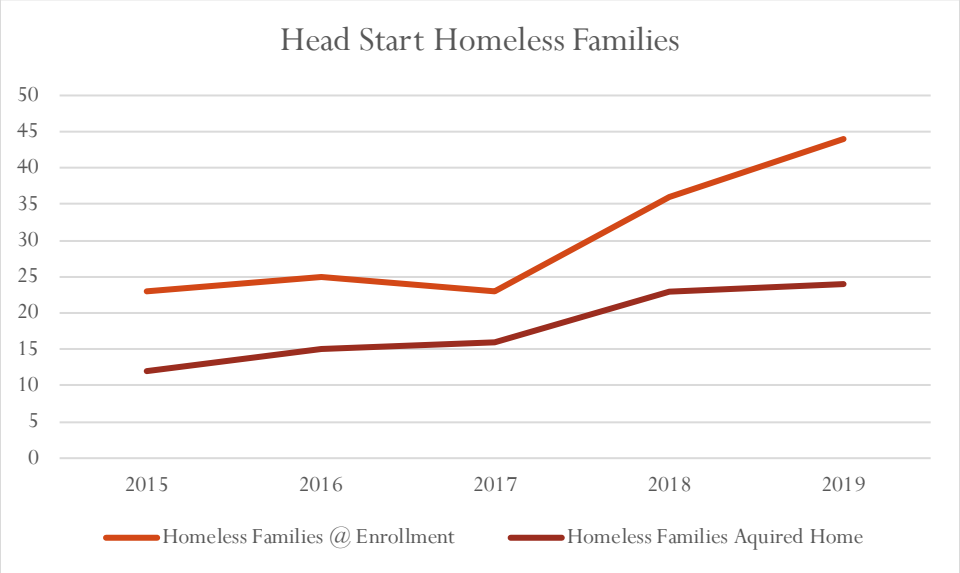
Appendix A: MCPS 2015-2019 PIR Data Reports



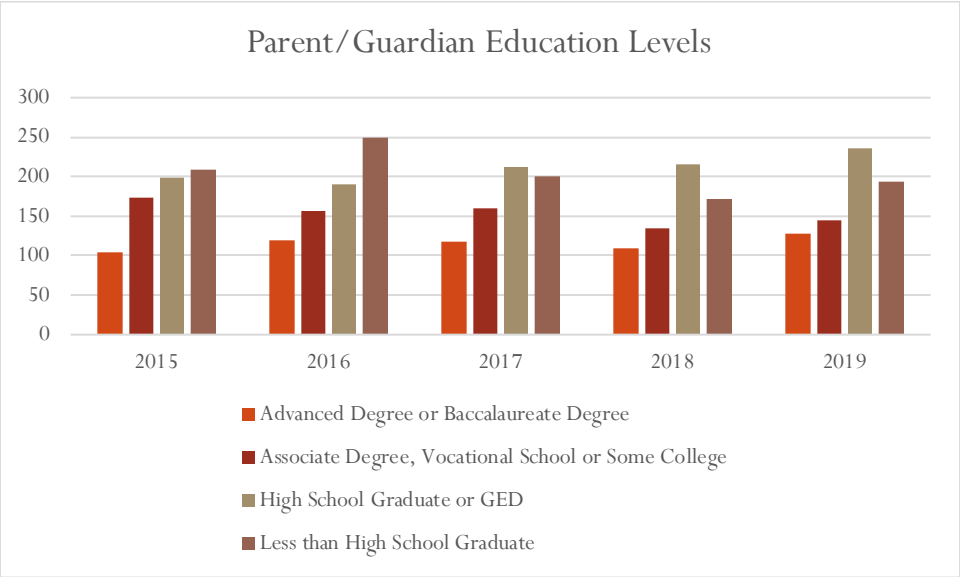
Head Start Children Primary Home Language

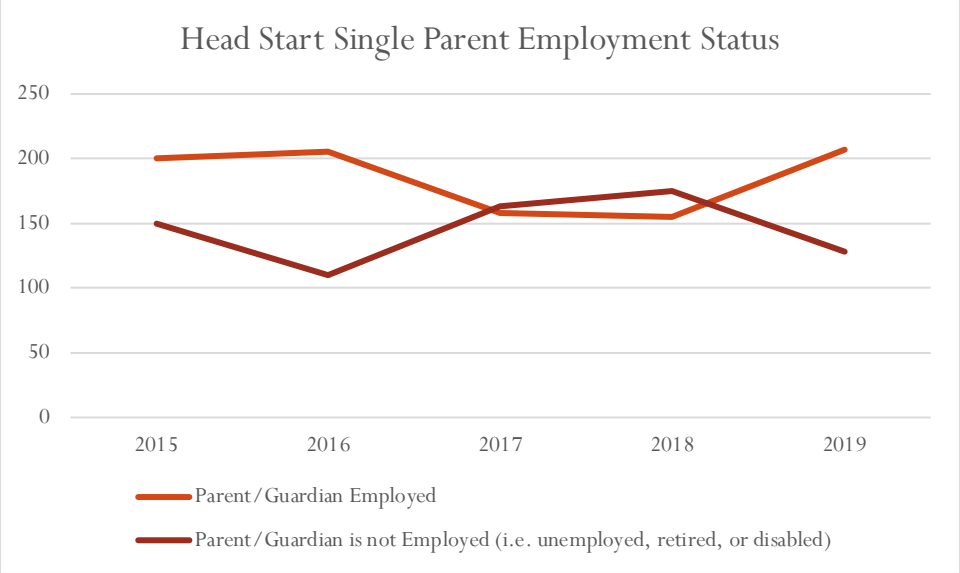


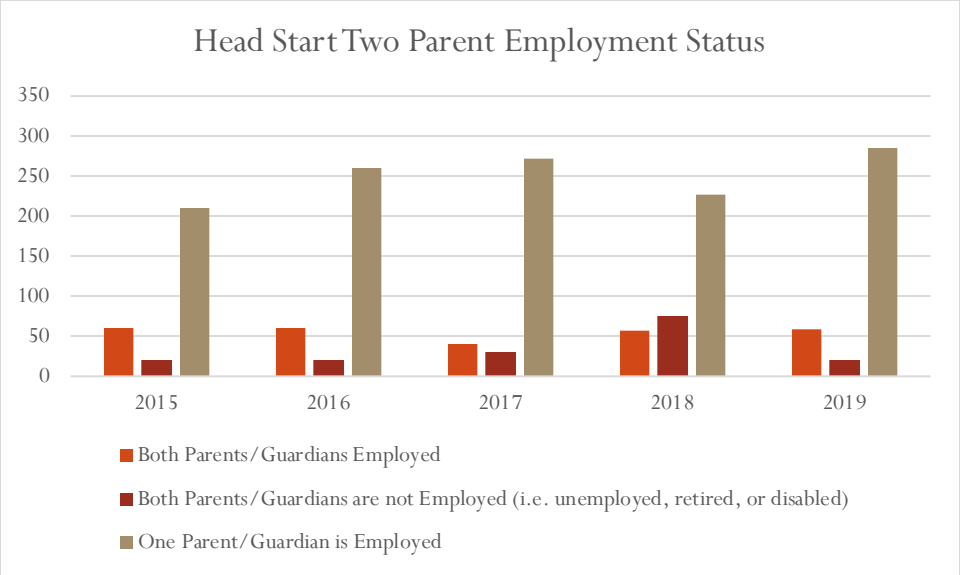

Head Start Head of Household
450
400
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
Single Parent Household
Two Parent Household

