

Community Assessment Update

Poudre School District Head Start Grant 2020-2025

Because our original community assessment was written for the 2020-2025 grant cycle, it was written prior to that and prior to the public health/global pandemic with COVID 19. In many ways the pandemic has shaped the community that we serve and the way we offer services to families. As we move through the pandemic, many things have adjusted along the way. When completing this update, we used a combination of research and discussion with stakeholder groups. Discussions were guided by two questions: How have the needs of our community changed? How has the work changed?

Demographic Make Up for Eligible Children and Families:

Here is a chart that represents a snapshot of our program. We have not seen significant changes in demographics. The program consistently and actively recruits families who are diverse, come from a variety of economic backgrounds, and varying levels of risk/need.

	Race	Ethnicity	Spoken Languages	Homelessness	Foster Care	Dual Language Learners	Disabilities
PSD ECE Program (Baseline Assessment) In-Person Services only.	88% white 4 % multiracial 4 % Asian 3 % African American 1.5 % Native American	37% Hispanic or Latino	72% English 21% Spanish 4 % Arabic 3 % other languages	6 % of total ECE Enrollment	2.5% of enrollment in foster or kinship care	27% of ECE enrolment	35% of total ECE enrollment
2020-2021 School Year Remote/Hybrid/In-Person	87% white 4 % multiracial 5 % Asian 3 % African American 1 % Native American	41% Hispanic or Latino	69% English 22% Spanish 4 % Arabic 5% Other languages	8% of total ECE enrollment	Less than 1%	31% of ECE total enrollment	29% of total ECE enrollment
2021-2022 School year In Person with very little remote.	85% White 4 % multiracial 5% Asian 3% African American 2% Native American 1% Pacific Islander	40% Hispanic or Latino	73 % English 19% Spanish 2% Arabic 6% Other languages	7% of total ECE program	1%	27% of total ECE program	24% of total ECE enrollment
2022-23 School Year	85% White 4 % multiracial	38% Hispanic or Latino	74 % English 17% Spanish	8% of total ECE program	1%	29% of total ECE program	23% of total ECE enrollment

Community Assessment Update
 Poudre School District Head Start Grant 2020-2025

In-Person with very little remote.	5% Asian 3% African American 2% Native American 1% Pacific Islander		3% Arabic 6% Other languages				
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Education (Early Head Start And Pre-K)

Early Head Start services returned to in-person for the 2021-2022 school year. Virtual/remote home visits were options for families when needed if there was a health-related reason. Most families preferred to meet in-person, with masks and/or social distancing. Many in-person visits took place in public settings such as the Museum of Discovery and the public libraries. Visits were also held in families’ backyards and local parks. Parent and Child Together (PACT) events were held both in -person and virtually. Offering in-person and virtual PACTs gave families with different needs options to attend. Both in-person and virtual PACTs were well attended. Two 6-week parenting workshops were held virtually. Three program-wide in-person PACT events with our community partner, The Museum of Discovery, were offered to encourage activation of free memberships provided to all Early Childhood families.

During the 2021-2022 school year, our service delivery model was primarily in-person learning. COVID guidance for child care programs and schools went through many different shifts during the school year. Due to COVID, we did experience short term closures 59 times in our classrooms. This Fall 2022, the program has continued in-person learning services for all students. With changes in district protocols, we have not experienced any classroom closures. The availability of technology resources is a great asset to our families and staff. Classrooms have created “Teacher Learning Pages” that provide critical information about the classroom- schedules, newsletters, menus quick links to resources, attendance information, and more. Upon request, families may access district I-pads to support their child’s learning.

Enrollment

Changes in enrollment took us on quite a rollercoaster ride last year, largely attributed to the changing service landscape during the pandemic. We have been able to innovate by allowing more and more things to happen electronically. We created a centralized email address to field initial inquiries and accept program documents. Our application and developmental screening process has a completely electronic option. In addition, we can conduct some of the initial interviews with families over the phone or via electronic means. During the 2021-2022 school year, we did eliminate a virtual only option, but the rest of the program remained primarily in-person.

