



The  
Opportunity  
Alliance



# Head Start & Early Head Start

2020-2021 Annual Report

# Message from the Director

Dear Friends,

We are pleased to present the 2020/2021 Annual Report for the Opportunity Alliance Head Start and Early Head Start Programs. The following report highlights our activities and accomplishments over the past year that have supported children and their families across Cumberland County.



We opened our classrooms in the fall, just as COVID-19 cases were slowly beginning to increase across the state. Our opening was delayed until early October so that we could train staff and properly prepare classrooms. We limited our in-person enrollment to 10 children in preschool classrooms and 6 children in infant and toddler classrooms. We enrolled additional children virtually – both integrating them in the classroom through ZOOM and working with them and their families individually each week.

While families could not enter our spaces and we could not enter theirs, Family Services staff and Family Visitors worked tirelessly to support families in meeting their basic needs and in taking steps towards reaching their goals. They accessed funds so that families could get needed technology and connectivity to access services and provide educational support to their children.

Our primary focus was (and continues to be) on the health and safety of our children, families and staff. As the pandemic endures, we continue to see the impact on our community and are committed to providing a pathway to stability and hope.

Sincerely,

*Debra Flynn*

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# Statement of Mission

The mission of Head Start and Early Head Start is to nurture safe and trusting relationships so that all members of the community know they matter and believe in their potential to impact their world.



## Overview

Head Start and Early Head Start programs support the comprehensive development of children from birth to age five, in centers and in homes, in a variety of ways:

- **Early Learning:** Teachers and family visitors facilitate individualized learning experiences to promote children’s readiness for school and beyond. Through planned and spontaneous instruction, relationships with adults, and play, children grow in language and literacy, early math and science concepts, and social and emotional development.
- **Health:** Children receive health and development screenings, nutritious meals, oral health and mental health support. Programs connect families with medical, dental, and mental health services, and ensure that children are receiving the services they need.
- **Family Well-being:** Parents and families are supported in achieving their own goals, such as housing stability, continued education, and financial security. Programs support and strengthen parent-child relationships and engage families around children’s learning and development.

*All Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms are licensed by the state of Maine, staffed by credentialed professionals, and participate in the Quality Improvement Rating System (QRIS).*

# Program Snapshot



The Head Start and Early Head Start program is federally funded to serve 272 slots. Head Start has a total of 197 and Early Head Start has a total of 75.

Sites	Number/Type of Classrooms	Funded Slots
Bridgton	1 Head Start	18
Gorham	1 Head Start	18
Portland	3 Head Start 3 Head Start/Child Care 3 Early Head Start/Child Care	122
Westbrook	3 Head Start/Public Pre-K	44
South Portland	1 Head Start	18
Greater Portland Home-based	5 Family Visitors	40
Lakes Region Home-based	1 Family Visitor	12



# Our Approach to School Readiness

Research shows that children who receive high-quality early childhood experiences and strong family support are far more likely to succeed in school and throughout their life.

## Children are prepared for school

We believe children thrive in nurturing environments in which they are trusted and respected. Children benefit from a comprehensive program that supports all areas of development. Children learn through relationships with teachers and peers, through creative open-ended play and through exploring intentionally designed classroom environments. To support learning, our program utilizes the *Creative Curriculum* for infants and toddlers and *Opening the World of Learning* (OWL) and *Second Step* for preschoolers. Our family visitors use the *Parents as Teachers* (PAT) curriculum with families in the home.