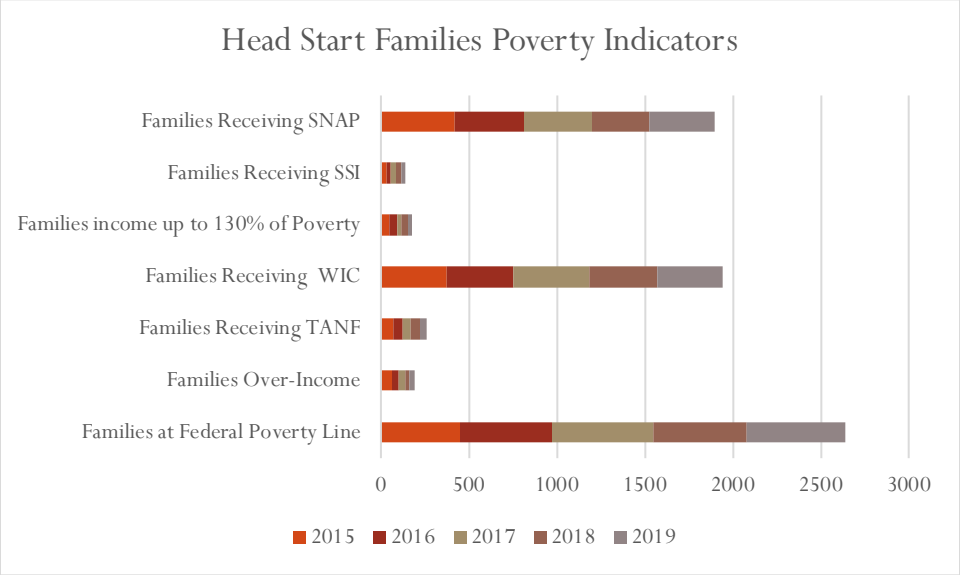

Head Start Homeless Families
50
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
Homeless Families @ Enrollment
Homeless Families Aquired Home