Overall Program Enrollment 2021-2022

Community Assessment Update
Poudre School District Head Start Grant 2020-2025

	Goal	Actual Slots Filled	% Enrolled
Sept 2021	1070	794	74%
Oct 2021	1070	824	77%
Nov 2021	1070	827	77%
Dec 2021	1070	841	79%
Jan 2022	1070	851	80%
Feb 2022	1070	867	81%
Mar 2022	1070	859	80%
Apr 2022	1070	1062	93%
May 2022	1070	1059	92%
June 2022 Summer Session	124	126	100%

Head Start Enrollment 2020-2021

	Goal	Actual	% Enrolled
Sept 2021	275	202	73%
Oct 2021	275	229	83%
Nov 2021	275	246	89%
Dec 2021	275	236	86%
Jan 2022	275	258	94%
Feb 2022	275	275	100%
Mar 2022	275	275	100%
Apr 2022	275	275	100%
May 2022	275	275	100%
June 2022 Summer Session	275	126	100%

EHS Enrollment

Community Assessment Update
Poudre School District Head Start Grant 2020-2025

	Goal	Actual	% Enrolled
Sept 2021	108	69	64%
Oct 2021	108	75	69%
Nov 2021	108	95	88%
Dec 2021	108	101	94%
Jan 2022	108	99	92%
Feb 2022	108	107	99%
Mar 2022	108	108	100%
Apr 2022	108	107	99%
May 2022	108	108	100%
June 2022	108	105	97%

The response was overwhelmingly that families needed IN PERSON care and education throughout the year. While the district shifted back and forth between in-person, hybrid and remote only services, we made every attempt to remain in person as much as the pandemic conditions allowed.

Health & Mental Health

There were several pandemic related changes to our health and mental health departments. First, many of the duties of the personnel in these departments changed overnight. In addition to their duties to maintain health records for funders and licensing, our health team took on many of the duties related to pandemic-related illness tracking. Families who reported symptoms received follow up calls and individual coaching about return to learn guidance. In addition, the program experienced falling rates of compliance for required early childhood vaccinations, medical and dental visits. Reasons reported were lack of appointment availability, medical and dental clinic closures, fear of COVID exposure at regular appointments, as well as a decrease in accountability measures made it less of a priority for families.

Pandemic related conditions also did not allow for teeth brushing in the classroom, as it was labeled a high-risk activity. Classroom dental visits were cancelled because volunteers were not allowed in the classrooms. We supported families by sending home supplies and dental education materials two times during the year. Our initial vision and hearing screenings were postponed because in-person services were restricted and didn't occur until later in the year. Additional classroom time is being used for instruction about mask wearing and hand washing. Staff also report seeing "scarcity" behaviors pop up in the classrooms when it comes to sharing. Increased licensing rules called for different disinfection, check-in and wellness check procedures based on the most recent public health requirements. We also were restricted by the type of toys we could use: plush and cloth items were restricted as was the use of sensory tables. These restrictions have since been lifted, but we follow the most current public health and licensing rulings.

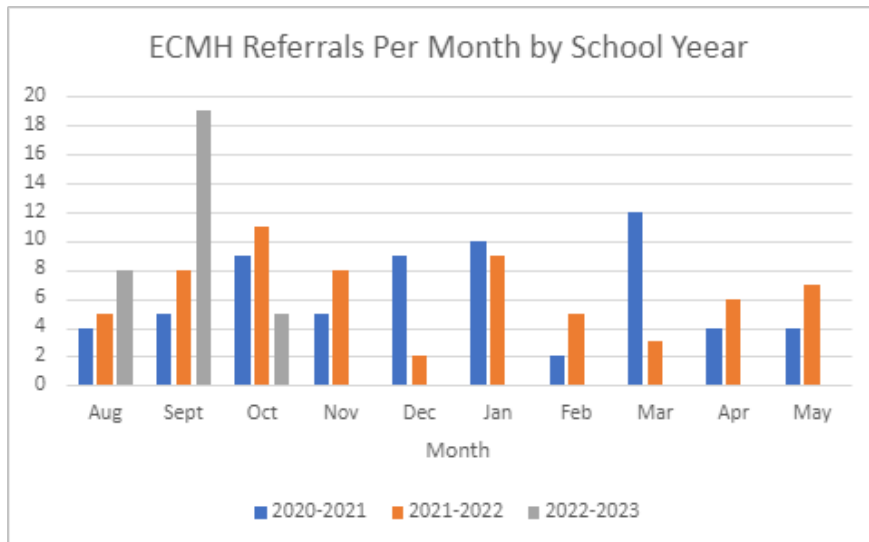
We are continuing to see a significant level of need in social-emotional learning and social-behavioral support. As a program, we have allocated intentional time for staff professional development to focus on these areas of need for both adults and children. In our first all staff meeting this fall, we addressed the concept

Community Assessment Update

Poudre School District Head Start Grant 2020-2025

of nurturing ourselves and reminded staff of the program's resources for universal positive guidance. The program is continuing to provide resilience book studies for our Early Childhood staff.

Last year, our mental health specialist received 64 mental health referrals to support families and children in our program. In the months of August and September 2022, the referrals have increased 138% over last year during the same time period. We are seeing trends in the areas of parent stress/anxiety, trauma, parenting needs, and supports with behaviors at home. Partnerships have been created with community providers to support mental health needs.



