

2017-2018
Annual Report

Early Childhood Connections 0 to 5

305 Main Street
Hays, KS 67601
785-623-2430

Sponsoring Grantee: USD 489
Assistant Superintendent: Shanna Dinkel
Director: Donna Hudson-Hamilton



OUR MISSION

Our mission is empowering families to live the possibilities by nurturing children, family and community connections.

OUR GOALS

- Children are ready for school and sustained development and learning.
- ◆ Families are engaged in their child's education and with their own personal growth and development.
- ◆ Management systems promote school readiness and sustained development and learning.
- ◆ Community partnerships are developed and strengthened to meet the needs of children and families.



Photo Above: Preschool students make an indoor snowman. Connections provided preschool services to 173 children during the 2017-2018 school year.

OUR LOCATIONS

During 2017-2018, Connections 3 to 5 had six classrooms (3 full-day and 3 half-day sessions) in Hays, one classroom in Russell (morning and afternoon session), and one classroom in Ellis (morning and afternoon session). The classrooms located in Hays served a combination of children eligible for Head Start, State Pre-Kindergarten and the Early Childhood Block Grant. The classroom located in Ellis served both children eligible for Head Start and children from the community. The Russell classroom served only Head Start eligible students. Home-based services were provided to families in Ellis, Rush, Russell and Rooks Counties. All classrooms serve as a community site for children with special needs.

The Early Childhood Connections 0 to 3 program had a center-based program located in Munjor School. Services were also provided to families by partnering family child-care providers. Early Head Start home-based services were provided in Ellis, Rush, Russell and Rooks Counties. Parents as Teachers services were provided to families in the USD #489 service area.

Hays Classrooms:

Washington Site

Russell Classroom:

Simpson Elementary

Ellis Classroom:

Washington Grade School

EHS Center-Based:

Munjor School



EARLY HEAD START

EHS serves pregnant mothers as well as children through age four. Parents have the option of center-based, family child care or home-based services. Parent Educators meet with home-based parents weekly. Center-based and child care families receive monthly contacts. The primary focus of the program is child development, parenting, goals to strengthen the family and self-sufficiency.

EHS is open to families who meet income-eligibility in Ellis, Rush, Russell and Rooks County. Our center-based site is located in Munjor School outside of Hays. Family child care options are offered within the communities of Hays, Ellis, Russell and LaCrosse. These options allow families to choose the services that best fit their philosophy of care and meet their personal schedule.

Funding for services are provided through Federal Early Head Start Funding, Kansas Early Head Start Home Visitation and Kansas Early Head Start Child Care.



Photo above: Children and staff from the Munjor EHS site enjoy a visit from the local fire department. 25 children received quality child care in 2017-2018., allowing their parents to work or attend school.

PARENTS AS TEACHERS

During 2017-2018, the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program served 33 families. PAT is a child development/parenting/family services program for pregnant women and families with a child between birth through age three. Staff recognize parents as the first and most important teacher of their child.

The PAT program assists parents prenatally through age three by providing up to date information and opportunities to share information and experiences with well trained Parent Educators. Parent Educators meet with parents once to twice a month in their home. The primary focus is child development and parenting and is open to eligible families that live in the Hays School District. PAT, in conjunction with EHS, offers playgroups and socialization opportunities.

This program is funded through the Kansas State Department of Education plus a local match from the local school district.



The Parents as Teachers program served 33 families during the 2017-2018 school year.

PRESCHOOL

The Early Childhood Connections 3-5 program provides preschool children and their families a head start on educational opportunities that may not be afforded to them otherwise. It is a comprehensive, child development program concerned with the health, education and welfare of its participants.

Connections provides services in the areas of: education, special education, nutrition, medical, dental and mental health and social services. Family engagement is a key component in the program. Parents work to meet their own individual goals to move towards self-sufficiency.

The program provides 3 full day classrooms (7.5 hours of class time) and 5 half day classroom (3.5 hours of class time), four days a week as well as a home-based option. Families are eligible through Head Start criteria or identification of risk factors which include: single parent family, teen parents, no parental high school diploma or GED, limited English proficiency, developmental delays, or eligibility for free lunch (State Pre-Kindergarten and Early Childhood Block Grant). The program is provided at no cost to families and provides 1/3 of a child's daily nutritional requirement.