Head Start Parent Education Levels

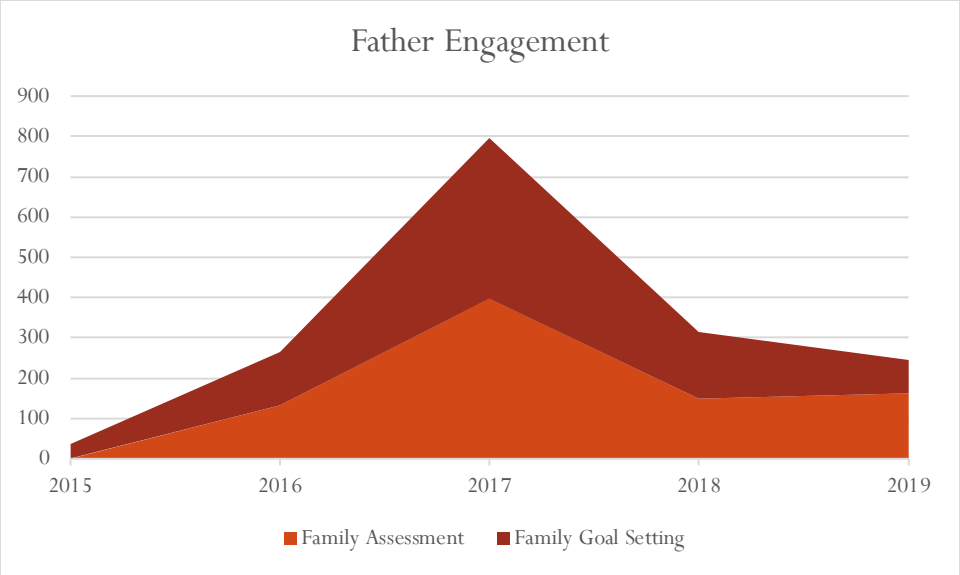




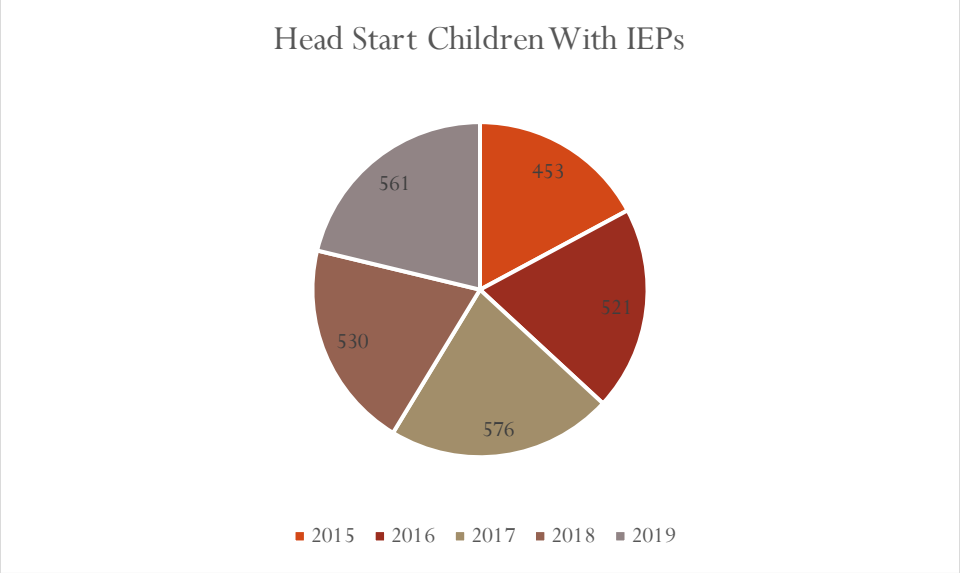


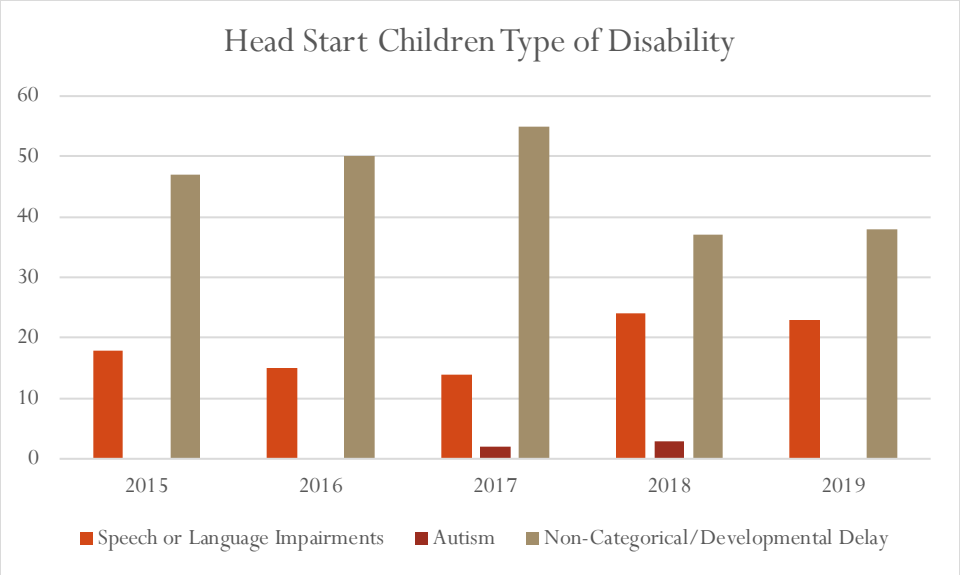


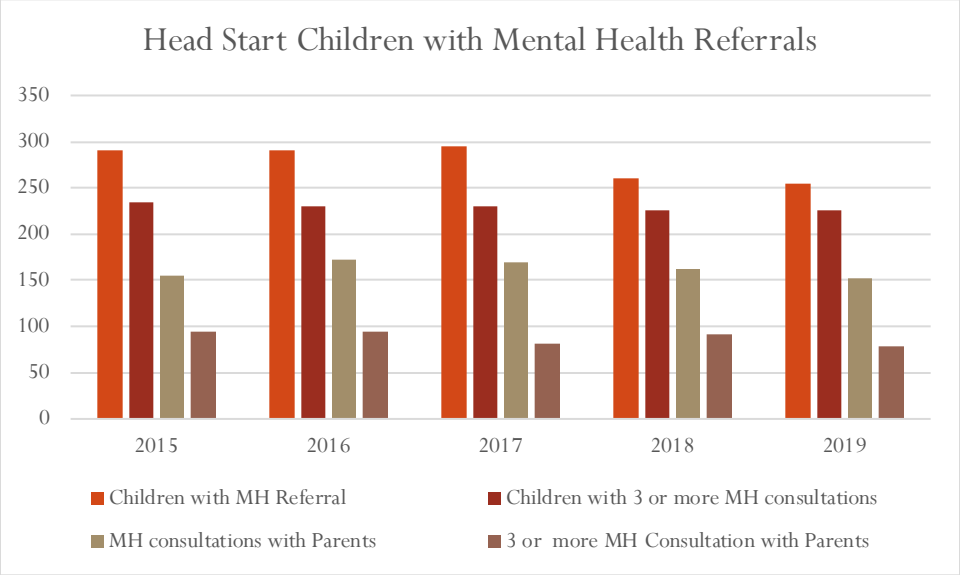
Families Identified Need During the Program Year (Total = 648)	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Emergency or Crisis Intervention	96%	94.5%	100%	100%	100%
English (ESL) Training	36%	26.5%	24.3%	20.5%	23.1%
Job Training	29%	13.8%	13.1%	21.4%	16.5%
Parenting Classes	15%	94.5%	22.6%	100%	100%