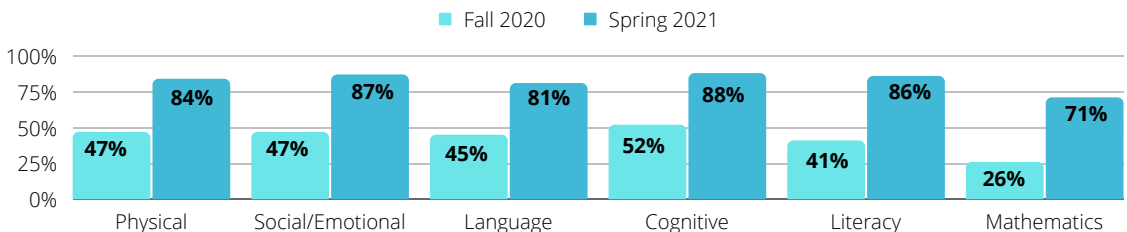
## Families are supporting children's learning

To maximize child outcomes, we work to support family stability and well-being. Parents are considered their children's first and most important teachers. They are viewed as partners in identifying the learning needs and goals of their children. Through home visits, parent conferences, playgroups, volunteering, parent committees and Policy Council, parents are fully engaged in the education of their children.

## Schools are ready as children transition into kindergarten

We cannot achieve our goals without strong community partnerships. We strategically collaborate with other providers to improve access to services for our children and families and to support their transition to Kindergarten. We strive to partner with welcoming schools by inviting them into our program, participating in transition meetings, and providing them with important information as children and families move on to the next step in their journey.

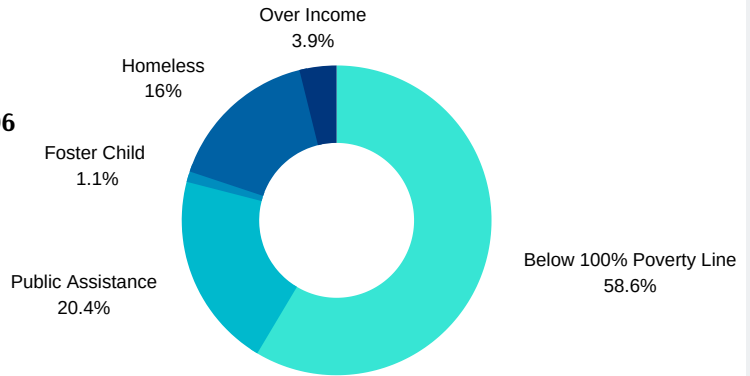
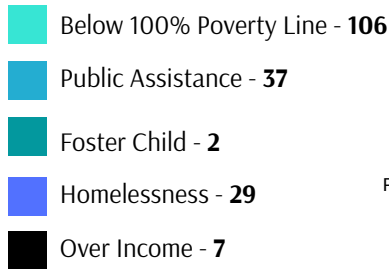
**Data depicted is a % comparison of 4-year old children meeting or exceeding the Teaching Strategies GOLD Widely Held Expectations for the Fall of 2020 and the Spring of 2021.**



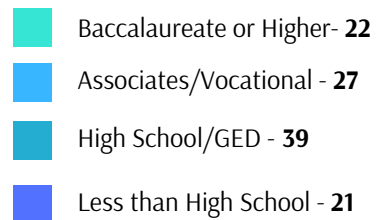
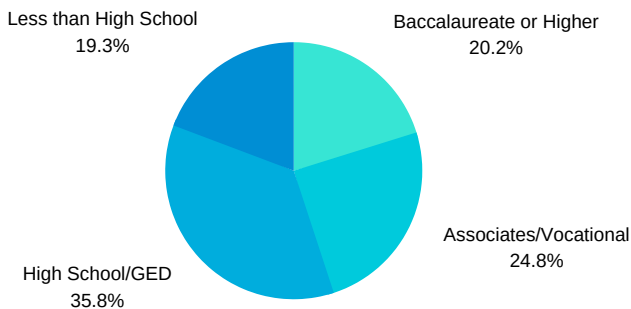
# Families At-A-Glance

The Opportunity Alliance served a total of 181 children and their families and 5 prenatal women in our Head Start & Early Head Start programs. The following charts provide information about of the families we served.