Head Start is made possible by a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services and by people like you!

FACTS & FIGURES

Connections 0 to 3 Counties:

126 children in Ellis County
2 children in Rush County
27 children in Russell County
3 children in Rooks County

Connections 0 to 3 Staff:

7 Parent Educators, 6.6 FTE
2 Coordinators, 2 FTE
1 Family Support Worker, 1 FTE
2 EHS Lead Teachers, 2 FTE
7 Teacher Assistants, 5 FTE
1 Custodian, .5FTE

Connections 3 to 5 Counties:

130 children in Ellis County
3 children in Rooks County
36 children in Russell County
4 children in Rush County

Connections 3 to 5 Staff:

10 Teachers, 9.1 FTE
13 Teacher Assistants, 13 FTE
3 Family Advocates, 3 FTE
3 Teacher Assistants/Family Advocates, 3 FTE
3 Coordinators, 3 FTE
1 Floating Bilingual Assistant, 1 FTE
1 Custodian, 1 FTE

Connections 0 to 5 Staff

1 Director, 1 FTE
1 Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant, .6 FTE
4 Coordinators, 4 FTE 1 Grant Coordinator, 1 FTE
1 Administrative Assistant, 1 FTE 1 Data Entry, 1 FTE



SCHOOL READINESS

The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework represents the foundation of the Head Start approach to school readiness. The framework aligns with and builds from the five essential domains of school readiness identified by the National Education Council's Panel and lays out areas of learning and development. Programs are expected to utilize the framework to align with state standards and local education agencies. A committee of Connections staff, Kindergarten teachers and other local early childhood educators met and outlined target school readiness goals.



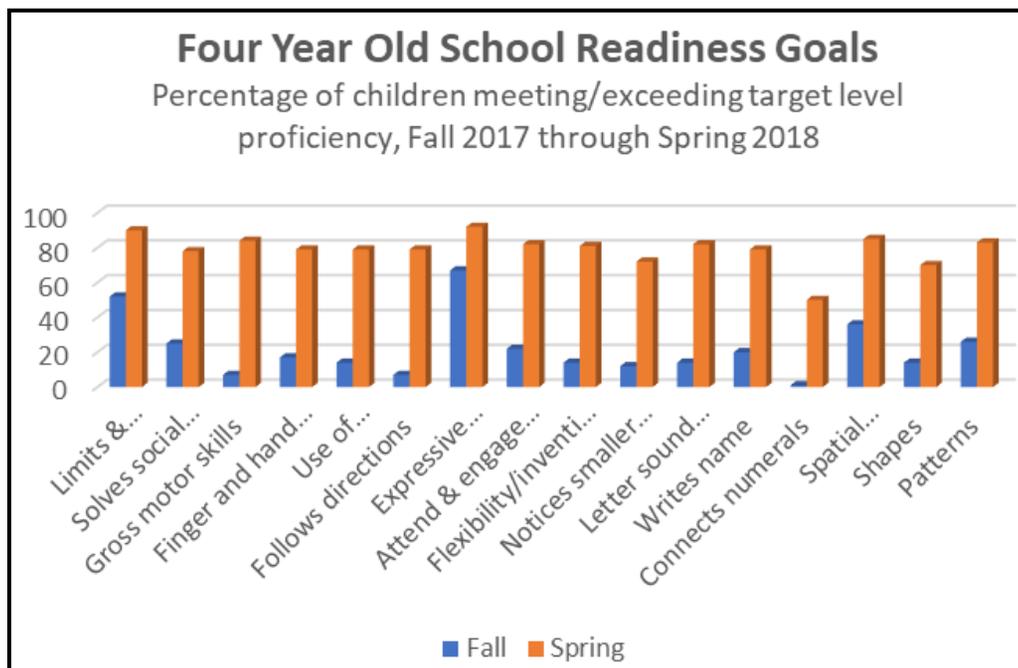
School readiness targeted goals are:

- Children will note and discriminate small and smaller units of sounds.
- Children will use letter-sound knowledge.
- Children will write their names.
- Children will demonstrate the ability to connect numerals with their quantities.
- Children will understand spatial relationships.
- Children will demonstrate understanding of shapes.
- Children will be able to demonstrate knowledge of patterns.
- Children will demonstrate use of fingers and hands.
- Children will demonstrate use of writing and drawing tools.
- Children will demonstrate appropriate gross motor skills.
- Children will attend and engage in group experiences.
- Children will show flexibility and inventiveness in thinking.
- Children will follow limits and expectations.
- Children will demonstrate the ability to solve social programs.
- Children will follow directions.
- Children will use an expanding expressive vocabulary.