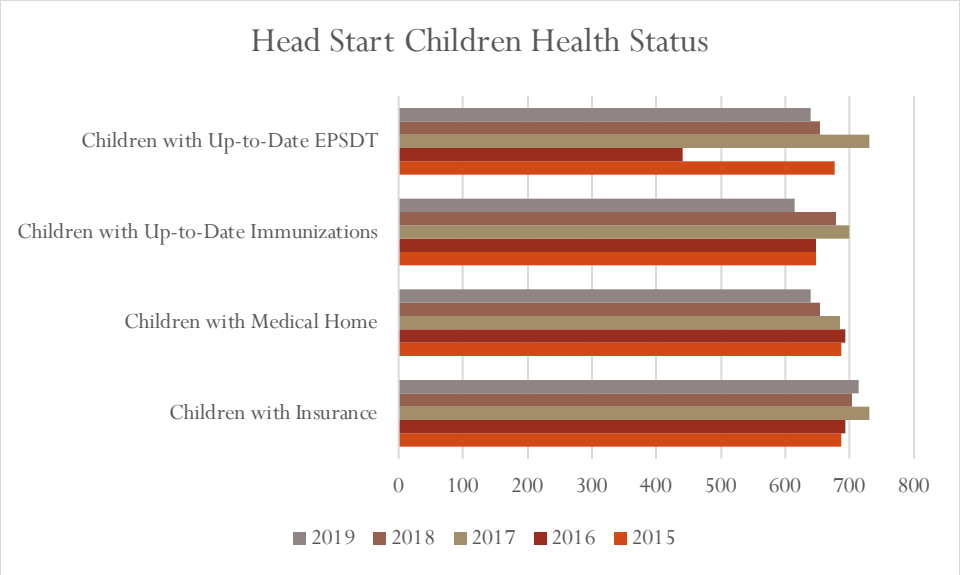


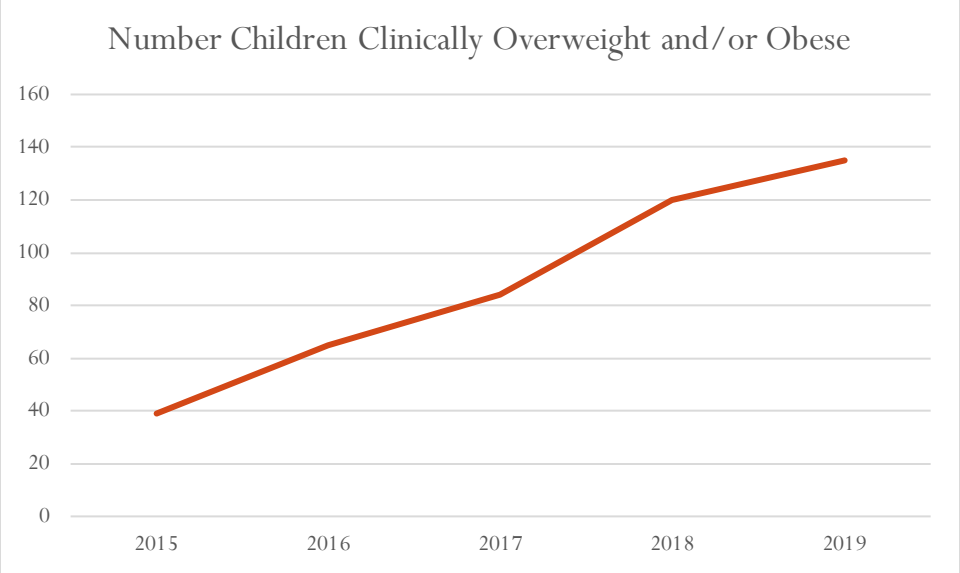
Head Start Children with Disabilities

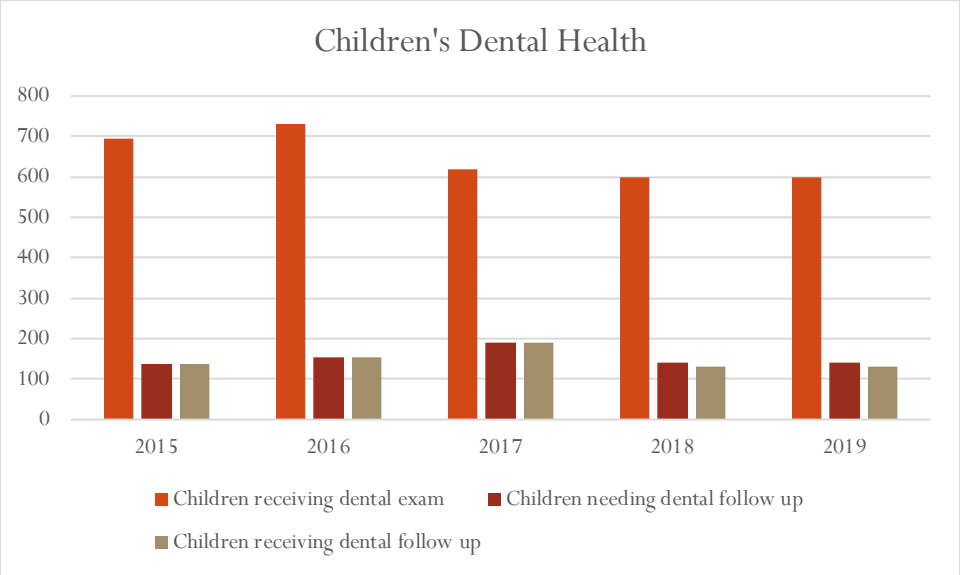



Head Start Children Type of Disability
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
Speech or Language Impairments
Autism
Non-Categorical/Developmental Delay


Head Start Children with Mental Health Referrals
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
Children with MH Referral
Children with 3 or more MH consultations
MH consultations with Parents
3 or more MH Consultation with Parents


Head Start Children Health Status
Children with Up-to-Date EPSDT
Children with Up-to-Date Immunizations
Children with Medical Home
Children with Insurance
0
100
200
300
400
500
600
700
800
2019
2018
2017
2016
2015

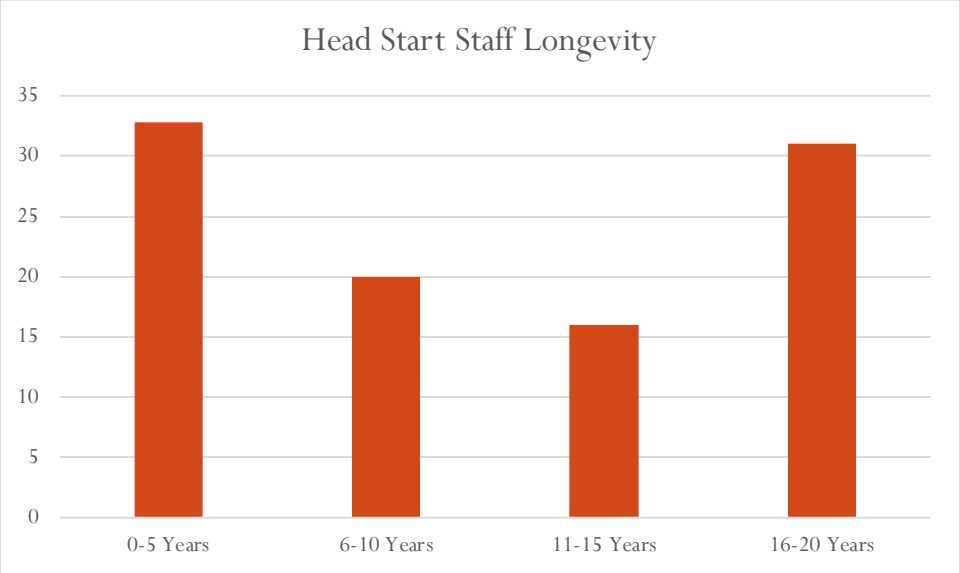

Number Children Clinically Overweight and/or Obese
160
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019


Children's Dental Health
800
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
Children receiving dental exam
Children needing dental follow up
Children receiving dental follow up

Appendix B: MCPS Staff Survey Results

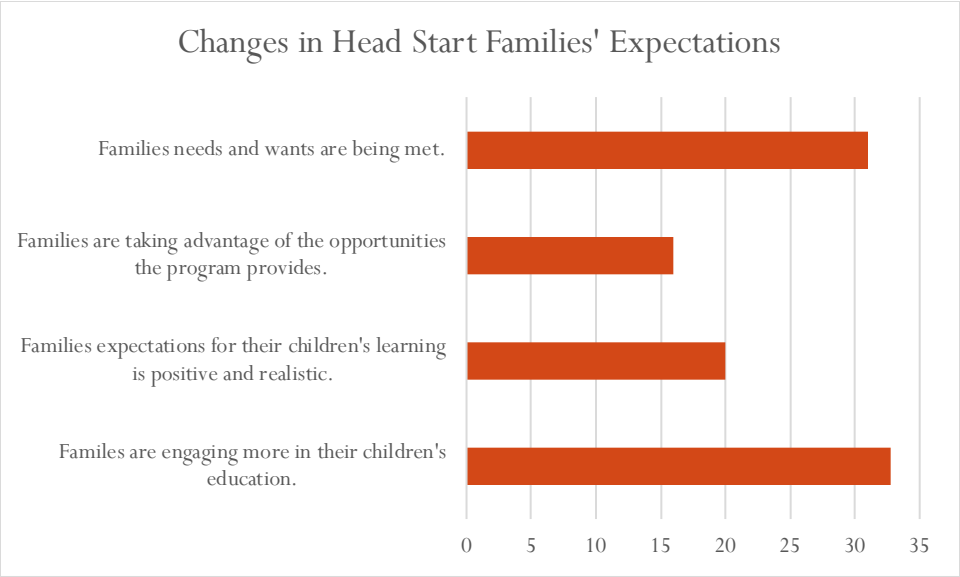
MCPS STAFF COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS (2019)

N= 65 Respondents



Years of Service	Number of Staff
0-5 years	21
6-10 years	13
11-15 years	11
16-20 years	20

QUESTION #2 What changes have you seen in the families you work with?



Other

I'm not sure I've seen changes. It's about the same as when I started.

All of the above.

Families are not engaging in their children's education.