## Eligibility Type

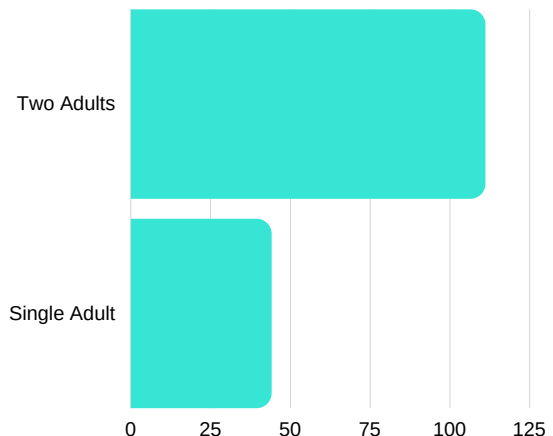


## Parent Education Levels



## Caregiver Status

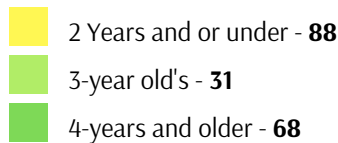
Two-Parent Families - **111**  
 Single-Parent Families - **44**



# Children At-A-Glance

The children served by The Opportunity Alliance Head Start and Early Head Start programs in the 2020-2021 program year were developmentally, culturally, and linguistically diverse.

## Participant Age

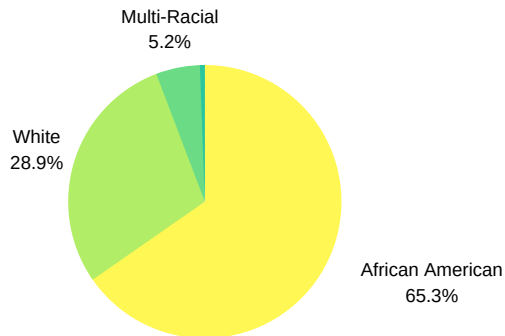


4-year old's  
36.4%

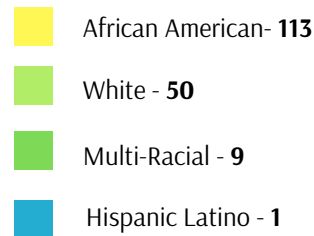


2 Years and or Under  
47.1%

3-year old's  
16.6%



## Race



## Children with Disabilities

Through initial developmental screenings and ongoing assessment and observation, many children were referred to Child Development Services (CDS) for special services. Due to the pandemic, many children who were approved for services did not receive them.

**25** children in the Head Start program had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

**5** children in Early Head Start had an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

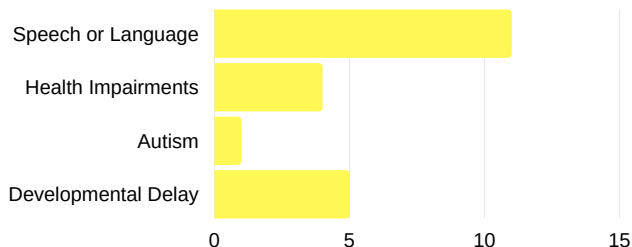
**5** children who were eligible for services did not receive them.

