



Las Cruces Public Schools



Head
Start

Building Family Partnerships



Annual Report to the Community 2020-2021

What is Head Start?

Head Start is a federally-funded program that supports children’s development in a positive learning environment. It provides comprehensive services for low-income children and their families to include education, social services, parent education, and health/safety/nutrition.

LCPS Head Start program has been serving the Las Cruces community since 1971. LCPS Head Start serves three- and four-year-olds and promotes school readiness by enhancing the child’s social, emotional, language, cognitive and physical development.

The LCPS Head Start program offers a school-based program option. These programs operate on a nine-month basis and with similar alignment to the LCPS school district calendar from August-May. There are 26 assigned sites within 13 elementary schools.



**Head Start Office
2020-21 SY**

Director
Dr. Christina Freeman

**Leadership
Team**

- ◆ Bobbi Baca
- ◆ Christina Bustamante
- ◆ Yrazema Cabrera
- ◆ Luis Chavez
- ◆ Dr. Cynthia Gomez
- ◆ Luis Guzman
- ◆ Christine Navarro
- ◆ Brisa Miranda

Office Staff

- ◆ Angelica Cornejo
- ◆ Gabriel Holguin
- ◆ Jacqueline Mejia
- ◆ Tory Woods

Teachers	Educational Assistants	Parent Engagement Assistants
Daleen Cowder	Jayne Ortiz	Melissa Hunt
Jaime Armendariz	Julie Salcido	Natalia Dallman
Amanda Tucker	Nancy Marquez	Norma Perez
Sabrina Mooers	Stephanie Molinar	Brittney Romero
Gabriela Diaz	Amanda Fulps	Maria Esparza
Joyce Stroud	Dana Nichols	Judy Lopez
Teresa Calderon	Ruby Vasquez	Brenda Rubio
Carissa Soria	Alma Escarcega	Melissa Ayala
Jennifer Martinez	Nancy Jurado	Arlene Aguirre
Mahsa Azma	Vianey Guzmán	Araceli Moriel
Nicole De La Peña	Daniela Segura	Ana Diaz
Cynthia Lopez	Joyce Stroud	Ilda DeBord
Michelle Solis	Tamatha Murphy	Lupe Mendoza
Ashley Shaw	Jessica Lopez	Lucy Cuevas
Erin Barela	Catherine Flores	Amelia Hamilton
Bernadette Hernandez	Catherine Martin	Patricia Amaya
Sylvia Roberts	Maria Luisa Jaques	Angelita Arenas
Christine Navarro		Deanna Sanchez-Aguirre
Irene Aragon		Laura Gomez
Priscilla Duran		
Rebecca Gutierrez		
Alyssa Molina		
Noemi Garcia		
Sabrina Reese		
Kathryn Desmarais		

Practice-Based Coaching (PBC)

PBC is a cyclical process for supporting teachers' use of effective teaching practices that lead to positive outcomes for children, with a focus on literacy and social emotional learning.

The coaching cycle components are:

1. Planning short-term goals and developing measurable action steps
2. Engaging in focused observation
3. Reflecting on and sharing feedback about teaching practices.

PBC occurs within the context of a collaborative partnership. Each component in the cycle is designed to inform the actions taken by a coach or teacher during the subsequent component (or throughout the coaching process). The cyclical nature of PBC emphasizes that expectations and desired outcomes of coaching are regularly reviewed and updated.

Practice-Based Coaching provided all Head Start teachers the opportunity to participate during 2020-2021 school year. Teachers were coached by three different Early Childhood Instructional Coaches. They were able to complete a range of 2-15 cycles throughout the school year.

Income Guidelines for the 2020-21 School Year

FAMILY SIZE	100% Poverty and under Annual Income
1	\$12,880
2	\$17,420
3	\$21,960
4	\$26,500
5	\$31,040
6	\$35,580
7	\$40,120
8	\$44,660

Social-Emotional Curriculum: Kimochis

Kimochis is a curriculum designed primarily for young children to be able to communicate their feelings in positive ways. Kimochis uses characters to promote social emotional development. Children are taught to identify and communicate their needs, thoughts, and emotions in a way that teaches self-regulation and coping skills. They develop positive social skills that lead to lasting relationships and success in all aspects of life.