Parents are not as involved. They give too much screen time and don't seem to realize how important school is. When I first started, the parents were always so excited. Now they are just happy to have all day daycare!

Families are learning what the expectations for their child's learning are: and some families really help encouraging their child's learning.

Some families have very poor attendance and it makes the learning process difficult. Also, it is a negative attribute that counts against the home school. Admin is less likely to support PreK/HS children because they negatively impact school data and it is not their home school.

Families want to help their children and through parent programs will follow through and teach their children foundational skills.

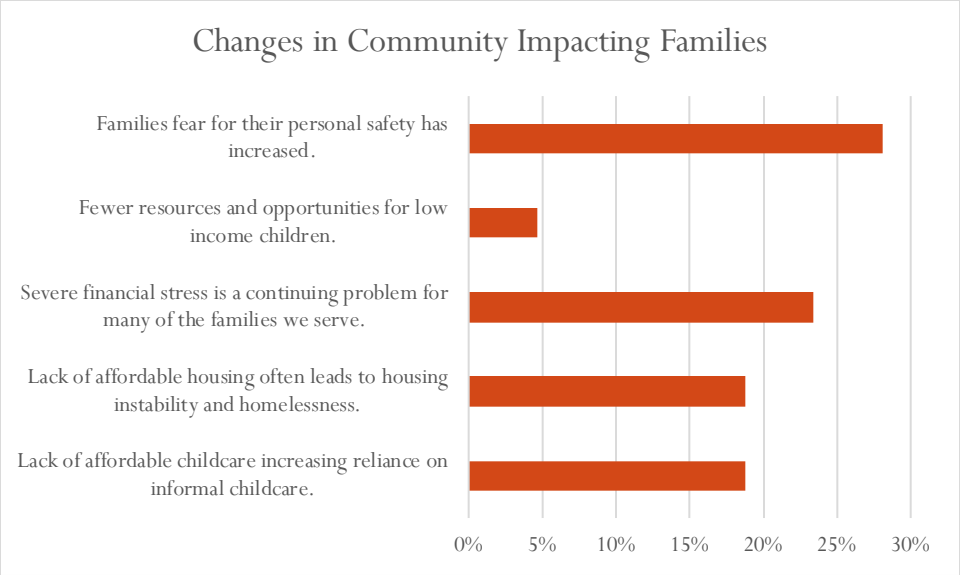
Overall my families seem less engaged, more stressed and have a difficult time making time to engage in school activities.

Family needs are increasing.

The dynamics of family issues have changed greatly with the increase of our immigration population. Some issues have intensified because of this shift. We have had to up our game considerably.

I am still new and trying to figure out my families.

QUESTION #3 What changes in the community have you seen that are impacting the families?



Other

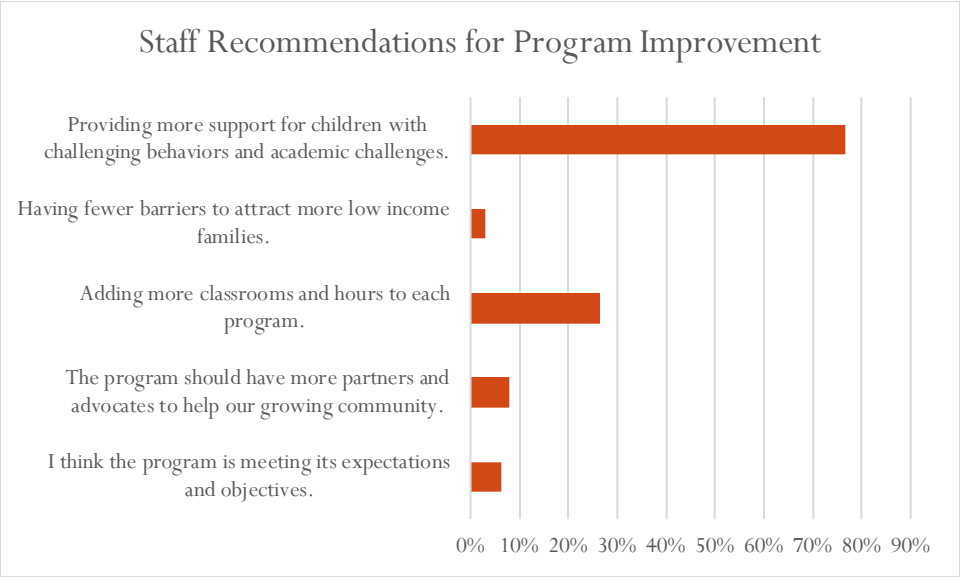
How about all of the above- 6 comments!

There are multiple factors at work. Immigration fears are very real.

All of the above, plus trauma at home and in community affecting children.

Immigration concerns.

QUESTION #4 How can the program do a better job of meeting the needs of children and families?



Other

Class sizes need to decrease 8-12 children.

Provide more support for needy children with challenging behaviors.

Smaller class sizes and support for children with challenging behaviors.

Providing more support for children experiencing trauma and working with families of children with challenging behaviors.

We need more resources in the way of boots on the ground. More hands to help with students and families. Even having two paraeducators per class would help or make all programs full day.

This year's class is very immature and not academically ready for school or Head Start!

Additional 3-year old classes Up county.

Also adding more classrooms and hours to each program.

A more streamlined enrollment process. Students are missing days and weeks of school because of paperwork back-ups. Also working families' jobs are at risk because there is a 2+week wait on the bus. How can we expect hourly workers to be late to work every day for 2 weeks? Not fair!

Lowering class size.

We need to limit Pre-K sizes to 20. Over crowdedness is a real issue and our students have tremendous needs. We do them a disservice by packing them in. Parents are afraid to full our FARMS forms because of ICE issues.

More opportunities for ½ classes to become full day would be fantastic.

Trying to figure out a way to reduce the number of qualified children on the wait list and in schools.

Appendix C: MCPS FY17 Parent School Readiness Survey Results

Montgomery County Head Start
Parent School Readiness Survey 2017
108 responses

Question	Fall n=170	Spring n=108
Have you met the FSW assigned to your school?	Yes- 61%	Yes- 82%
The FSW provided me with services and referrals	Yes- 49%	Yes- 74%
How often do you read to your child at home?	Every day- 48% A few times a week- 46%	Every day- 54% A few times a week- 35%
How many minutes?	15 minutes- 34% 20 minutes- 24% 30 minutes- 19%	15 minutes- 30% 20 minutes- 27% 30 minutes- 23%
Do you have a library card?	Yes- 55%	Yes- 80%
How often do you visit the library?	Once a month- 22% Once a week- 17% A few times a year- 25%	Once a month- 35% Once a week- 16% A few times a year- 22%
How often do you sing songs, tell stories?	Every day- 48% A few times a week- 35%	Every day- 46% A few times a week- 38%
How often do you talk about colors, numbers, etc.?	Every day- 68% A few times a week- 24%	Every day- 69% A few times a week- 22%
How often does your child color, draw or write?	Every day- 44% A few times a week- 39%	Every day- 58% A few times a week- 34%
How often do you play games with your child (board games, matching games)?	Every day- 17% Once a week- 18% A few times a week- 45%	Every day- 20% One a week- 28% A few times a week- 35%
How often do you visit parks, museums, community activities?	Once a week- 20% A few times a week- 39% Once a month- 16%	Once a week- 23% A few times a week- 46% Once a month- 8%
Do you speak a language other than English at home?	Yes- 73%	Yes- 78%
How often do you speak to your child in your home language?	Every day- 91%	Every day- 95%
How often do you read to your child in the home language?	Every day- 42% A few times a week- 29%	Every day- 41% A few times a week- 23%

Appendix D: MCPS FY19 Parent Satisfaction Survey Results

21 parents responded in 2019 (50 parents replied in 2018) (69 parents responded in 2017) (110 parents responded in 2016).