Speech or Language  
Impairments: **11**

Health Impairments: **4**

Autism: **1**

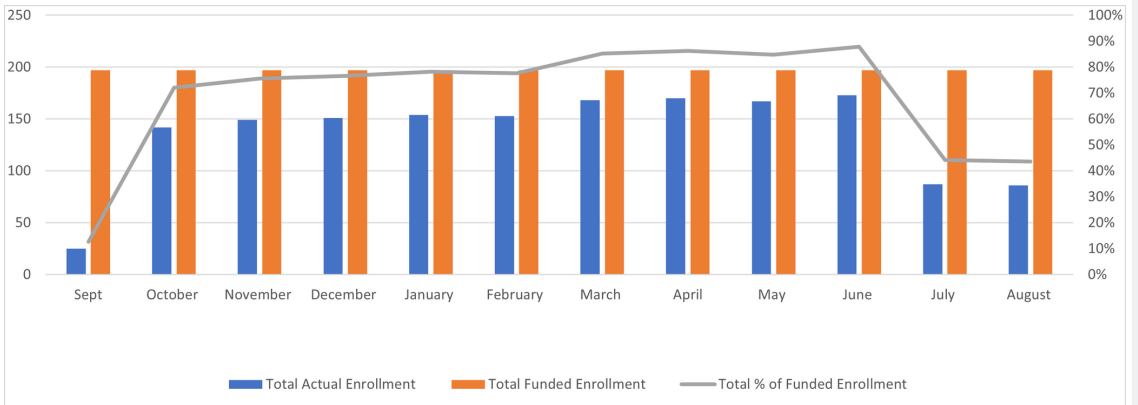
Developmental Delay: **5**





# Enrollment Overview

TOA's funded enrollment is 272 slots. We are funded to serve 122 children during the months of June, July, and August. The average of enrollment was 223. All students (100%) enrolled in the program were eligible for the program.



# Family Engagement

Experiencing another year in the shadow of COVID-19, our Head Start program continued to adjust the way we engage families. Family Advocates and Family Visitors met with individual families in their yards, in parks, socially distanced in offices, over the phone, and on WhatsApp and Zoom to support strengths, needs, and goals.

Parent groups and socializations occurred both outdoors and via ZOOM. Family Visitors found great success in virtual playgroups for young learners and their families, sharing books, games, and resources monthly. For our preschool families opting to learn remotely, their Family Advocates met with them twice a month to support their goals and ensure they had access to needed resources.

We continued our practice of Family Conferences, embracing the holistic approach of sharing information about children at school and learning from parents and caregivers about their children at home. This allowed us to collaborate on learning goals and have a broader understanding of each child's development. Individualizing ways for families to engage with our program minimized stress and created pathways to support the hard work families were doing toward their well-being.



# Nutrition



Our focus this year has been to include a variety of fresh produce, add culturally appropriate meals and source locally when possible.

Sourcing locally was made possible by a grant from the **Portland Food Fund**, which allowed us to support the **Somali Bantu Community Association** which empowers new Mainers to farm in Maine. It has also allowed us to purchase local seafood through **TrueFin Seafood** which supports local fishermen in the Gulf of Maine.

Our partnership with **The Locker Project** has allowed us to continue to deliver fresh produce and grocery items directly to families on a regular basis. We delivered over 75,000 pounds of food to at least 170 distinct families.



# Family Services Support

## Health Services

Though the coronavirus pandemic interrupted families' access to health care, immunizations and dental treatment, Family Services staff continued to support families to secure dental and medical homes for preventative health care measures.

- Immunizations: **176**
- Dental Home: **106**
- Medical Home: **125**



## Other Family Services

- Emergency/Crisis services: **106**
- Health Education: **62**
- Parenting Education: **41**
- ESL Training: **45**
- Education Training: **76**



# Goals for the Year Ahead

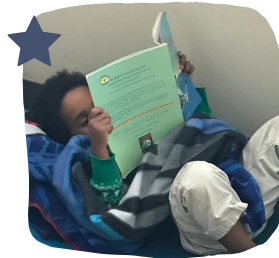
1

Continue to develop our program's **ability to serve children with diverse developmental, mental health, and language needs** through training and ongoing support of classroom and family visiting staff.



2

Continue to build a program-wide culture of safety to ensure the safety and wellness of children in our care.



3

Evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on our community and identify any needed changes to our delivery of services.



# Federal Funding Snapshot

The Opportunity Alliance's fiscal year 2019-2020 included the dates of July 1st, 2020 through June 30th, 2021.