SCHOOL READINESS

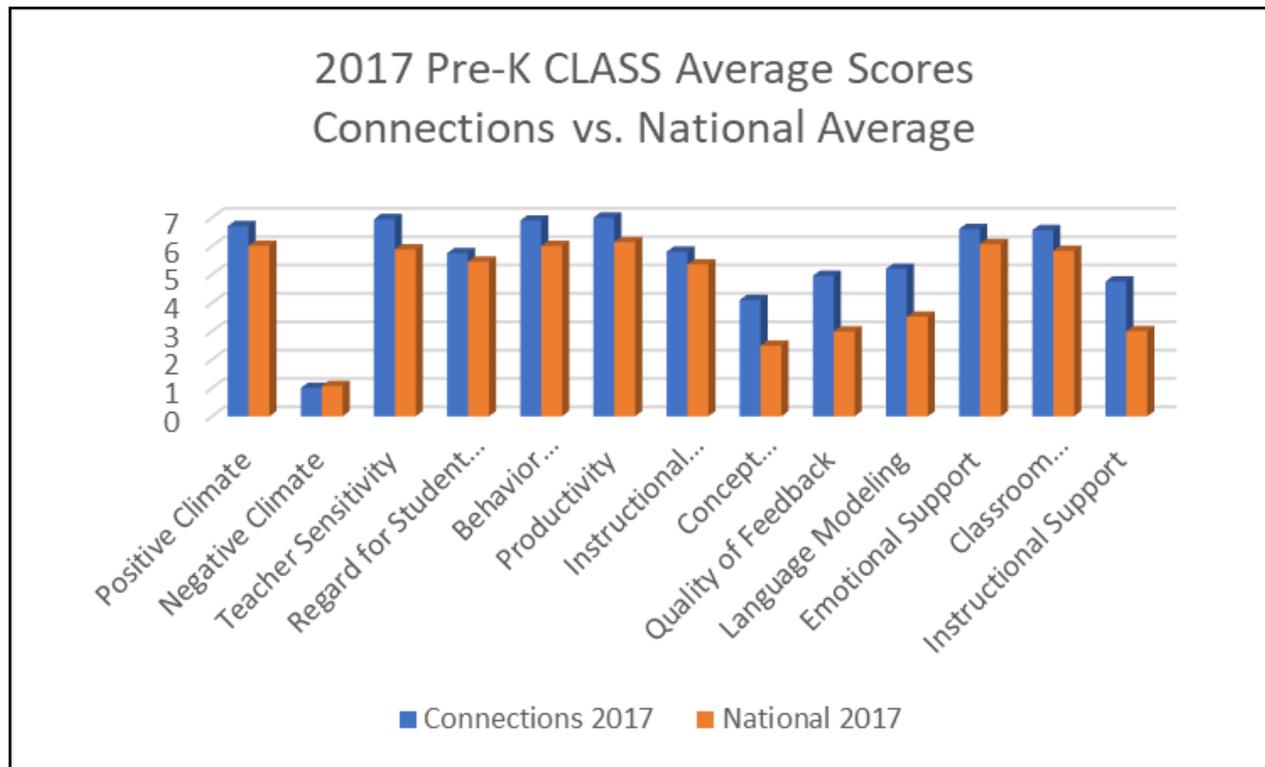
The Connections program focuses on comprehensive services to prepare children to be ready to learn when they walk into Kindergarten and for later life-long success. All children are continually monitored and assessed three times a year. Each of these assessments focuses on a number of objectives in the areas of literacy knowledge and skills; language development, approaches to learning; creative arts expression; social-emotional development; physical development and health; social studies knowledge and skills; science knowledge and skills; mathematics knowledge and skills and logical reasoning.

Early Childhood Connections uses the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment tool to assess all 3 to 5 children and to help teachers focus on all aspects of a child's development ensuring that all children are making progress. The assessment is a strength-based approach and is based on observations taken within the context of classroom activities. The program collects data and analyzes children's progress as part of program outcomes. Early Head Start uses Teaching Strategies Gold and PAT uses PAT milestones and Foundational Curriculum. The 0 to 3 goals align with the 3 to 5 school readiness goals.