1. Do you feel that you are welcome to come into the classroom to visit or volunteer?

76% 82% 70% 79% Always 0 4% 16% 12% Sometimes 5% Never 19% 14%14% no response

2. Does the teaching staff communicate with you regularly about activities that are going on in the classroom?

76% 68% 72% 76% Always 19% 18% 22% 18% Sometimes 0 2% Never 5%12%6% no response

3. If a language other than English is spoken in the home, does the teaching staff help your child learn English?

86% 66% 70% 65% Always 5% 2% 4% 5% Sometimes 5% 18% 20% 26% Does Not Apply 4% 14%6% no response

4. Does the teaching staff encourage you to tell them about your child's interests, strengths, and needs?

90% 76%77% 80% Always 5% 12%16% 15% Sometimes 5% 12%7% no response

5. Does the teaching staff give you suggestions and/or materials for you to work with your child at home?

86% 64%77% 77% Always 9% 24%17% 20% Sometimes 5% 12%6% no response

6. Were the days/times when parent activities were offered convenient for you?

67% 64%56% 51% Always 29% 16%36% 39% Sometimes 6%1% Never 4%14%7% no response

7. Do you feel that parent activities and staff are respectful of your family's culture and ethnic background?

86% 82%86% 81% Always 5% 6%7% 16% Sometimes 1% Never 9%12%6% no response

8. Has the family service worker referred you to any community agencies? If yes, were your needs met?

62% 38%32% 27% Always 19% 6%13% 14% Sometimes 12%26% 18% Never 14% 26%22% 38% Does Not Apply 5% 18%7% no response

9. Were you satisfied with the frequency of contact with the family service worker assigned to your school?

86% 64%68% 55% Always 0 8%17% 24% Sometimes 10%6% 12% Never 14% 18%9% no response

10. Overall, were you satisfied with the support you received from the family service worker?

81% 66%68% 63% Always 5%8%16% 18% Sometimes 5%10%9% 11% Never
9%16%7% no response

11. Do you have the opportunity to share observations/concerns about your child's emotional and behavioral health with staff?
90%74%63% 76% Always 0 10%26% 16% Sometimes 5% 4%4% 5% Never
5%12%7% no response

12. Does Head Start provide you with information or training on child behavior management strategies?
90% 64%67% 75% Always 5%16%16% 14% Sometimes 6%4% 8% Never
5%14%13% no response

13. Has the Head Start staff provided the services outlined in your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP)?
43% 42%57% 50% Always 5%6%12% 9% Sometimes 5%2%7% 5% Never
24%30%14% 35% Does Not Apply 23%20%10% no response

14. Has staff provided you with resources and supportive information in regard to your child's disability?
38%42%35% 34% Always 5%5% 7% Sometimes 5%2%12% 6% Never
43%42%35% 51% Does Not Apply 9%14%13% no response

15. Were the Head Start registration locations and the registration process convenient for you?
81%76%73% 77% Always 10%4%14% 14% Sometimes 3% 6% Never 4% Does Not Apply
9%16%10% no response

16. Were you treated in a respectful and courteous manner when you called the Head Start office?
90%82%81% 85% Always 2%9% 9% Sometimes 10%16%10% no response

17. Were you informed of program activities in a timely manner?
86%78%72% 77% Always 5%6%19% 16% Sometimes 2%Never 9%14%9% no response

18. Were you satisfied with the transportation services provided for your child?
90%64%77% 71% Always 8%6% 10% Sometimes4%6% 11% Never 6% Does Not Apply
10%18%11% no response

19. Overall, did you have problems with the program services provided by Montgomery County Head Start?
24%10%10% 6% Always 2%1% 6% Sometimes 62%74%80% 84% Never
14%14%9% no response

20. Were your child's dental health concerns and needs addressed to your satisfaction?

86%68%67% 76% Always 8%9% 9% Sometimes 5%8%13% 9% Never 9%16%11% no response

21. If your child needed a dental referral were you assisted in obtaining help with finding a dental provider?
52%52%60% 51% Always 5%4%10% 12% Sometimes 24% 14%14% 23% Never 8%Does Not Apply 19%22%16% no response

22. Did the Head Start nurse respond to your needs in timely and courteous manner?
86%74%71% 77% Always 5%6%14% 7% Sometimes 2%3% 8% Never 2%Does Not Apply 9%16%12% no response

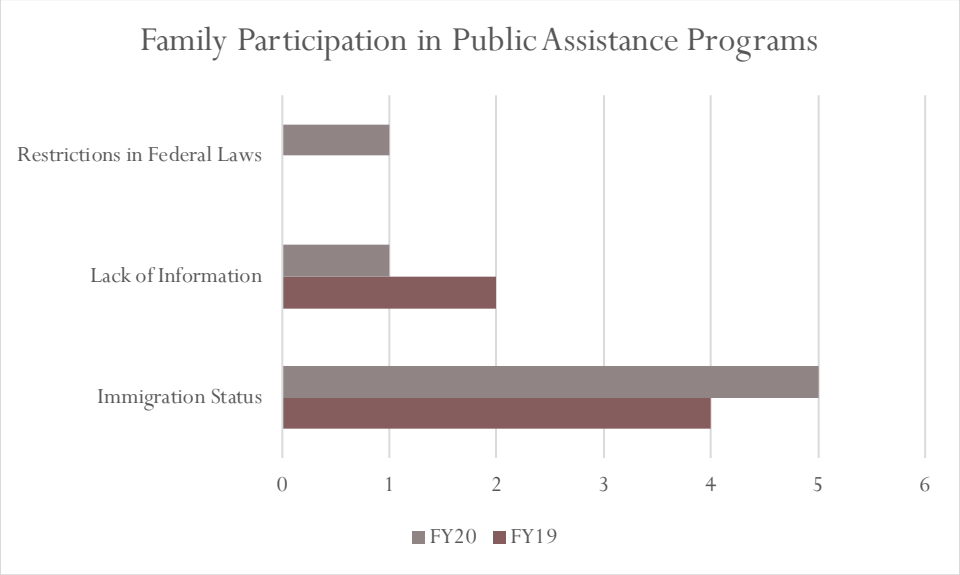
23. Were your child's health concerns addressed to your satisfaction?
81%74%80% 70% Always 5%2%4% 9% Sometimes 5%2%7% 13% Never 4%Does Not Apply 9%18%9% no response