Nutrition

The pandemic offered nutrition challenges that didn't exist prior to 2020. The program, along with the rest of the school district, took advantage of federal funding that allowed any child to access meals free of charge. Families were experiencing supply shortages, rising food costs, and lack of access to in-person services, which often came with a minimum of 1-2 daily meals. Our nutrition services offered varied throughout the year. When the school services were shifted to remote, the school district offered bagged breakfasts and lunches available for pick up at many sites. We are also experiencing going back to the regular free/reduced reimbursement system in Fall of 2022. Another innovation our program worked to design was to create a food pantry for families in need. Family mentors took shelf-stable food items to home visits for families in need. This pantry will be initially funded through COVID relief dollars and distributed to families via the home visiting program. Fall of 2022, we expanded the food resources even further with an additional local grant, offering bags of groceries for parent participation in Policy council and PACT events.

Social Services

An increase to social services in the community may have created more stability for economically unstable families though there is some concern about what will happen when some of these services end. Staff also report that an increase in social emotional needs has impacted both adults and students. There was additional pressure on families when services were virtual, and parents communicated their stress and fears of not meeting their children's needs. While there may be holes in social emotional developments, we are also seeing families creating bonds and attachments that may not have been as possible in the past.

Employment

In our community, unemployment rates have been a rollercoaster. In July 2021, Larimer County's unemployment rate was 5.1%, which is a drop from 10.2% in May 2020. In July of 2022, Larimer county's unemployment rate was 3.0%. There was a pre-pandemic unemployment rate of 2.2% during 2019. While this is continuing to improve, we still have not yet reached our pre-pandemic rates. We did reach out to families to encourage them to share any changes to employment with us, and we did have several families switch funding sources as a result of qualifying based on new income levels.

The 2020-2021 school year brought much speculation regarding the ability to sustain the full amount of classrooms and employees, however, we didn't experience any lay-offs or closures. We spent COVID relief dollars on several positions like floating substitutes to help keep our classrooms running. We will continue to invest COVID relief dollars in symptom tracking positions to support the health team, additional paras to support classrooms teams, and floating substitutes to support the system. Even with the in-flux of new dollars, the program is experiencing staff shortages and a lack of applicants for posted positions. The program has had to make creative shifts to cover ratio in classrooms, which means other priorities in the program have been delayed. In Fall of 2022, the program sought additional resources through Circle Grants and Stabilization Grants to increase access for students in the program. This revenue generated has helped us add paraprofessional hours in many classrooms.

Parent Involvement/Volunteers

COVID regulations prevented volunteers from being in the classroom for nearly the entire 2021-2022 school year. To prevent the spread of COVID 19, back-to-school, first center visits, parent/teacher conferences were conducted in small groups or virtually. Families reported enjoying the option to conduct parent/teacher conferences virtually, because it allowed them to be able to work with conferences around their work schedule at greater ease. The school district's volunteer policy did not allow volunteers in the classroom until the end of the year when regulations began to lighten. The volunteer/parent involvement also impacted our work in Policy Council. We struggled to recruit enough parents for our policy council, but this steadily increased as we continued to have more and more in-person meetings and families had access to childcare.

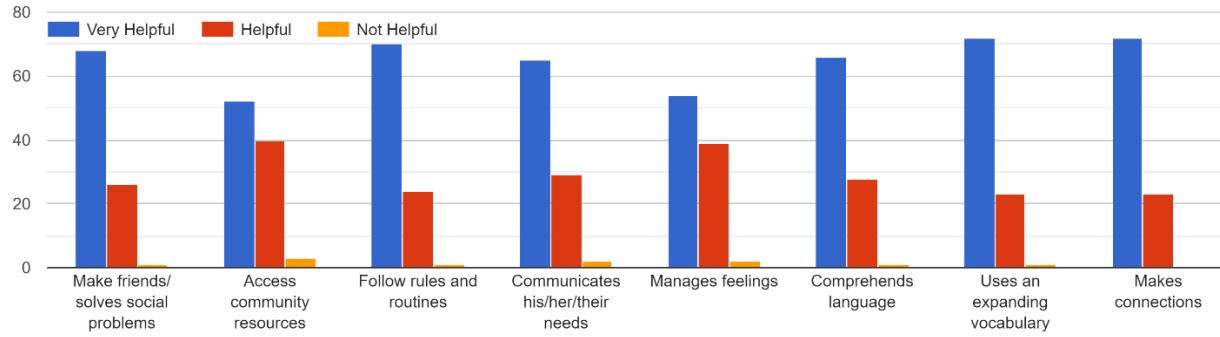
Parent Satisfaction

From our parent satisfaction data, we did continue to receive reports that the outcomes for preparing students for success. Here are the results of our most recent satisfaction data, collected Spring of 2022.