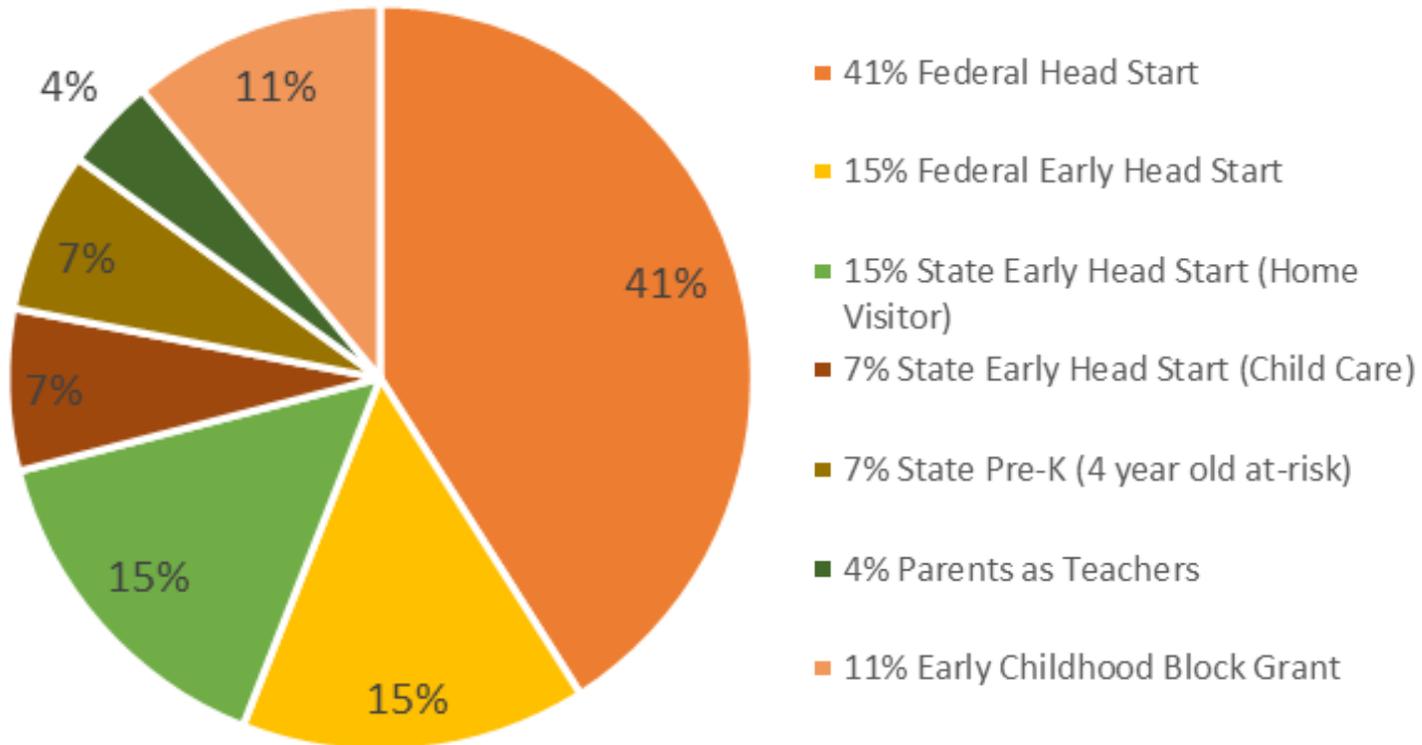
TEACHER CHILD INTERACTIONS

The CLASS tool measures the quality of teacher-child interactions. The CLASS examines social-emotional and instructional interactions that contribute to a student’s social competence and academic achievement. The CLASS has 10 subscales organized into three domains: emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. The graph below illustrates how Connections teaching staff compare to the national average. **In comparison to the National average, Connections classrooms were in the top 6.48% in emotional support, top 6.33% in classroom organization and top 3.65% in instructional support.**