24. Were you satisfied with the overall health and dental services?
86%76%87% 79% Always 8%3% 9% Sometimes 5%1% 7% Never 9%16%9% no response

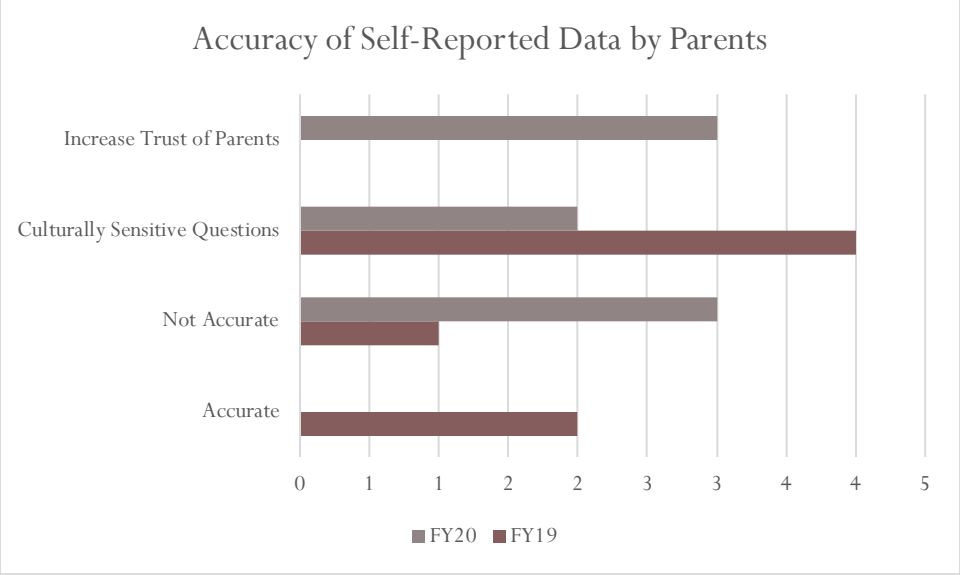
25. Did staff provide you with information and resources regarding applying for insurance and/or gaining access to health care?
71%66% Always 5%0Sometimes 14%10% Never 6% Does Not Apply 10%18% no response

Appendix E: Community Action Agency Needs Assessment Survey

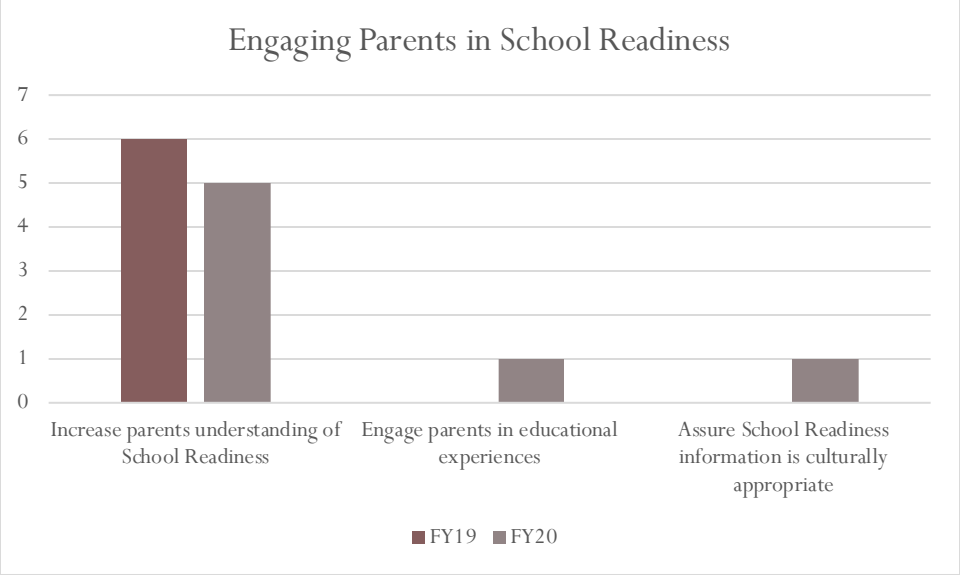
Question 1: If 100% of Head Start families are at or below the poverty line, why do you believe there is such a small percentage of families receiving public assistance (TANF, WIC, SSI, SNAP)?



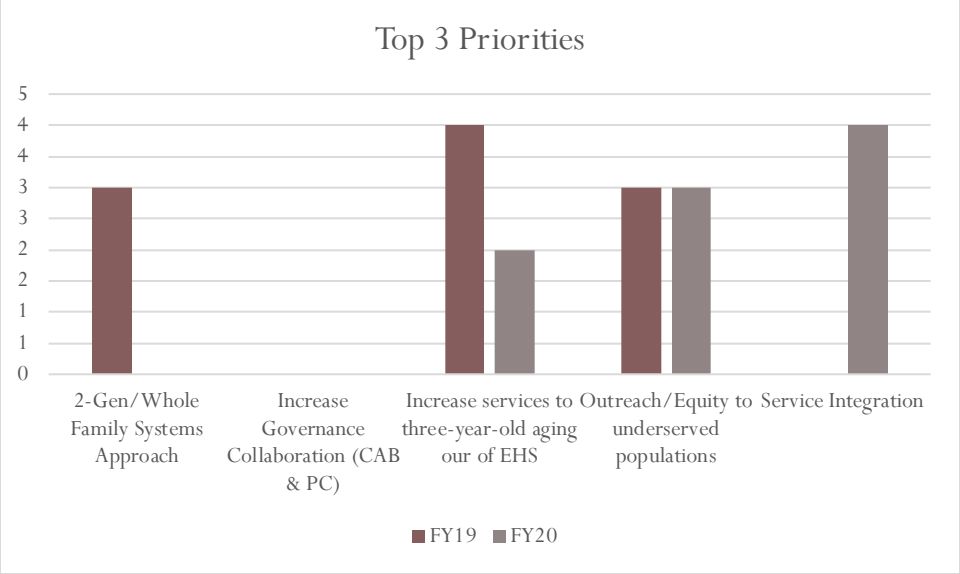
Question 2: In your opinion, how accurate is the Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) data if it is "self-reported" by parents? How can we assure more accuracy in self-reporting? What are the barriers?



Question 3: According to surveys, staff members observe that "the expectations of [Head Start] parents for their child's learning" is low. How do you recommend that we address this issue?



Question 4: We are striving to focus on some new priorities for our five-year project period. Please select the top three areas (#1 as top priority).