## Funds Received for Fiscal Year 2020-2021

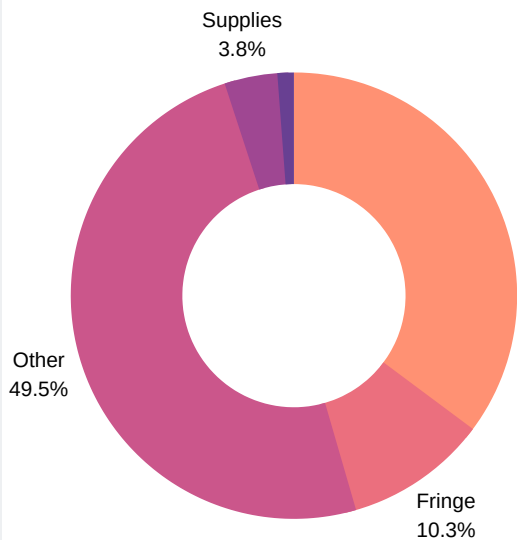
Type of Funding	Head Start	Early Head Start	Total
Federal Grant Funds	\$2,741,628.00	\$943,435.00	\$3,685,063.00
USDA (CACFP) Funds	\$31,667.00	\$14,414.00	\$46,081.00
Non-Federal Share (In-Kind)	\$685,407.00	\$235,859.00	\$921,266.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,458,702.00</b>	<b>\$1,193,708.00</b>	<b>\$4,652,409.00</b>

## Federal Grant Funds Expenditures for Fiscal year 2020-2021 by Category

Expense Category	Head Start	Early Head Start	Total
Personnel	\$989,040.00	\$374,055.00	\$1,363,095.00
Fringe Benefits	\$374,107.00	\$109,696.00	\$483,803.00
Supplies	\$71,653.00	\$40,765.00	\$112,418.00
Contracts	\$61,719.00	\$12,662.00	\$74,381.00
Other (includes Travel)	\$1,626,747.00	\$525,806.00	\$2,152,553.00
Equipment			
Training/Technical	\$29,171.00	\$20,818.00	\$49,989.00
Indirect	\$271,002.00	\$92,179.00	\$363,181.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,423,439.00</b>	<b>\$1,175,981.00</b>	<b>\$5,962,515.00</b>

An annual audit for fiscal year 2020-2021 was conducted by Berry Dunn, an independent auditor. The firm did not disclose any instances of non-compliance.

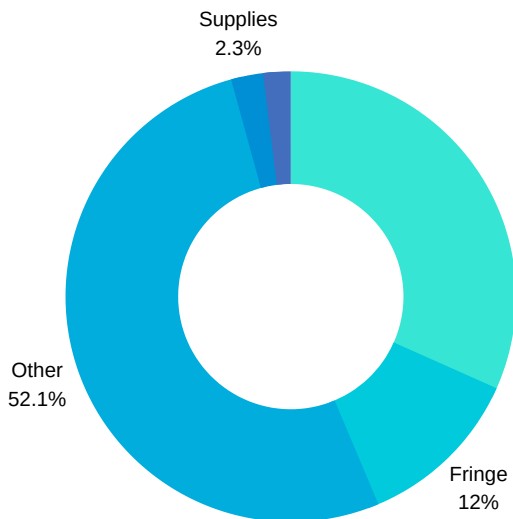
# 2020-21 Federal Grant Funds Budget Expenditures



## Early Head Start

- Personnel: **\$374,055**
- Fringe: **\$109,696**
- Other: **\$525,806**
- Supplies: **\$40,765**
- Contracts: **\$12,662**

Direct Expenditures: **\$1,062,984**  
 Indirect Charges: **\$92,179**  
 Total Expenditures: **\$1,155,163**



## Head Start

- Personnel: **\$989,040**
- Fringe: **\$374,107**
- Other: **\$1,626,747**
- Supplies: **\$71,653**
- Contracts: **\$61,719**

Direct Expenditures: **\$3,123,266**  
 Indirect Charges: **\$271,002**  
 Total Expenditures: **\$3,394,268**



## Center Based Locations

Bridgton	Gorham	Portland	South Portland	Westbrook
6 Meadow Street	28 Husky Drive	81 East Oxford Street 102-104 Riverton Drive 85 Grant Street 215 Congress Street	50 Lydia Lane	110 Huntress Ave

*TOA assures non-discrimination in all aspects of program participation, in conformance with Federal regulations. No one will be denied access to any aspect of program participation because of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, national origin, handicap, veteran status, or political affiliation or belief. Some of the services described here are partially funded by the Department of Human Services.*