



Head Start 2022/2023 Annual Report

Head Start is a high quality, comprehensive early childhood program that enhances the cognitive, social and emotional development of three and four-year-old children in Columbia County, NY. Head Start provides a learning environment that supports children's growth in many areas such as language, literacy, social and emotional development. Head Start emphasizes the role of parents as their child's first and most important teacher. Head Start helps build relationships with families that support family well-being and many other important areas. This federally funded program serves income eligible children and families. Eligibility preference is given to children who are homeless, are in foster care, receive public assistance or live in families at or below the federal poverty level, (\$27,750 for a family of four).

During the 2022-23 program year, Columbia Opportunities, Inc. (COI) served a smaller number of children than usual due to staffing shortages. We operated four classes and provided Head Start services to 78 children and their families. Four classrooms operated throughout the county in the Hudson City, Chatham Central, Taconic Hills Central and Ichabod Crane School Districts.

Using the 2012-2016 American Community Survey data, we estimate that 322 three and four-year-old children were living at or below the poverty level in Columbia County. Based on this estimate, COI Head Start served 20% of the county's eligible children. Using recent school lunch data, we estimate that 431 three and four-year-old children would have been eligible for the free school lunch program. Based on this estimate, COI Head Start would have served only 22% of the county's eligible children.

Accomplishments

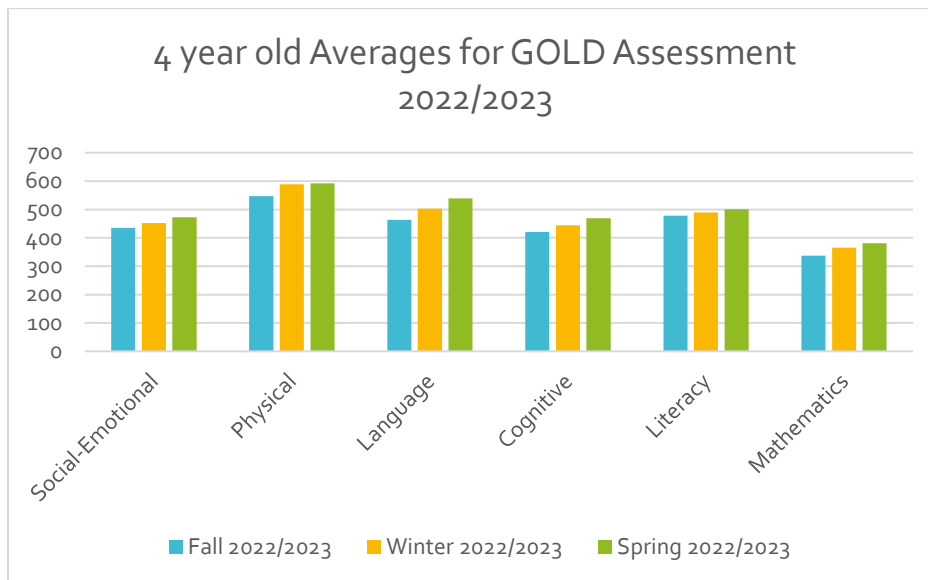
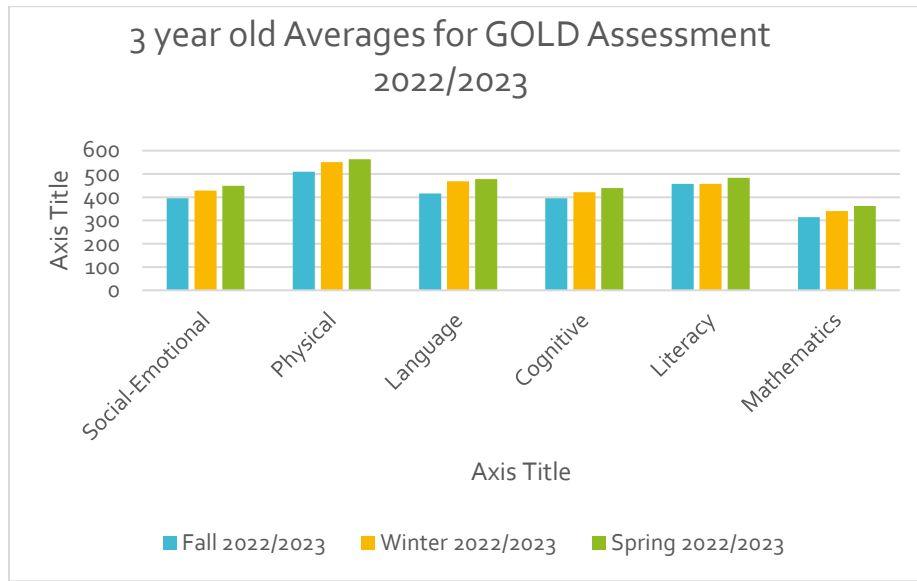
Total number of children served	78
Average monthly enrollment	61%
Number of children diagnosed with a disability	8
Number of children receiving disability services	8
Percentage who received a professional dental examination during the year	51%
Percentage of children who completed medical exams	100%

School Readiness

Kindergarten readiness is an on-going focus from the first day of Head Start enrollment. COI-Head Start classrooms are located throughout Columbia County so that children attend sites in or near the schools where they will be attending kindergarten. Parents are supported in the kindergarten registration and screening process and families are encouraged to visit kindergarten orientation classes. With parental consent, we share information with local school districts about individual children's progress in the Head Start program.