Community Assessment Update

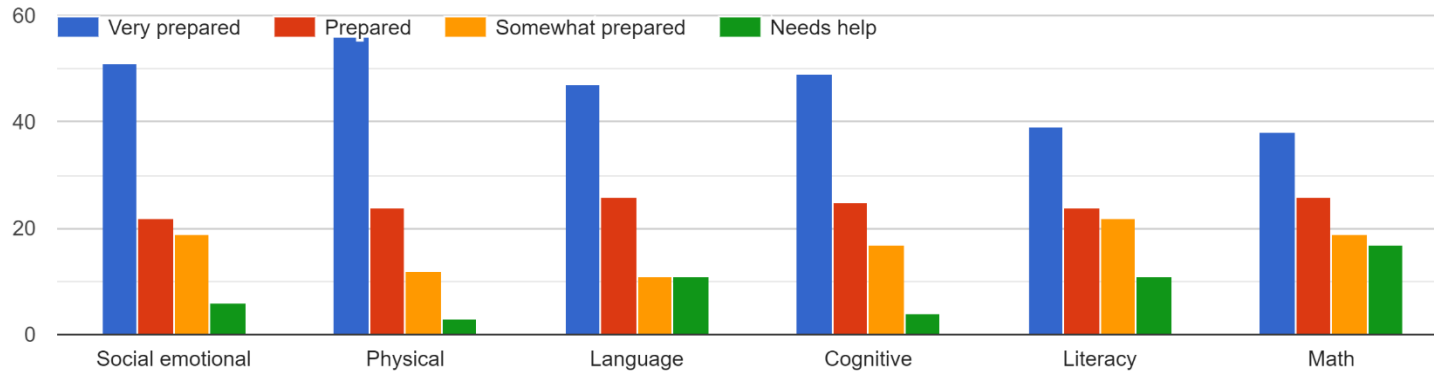
Poudre School District Head Start Grant 2020-2025

What are some ways the early childhood program has helped your child or family?

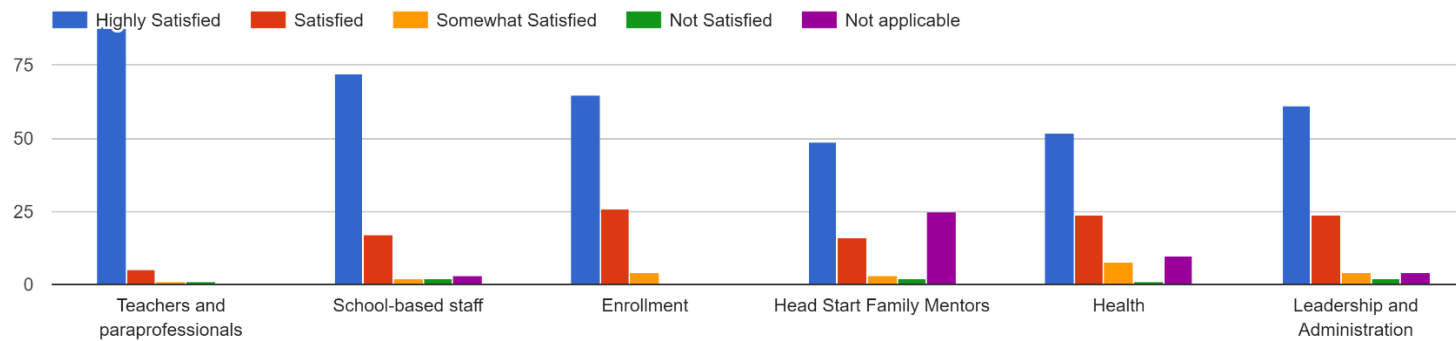


Community Assessment Update
 Poudre School District Head Start Grant 2020-2025

Our goal is to prepare every child for kindergarten. After participating in our early childhood program, is your child ready for kindergarten in the following areas?



How would you rate your satisfaction with our departments?



Universal Pre-K Preparation

In Fall of 2020, the state of Colorado passed proposition EE, which provides 10 hours a week of preschool for any four year-old through a tobacco and vaping tax. The implementation of Universal Pre-K will begin Fall of 2023, and Poudre School District Early Childhood will be a partner in a network of childcare and education partners across Larimer County. The Early Childhood Council of Larimer County has been selected to be our Local Coordinating Organization. They will distribute slots to our district and community partners. As of May 2022, the community was anticipating to be 1,000 slots short of the demand for slots for four year-olds. It will become an urgent need in our community as students will qualify for funding, but there will not be enough slots for them to enroll. Based on local survey results of more than 400 people, our community wants our school district to attempt to get to a universal preschool level, meaning that four year-olds will become a grade level. This cannot happen in one year, and the school district will be recommending we start a small-scale pilot program for the 2023-2024 school year to student the financial sustainability of Universal Pre-K funding before trying to implement it across the district.