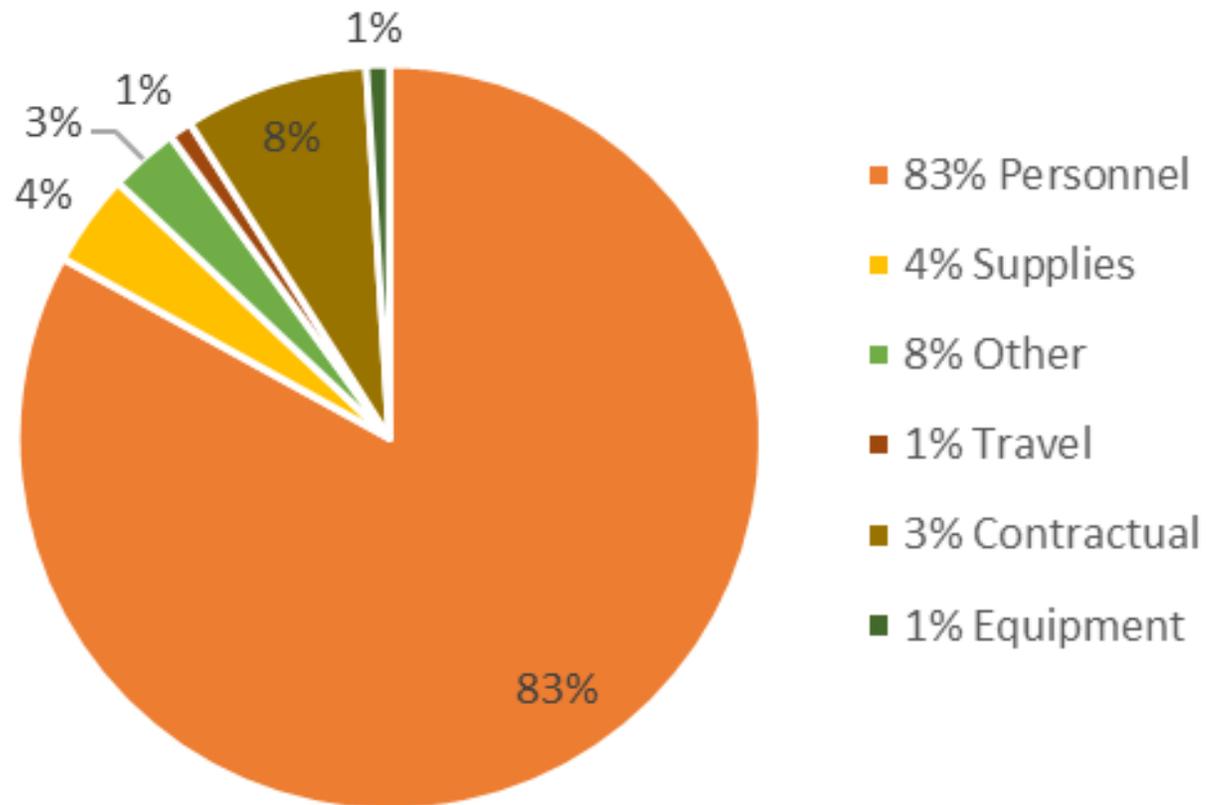
2017-2018 REVENUE

Early Childhood Connections secures funding for its programs through a variety of state and federal grants. The total funding for the 2017-2018 school year was \$3,048,997.



2017-2018 EXPENSES

The largest expenditure in the Early Childhood Connections budget is, by far, personnel expenses. Personnel expenses include salary and fringe for staff. The chart below show how Connections funds are spent.

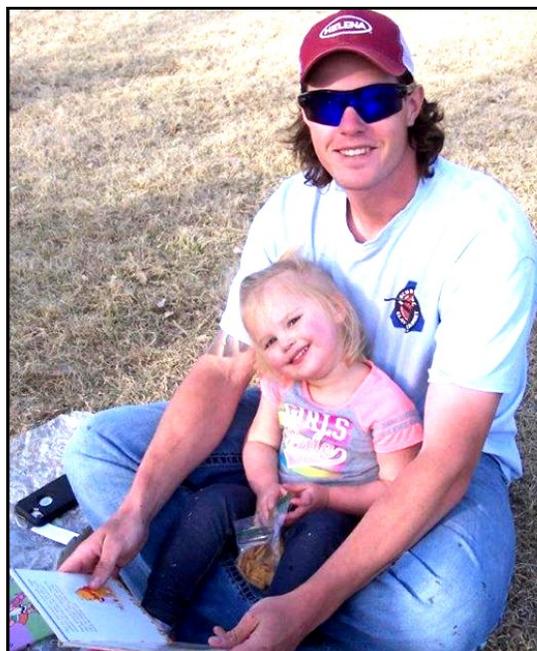


0 TO 3 PROGRAM INFORMATION REPORT DATA

The Federal Office of Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) provides comprehensive data on the services, staff, children, and families served by Head Start and Early Head Start programs nationwide. All grantees and delegates are required to submit PIR for Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