To ensure that children successfully transition to school age programs, COI-Head Start develops school/child readiness goals using the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, NYS Early Learning Standards and the Creative Curriculum. Child Assessments, using the Teaching Strategies GOLD, measure growth against six learning domains: Social and Emotional Development, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy and Mathematics.

In the 2022-23 program year, we had a much larger enrollment of 3-year old children. In prior years, more 4-year olds were enrolled. In this report, we will reflect the assessment reports for each of these age groups.



Computer assisted analysis provide reports on the progress of children and assist teachers in planning and individualizing instruction. Records maintained on each child include descriptions of their work, notes about their development and indicators or progress toward completion of individual objectives. Parents receive an individualized child report at a conference with the teacher after each period. This

information is used to plan for individual and groups of children and to determine materials needed and support/training for staff.

Parent and Family Engagement Activities

COI-Head Start believes that parents are the first and the best teachers of their own children. We provide a variety of parent and family activities that increase family engagement with the Head Start program and the local community:

- Parents as decision makers for Head Start through Policy Council and Parent Committees
- Individualized Family Goal Plans
- Supportive home visits to encourage goal completion
- Home visits & parent teacher conferences
- Volunteer opportunities
- Participating in Talk, Read, Sing Columbia
- Opportunities to engage with community partners

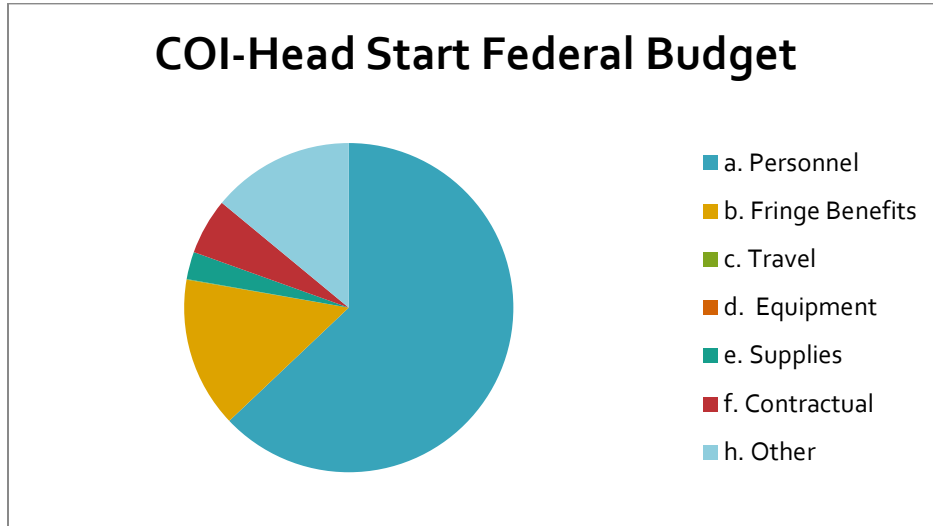
External Reviews

Federal Head Start Review – From March 13 through March 17, 2023, COI had a functional Area 2 review as a part of routine monitoring of our program by the Office of Head Start. Reviewers met with Columbia Opportunities, staff, parents, governing volunteers, visited classrooms and reviewed program records. It was determined in this review that the requirements of all applicable Head Start Program Performance Standards, laws, regulations and policy requirements were met by our program.

Independent Financial Audit - The most recent external audit conducted by RBT Accountants CPA's, LLP of the 2021-2022 year identified one finding regarding the organization's late filing of the previous year's (2020-2021) audit report. There were no questioned costs. The 2021-22 audit was submitted on-time. Otherwise, it was determined that Columbia Opportunities, Inc. was in compliance with all federal fiscal requirements.

Fund Allocation for COI-Head Start

The following table illustrates how Federal Head Start resources were allocated to support of Head Start services in Columbia County:



In addition to the funds received through the Office of Head Start, the following resources were used to support the program:

- Child & Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP): \$28,738
- Monies from Hudson City School District & Taconic Hills School district for partnering in Universal Pre-Kindergarten Services: \$39,720

Resources for Next Year (2023-24):

The estimated revenues for 2023-2024 are as follows:

Total Anticipated Revenue	\$1,938,519
This includes funds from the following sources:	
Head Start Services & Training	\$ 1,753,433
CACFP	\$ 45,000
Universal Pre-K (HCSD)	\$ 10,100
Other Non-Federal Matching Funds & In-kind donations	\$ 129,986

This report is published in accordance with the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007

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