Community Action Board Head Start CAN Survey Narrative

Q1 If 100% of Head Start families are at or below the poverty line, why do you believe there is such a small percentage of families receiving public assistance (TANF, WIC, SSI, SNAP)?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES
1	Families lack information; transportation access and language barriers.
2	Some families may not feel comfortable with accessing these services or may not even be aware that they are eligible for the services
3	I think there are families that do not look for some services because they may be exposed as illegal aliens.
4	Scared of public charge rule
5	Lack of information about the program. The amount received is at such a minimum that families may reject it. Fear of government interference.
6	Very strict federal laws; and some people do not want all that information submitted to the government
7	barriers to applying including, among other, access issues, immigration status concerns.
8	Immigration status, some are teens/students, some are large families

Q2 In your opinion, how accurate is the Head Start Program Information Report data if it is "self-reported" by parents? How can we assure more accuracy in self-reporting? What are the barriers?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 1

#	RESPONSES
1	I definitely don't think it's very accurate. I think that there continues to be a lot of misinformation and parents rely on hearsay from people they trust.
2	The questions could be ask in various different ways and some families are not comfortable with being forthcoming based on how that information may be used against them
3	I'm not sure if some people feel that in doing a survey it exposes them to other issues such as what I mentioned regarding being here illegally.
4	Probably 50% accurate. Assure clients that information won't impact them.
5	Probably 80%. Not sure you can. Families will only do what they can and sometimes reporting isn't black and white. There are so many nuances to incomes and the stability of that income.
6	More observation by family workers would be helpful
7	Parents must identify their own needs in a culturally sensitive approach. We do have some objective markers like WIC or Food Stamp participation-- we ask for proof like letters or EBT card.

Q3 According to surveys, staff members observe that "the expectations of [Head Start] parents for their child's learning" is low. How do you recommend that we address this issue?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES
1	I think that a lot of the information given to parents is probably not delivered in a way that it is relatable to them therefore creating a sense that their children can't attain same results.
2	Find out from the parents there understanding of how early learning programs impact the child in the long run
3	Is it possible to expose the population to statistics that show the results of having their children enrolled in such a program
4	Explain the value of the educational experience.
5	The parent becoming engaged in the classroom and policy council can combat that information.
6	More work with parents, particularly by staff who have similar cultural backgrounds. Invite speakers who can motivate parents
7	Through a targeted public awareness campaign on the importance of early care and education including free (or very low-cost) resources for parents and caregivers.
8	I have not observed that parents have low expectations; however, educating parents about developmentally appropriate expectations is an important goal

Q4 We are striving to focus on some new priorities for our five-year project period. Please select the top three areas (#1 as top priority).

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	S
System: Explore ways to strengthen 2-Gen/whole family approaches to addressing poverty	28.57% 2	42.86% 3	14.29% 1	0.00% 0	14.29% 1	7	3
Governance: Increase interactions between CAB and the Head Start Policy Council	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	20.00% 1	20.00% 1	60.00% 3	5	1
Model: Identify opportunities to serve three-year-old's aging out of Early Head Start	50.00% 4	25.00% 2	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8	4
Outreach/Equity: Evaluate which populations are under-served	0.00% 0	28.57% 2	42.86% 3	28.57% 2	0.00% 0	7	3
Service Integration: For families with significant needs, explore opportunities for intensive case management teaming by working with the Department of Health and Human Services	28.57% 2	14.29% 1	14.29% 1	28.57% 2	14.29% 1	7	3

Q5 Are there other priorities you recommend we focus on during the five- year project period? If so, please describe here.

Answered: 5 Skipped: 3

#	RESPONSES
1	Definitely how to serve the populations individually so that they can in turn come together collectively.
2	n/a
3	N/A
4	Work with pediatricians and religious leaders, to distribute educational information, to teach parents to talk and read to their kids in early childhood
5	Affordable housing

Q6 If you have any additional feedback for the Head Start Community Needs Assessment, please include it here.

Answered: 3 Skipped: 5

#	RESPONSES
1	n/a
2	N/A
3	Use parents who have had children in Head Start to engage new parents, and to obtain additional funding. Show success before and after Head Start by students to government and other potential funders

REFERENCES & END NOTES

REFERENCES

Additional data resources use to support the FY2020 Montgomery County Head Start Comprehensive Community Assessment:

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Sherman Center for Early Learning in Urban Communities, Annual Report 2018. University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

Understanding the Two Generation Strategy for Supporting Families: A Conversation about Local Implementation Strategies. Administration for Children and Families. Casey Family Programs. Hagerstown, Maryland, October 18, 2016.

END NOTES

[1] Montgomery County, Maryland Community Action Board Annual Report 2014-2015, page 5.

[2] This standard is adopted by the CAB approximately every two years. For 2016, the standard was prepared by CAA staff and CAB in cooperation with the developer of the measure's algorithms for updating the levels.

[3] Head Start Program Performance Standards 1302.11 (b) (1), (2) & (3)

[4] Montgomery County, Maryland Government Head Start (2018-2019) PIR Performance Indicator Report.

[5] *Montgomery County Public Schools at a Glance 2018-2019.*

[6] https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/

[7] Montgomery County Public Schools *at a Glance*. 2018-2019.

[8] https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/

[9] Community Commons Report. *The Census Bureau has no official definition of crowded units, but this report considers units with more than one occupant per room to be crowded.*

[10] https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/

[11] Maryland child Care Resource Network Child Care Demographics 2019. Montgomery County Report. (Maryland Family Network).

[12] https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/homelessness/

[13] Montgomery County Child Welfare Services.

[14] Community Commons Report 2014.

[15] http://mocofoodcouncil.org/food-security-plan-and-food-action-plan/

[16] Maryland child Care Resource Network Child Care Demographics 2019. Montgomery County Report. (Maryland Family Network).

[17] *Discovery Station Early Head Start Annual Report Program Year 2018.*
https://www.sheppardpratt.org/files/resources/discovery-station-ehs-annual-report-2017-2018-revi.pdf

[18] https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OPI/Resources/Files/2019/MarcElrich_Transition_Team_Report.pdf

[19] https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/CYF%20Docs/ECE%20Initiative%20Year%20One%20.pdf

[20] *Readiness Matters! The 2018-2019 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Report*. Maryland State Department of Education.

[21] Montgomery County Early Care and Education Strategic Plan 2017.
http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/Resources/Files/Reports/ECStrategicPlan1-17.pdf

[22] https://www.nonprofitmoco.org/programs/montgomery-moving-forward/

[23] Montgomery Moving Forward call to action: Early Care and Education

https://www.nonprofitmoco.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/MMF-Call-to-Action-Early-Care-and-Education-Jan2018.pdf

[24] http://mocofoodcouncil.org/food-security-plan-and-food-action-plan/

[25] http://www.healthymontgomery.org/index.php

[26] https://thewomensfoundation.org/ECEFC/