Transitioning Head Start Students into Kindergarten (1302.71)

Transition is embedded into the Head Start School Readiness goal to have Head Start children kinder ready. Teachers and staff prepare Head Start children throughout the school year by these best practices:

- Supporting positive social emotional practices
- Encouraging Self-autonomy and self-help skills in children
- Participating in Read Aloud and small group shared reading opportunities
- Building vocabulary by extending and expanding children's existing vocabulary
- Promoting exploration
- Scaffolding children's learning through reading, writing, math, and hands-on activities
- Providing higher level questions with real world connections
- Seeking services and supports for children that could benefit from early intervention.
- Informing families of children's progress during Head Start
- Including family input/families as a resource

Head Start helps families transition through:

- Assisting with the kindergarten registration process
- Offering community resources
- Informing families about support services (i.e., after-school care, special needs, free/reduced lunches, bus services, etc.).

Principals are involved in the transition process for strategic placement of children that will remain at the school site.

For the 2020-2021 School Year:

- Teachers conducted virtual learning opportunities offering additional small group sessions to support levels of learning.
- Teachers collaborated with families, principals, and kindergarten teachers to provide a virtual end-of-the-year kindergarten transition meeting informing families of kindergarten expectations, common core state standards and expectations, and answering any questions.
- Families were given summer learning resources to support ongoing learning and school readiness for kinder preparation.

LOCATION & AVAILABILITY

Center-Based Programs

Head Start classrooms were located in 13 elementary schools throughout the Las Cruces Public School district. Full day sessions were offered Monday-Friday from 7:45-2:45 with the exception of predetermined Wednesdays. In the virtual format, children participated via Zoom. When face to face instruction started on April 6, 2021, Head Start parents provided their own transportation to and from school.

Head Start School Sites (26)

Booker T. Washington: 6 classes
Cesar Chavez: 7 classes
Conlee: 1 class
Doña Ana: 1 class
Hermosa Heights: 1 class
Jornada: 1 class
Loma Heights: 1 class
MacArthur: 1 class
Mesilla: 1 class
Mesilla Park: 1 class
Tombaugh: 1 class
University Hills: 2 classes
Valley View: 2 classes

Remote Learning and Resources

Our priority is always to ensure that the safety, well-being, and social-emotional needs of our students and families. These needs were also addressed during the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason, the majority of the program year was in the remote learning format with the utilization of Zoom, Canvas, and the LCPS Early Childhood website as the primary platforms.

Children participated in curriculum based learning in whole group, small group, one on one, and virtual field trip settings. Virtual home visits, parent-teacher conferences, family engagements, and Policy Council meetings took place with high levels of participation. Families were provided with access to nutrition, comprehensive services, technology, resources, and supports to fully participate in an online mode of learning. Tangible supplies and were provided to families on a continual basis to make online learning engaging, intentional, and meaningful.

Family Partnerships

LCPS Head Start staff continue their efforts to establish and build strong partnerships with our families. At the first home visit, program staff invite our parents to partner with us in a family goal setting process which results in a Family Partnership Agreement. The Family Partnership Agreement is an individualized, strengths-based, family-driven, and staff-supported process. The process includes guidance and support for assisting the family to develop achievable and measurable goals. Family strengths are identified, and staff encourage families to draw on their strengths to help them reach their goal.

Responsibilities of all parties involved are determined and a timeline to complete tasks is established. Regular tracking of progress is initiated by the Parent Engagement Assistants throughout the program year. Strategies are discussed and implemented when families are faced with challenges that prevent them from moving towards reaching their goal. Our program uses our School Readiness Plan to emphasize to parents the importance of parent and family engagement in all content areas. The School Readiness Plan is continually revised and updated to improve the delivery of services.

Family and Community Engagement staff utilized the Family Interest & Information Survey, which is completed by the parent early in the program year to identify individualized areas of need. Our families are then provided with accurate and timely information about community service providers, agency referrals when needed and assistance with accessing appropriate services. In the upcoming school year, new initiatives to increase family engagement with an emphasis on mental health and parenting strategies will be implemented. Staff members will be engaged in professional development to implement social emotional learning, relationship-based competencies and increase involvement in family partnership defined by the School Readiness Plan.

Health, Safety & Nutrition

Children who have good physical and oral health, feel good, are pain-free, and ready to learn. For this reason, we are dedicated to ensuring that all families have:

- a secure medical and dental home(s),
- receive growth, hearing, and vision screenings,
- have a health history/nutrition assessment completed at the start of the school year,
- highly qualified staff keeping our children safe at all times through active supervision.