Connections 0 to 3 EHS PIR Data

% of EHS children up-to-date on a schedule of prevention & primary health care (PIR data):	93%
% of children with up-to-date, or all possible immunizations	100%
% of children needing medical treatment:	15%
% of children receiving medical treatment:	90%
% of Center-Based Teacher with a CDA:	83%
% of children with health insurance:	92%
% of Head Start children with medical home:	100%
% of Head Start children with dental home:	37%
% of children with an IFSP:	19%



3 TO 5 PROGRAM INFORMATION REPORT DATA

Connections 3 to 5 PIR Data

% of Head Start children up-to-date on a schedule of prevention and primary health care:	87%
% of Head Start children completing dental exams:	84%
% of Head Start children with up-to-date, or all possible Immunizations:	95%
% of Head Start children needing medical treatment:	09%
% of Head Start children receiving medical treatment:	78%
% of Head Start classroom teachers with a ECE or related degree:	100%
% of Head Start children with health insurance:	99%
% of Head Start children with a medical home:	100%
% of Head Start children with a dental home:	95%
% of Head Start children with an IEP:	34%

The Head Start Act requires periodic federal review of all Head Start programs. The Early Childhood Connections program had their federal review in March of 2018 with no findings.



PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Parents, as their child's most important advocate, are encouraged to be engaged in their child's education. Recognizing that parent engagement is an ongoing process that varies from parent to parent, a variety of opportunities are provided to ensure parent participation. Ideas for parent engagement are listed to the right.



Photo above: A father and daughter enjoy a Connections Daddy and Me activity. Early Childhood Connections provides monthly opportunities for parent engagement with their child and school.

- Contributing to their child's individual goal development by the completion of a developmental checklist at the beginning of the year.
- Following through on home activities to help children meet individual goals
- Contributing their child's work samples from home for inclusion in the child's portfolio
- Participation in curriculum goals through home activities.
- Participation in literacy activities
- Volunteering in the classroom.
- Participating in home visits and parent/teacher conferences throughout the year.
- Ensuring their child attends class on a regular basis
- Communicating with classroom staff regarding home events that may affect the child's classroom performance
- Participating in Family Activity Nights and other parent activities in the classroom
- Parents visiting the classroom during mealtime
- Participating on committees
- Participating in continuous self-assessment of program
- Serving on Policy Council.
- Read! Read! Read!

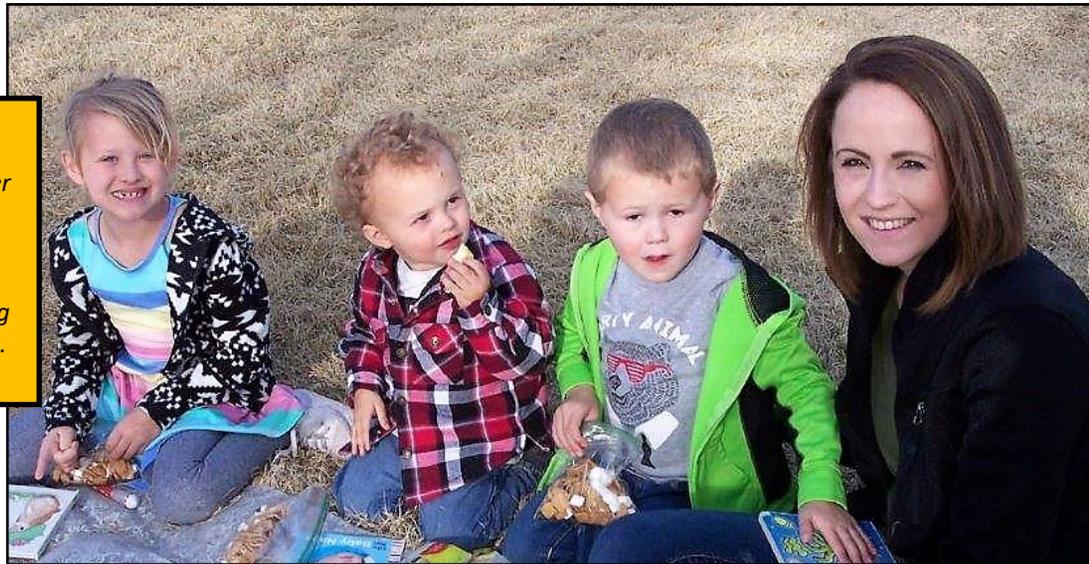
PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Empowering Parents! The Connections program offers parent involvement/parent support activities. Free childcare is provided at all activities as well as a meal or snack. The following activities are available to parents free of charge:

TGI . . . Family Night Out This monthly activity offers families in our community an evening that begins with a free meal, supervised planned activities for children while parents relax. Presentations from experienced professionals on a variety of topics to support families are provided.

Daddy and Me Day This monthly activity is designed to encourage fathers and male role models to be involved in the life of their child. Varied, structured activities are provided for the adults to interact with their children and have fun together. Moms and females are welcome as well.

The family at right take advantage of the Spring weather to enjoy a Connections "staycation" event. "Family Activity Nights", like this one, are held four times a year, giving opportunities for free family fun.



PARENT & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Connections needs the support of each child's family and members of the community in order to operate each year. Federal grants only fund 80% of the Head Start program; the remaining 20% is obtained locally through "In-Kind." In-Kind can be parent and community participation in the form of donated time, services, supplies or funding. Any person who volunteers on a regular basis, will be required to have a background screening and TB skin test.

Families and other community members have multiple opportunities to participate and contribute towards meeting our goal. They can:

- Work at home with their child on home activities provided by the center
- Attend parent meetings/serve as an officer
- Serve on Policy Council
- Serve on the Health Advisory Committee
- Help with the program Self Assessment
- Serve as a bus monitor
- Be a field trip chaperone
- Answer phones or other office duties
- Help with parent information boards
- Classroom helper
- Serve on school readiness committee
- Provide a training or share a skill with children or parents
- Other positions needed in the center



Photo above: Preschool students work with community volunteers to plant their classroom garden.

2017-2018 POLICY COUNCIL

USD 489 Hays, Kansas serves as the Head Start grantee. The USD 489 Board of Education is the governing board for the Head Start program. USD 489 Board members are publicly elected positions. The USD 489 School Board receives input from the Connections Policy Council, comprised of parent and community representatives. They work together to make programmatic decisions and meet the needs of the Head Start parents and community. The following individuals give their time and talents to Policy Council:

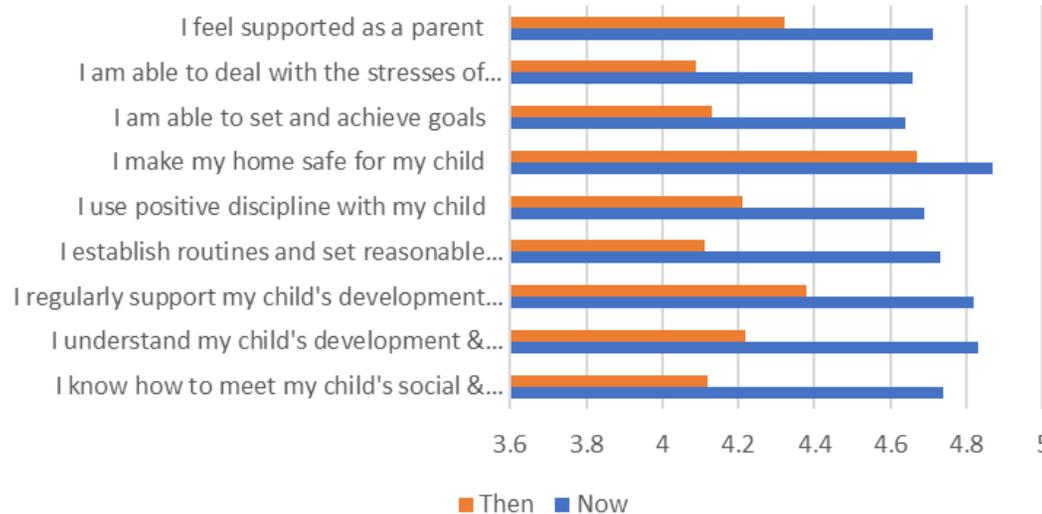
Parent Representatives are: Katie Abukhodair, Melissa Coca, Heidi Fisher, Sarah Smith, Amanda North, Angie (Ward) Kreutzer, Katie Armstrong, Elisa Chavez, Jaycee Nauert, Kurston Ghumm, Alyssa Balandran, Dallas Karlin, Mandy Kinzie, Ashley Cunningham, Stacy Nussbaum, Tera Stephens, Danielle Anderson, Alexandra Wiley, Lindsay Engling, Jessila Wickham, Jacobb Irvin, Laura Dunn & Gabriella Zimmerman. Community Representatives are: Sherry Dryden, Jennifer Oborny, Marcy Beougher and Paul Adams. Non-voting Members are: Shanna Dinkel and Donna Hudson-Hamilton.



PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Connections participants completed a parent reflection survey at the beginning and ending of services. The chart below shows the average results of how parents felt before and after exiting services.

2017-2018 Parent Reflection Survey Results



AWARDS

The following individuals were honored by the Kansas Head Start Association.

TAYA RANDLE

Kansas Head Start Alumni
High School Senior Scholarship
Recipient



Taya Randle will be studying Criminal Justice at Hutchinson Community College.

ASHLEY VOPAT

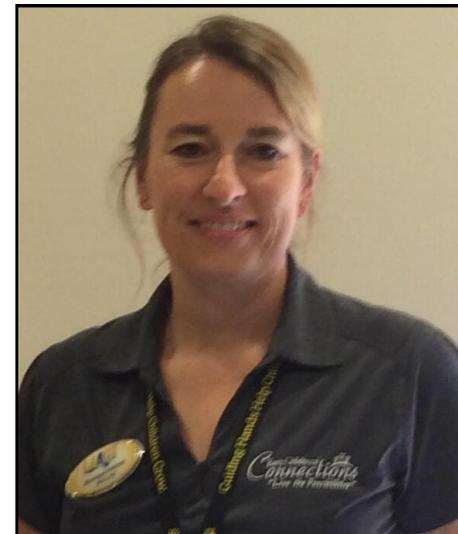
Kansas Head Start Parent
Post Secondary Education
Scholarship Recipient



Ashley Vopat, is pursuing a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing at FHSU.

MONIQUE HOLMES

Kansas Head Start Higher Education
Scholarship Recipient



Connections Parent Educator Monique Holmes, is a community advocate for breastfeeding .

AWARDS

The following individuals were honored by the Kansas Head Start Association.

Jean Hertel

Kansas Head Start Teacher of the Year



Connections Teacher, Jean Hertel has worked for Head Start for 21 years.

Shelina Dickerson

Kansas & Region VII Beating the Odds Parent Award



Parent, Shelina Dickerson was honored for her perseverance through difficult times and self improvement

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

We asked families, "What changes have you made in your family or personal life as a result of Early Childhood Connections?"

"As a family, we have worked on family time and routines. We have also learned how to set proper boundaries and rules. If it wasn't for the support I received from Connections I wouldn't have made it through this school year."

"We have made a more intentional effort to do an activity as an entire family with no distractions each day."

"She has been able to go from just saying her alphabet to being able to write it."

"As a family we set goals to find a new place to live and being able to buy a car. It has taken us a little time, but we accomplished both goals."

"This program has made a total difference in my life. Helped me to learn to communicate with my children. Helped me learn better discipline tactics and that it is o.k. to walk away to give myself time to calm down."

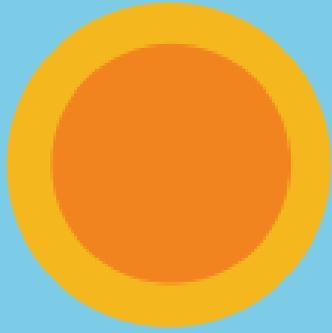
"Theresa now speaks more in English and uses it more at home with her younger sister."

"The improvement that we see in Katelyn is very exciting. She loves to share with us each day of what she has learned."

"I have an increased awareness of community resources and developmental milestones."

"Ways to use emotional, social and physical adaptations to teach and solve problems with my children."





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