We work collaboratively with families, local health departments, local federally qualified health care centers, and dental/primary health care providers to ensure children receive beneficial screenings, preventative care, and treatment. Our program supports families in having their children complete their routine immunization, well-child exam(s), and dental exam(s). For the 2020-2021 school year, 269 received well-child exams. The number of children who received dental exams was 249. The reduction in the completion rate is due to factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Lion's Club also continued to offer no-cost vision screenings to children at all Head Start sites within the first 45 days at the beginning of the school year. Head Start health specialists provided hearing screenings to children within the first 45 days at the beginning of each school year as well. Children with concerns were referred to community vision and hearing specialists.

Disabilities

The Las Cruces Public Schools Head Start Program recognizes the importance of school readiness for **all** children. A child with special needs can increase their learning and social skills when they are interacting with typically developing children in an inclusive setting. Each child suspected of a disability or behavioral concern was referred to the Disability Specialist for further observation and whether a referral for evaluation with the local education agency (LEA) is necessary. Head Start works collaboratively with parents to secure services from the LEAs special education staff. Head Start adheres to the federal mandate of ensuring that not less than 10% of the funded enrollment consists of children with disabilities.

For the 2020-2021 school year, LCPS Head Start disability enrollment began with 15.7% and ended with 19.4% of the total funded enrollment of 413 slots.

MENTAL HEALTH

Head Start continues to offer resources and awareness to children and families in the area of mental health. At the beginning of the year, children received developmental screenings related to milestones and social emotional /mental health using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-SE2). This information is used to provide support and referrals as needed. Innovative updates were made to meet the needs of families through the implementation of an online referral system. There was a total of 205 families were served through this system.

Head Start also collaborated with School Counselors, Social Workers and community Mental Health agencies. The program also continued to strive to develop and revise MOUs with area Behavioral Health providers on a yearly basis.

The Head Start Management Team utilized a multidisciplinary approach when assisting classrooms with strategies for children exhibiting adjustment and behavioral concerns. Specialists conducted classroom observations, provided feedback to staff, reviewed medical/nutritional information which was provided by the parents and/or legal guardians and intervention strategies.



INCLUSION

In an effort to make children the best they can be, the goal is to prepare the child for the path ahead. United in this belief, the Las Cruces Public Schools Early Childhood Programs (Developmentally Delayed Preschool, Head Start, and New Mexico PreK) collaboratively implemented inclusive practices throughout all early childhood programs. In this effort, Head Start students also serve as model students in 2 DD-Pre classrooms. The long-term goal of inclusion is that children have the positive social relationships as well as educational strategies and tools needed to succeed. This is in alignment with our QRIS (Quality Rating Improvement System).

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

Participation in these meetings was measured by attendance records and tracked by sign-in sheets:

Parent Engagement Meetings/Events SY 2020-2021	Number of Parent Engagement Meetings/ Events	Number of Parents Who Attended Parent Engagement Meetings/Events
Policy Council Leadership Training	1	19
Policy Council Meetings	10	131
Parent Committee Meetings	104	535
Volunteer Training	1	10
School Readiness Workshop	1	83
Social Emotional Workshop	1	22
Circle of Security Parenting	1	8
Nurturing Parenting Program	1	12
Self-Assessment Training	1	14
Self-Assessment	1	14
Health Advisory Council	2	0
TOTALS	124	848



Collaborative Efforts with Community Agencies

Head Start participated in various committees and initiatives to foster collaborative efforts with community agencies. These include, but are not limited to partnerships with:

- La Clinica de Familia Head Start
- Region 9 CYFD
- New Mexico PED/FOCUS
- Dona Ana County Head Start
- LCPS Developmentally Delayed Preschool
- New Mexico Head Start Association
- Children's Reading Alliance
- Methodist Children's Home
- Amistad Family Services
- Local Part C Agencies

2020-2021

Head Start by the Numbers

- 413 Funded Enrollment
- 88 Children with a Disabilities
- 896 Children Applied
- 456 Children and Families served
- Language of Origin
 - English: 670
 - Spanish: 168
 - Chinese: 2
 - Arabic/Middle Eastern: 7
- Race and Ethnicity
 - African-American: 23
 - Asian: 8
 - Hispanic/Latino: 742
 - Multi-Racial: 44
 - Native American: 10
 - Other: 3
 - Pacific Islander: 4
 - White: 251

