

# Maine Head Start Snapshot Report



*York County Community Action Program, January 2020*

2020





Dear Maine Community,

The Maine Head Start Directors' Association (MHSDA) and the Maine Head Start State Collaboration Office (MHSSCO) are pleased to share our Snapshot Report on Head Start and Early Head Start in Maine communities.

For over 55 years, Head Start has provided services to support the healthy development of Maine's most vulnerable children and their families. The model, developed in 1965 to provide preschool children with a "head start," is synonymous with a focus on school readiness. Informed by the known effects of poverty on child well-being, the comprehensive services program design provides equitable, diverse, and inclusive early education as well as health, nutrition, mental health, social and family support services. With the emergence of research on the importance of learning and development in the early years and the increased numbers of children and families living in poverty, Head Start is even more relevant today.

In Maine, there are eleven Head Start grantees that operate 24 programs, with 242 classrooms and three Tribal Head Start grantees, that serve 3 classrooms with a total of 60 children. The federal government provides 80% of the annual cost to operate Head Start programs with the remaining 20% coming from matching contributions. The State of Maine provides a small amount of funding allowing programs to serve additional children and families. The information presented in this report illustrates the unique features of the Head Start program, how our efforts are aligned and connected, and how we support the broad goal of increased investment in high quality early care and education in Maine.

As an early care and education partner concerned with the healthy growth and development of Maine's citizens, Head Start continues to make vital contributions to the early care and education system in Maine. As Maine continues to build a comprehensive early childhood system, Head Start has a critical role to play. Collaboration among early care and education programs is necessary to achieve greater access to high quality programs. Although there is no single agency that can meet all the diverse needs affecting low-income families, Head Start has a long and successful history in Maine of demonstrating effective outcomes for participating children and families. It is our hope that the Maine Head Start Snapshot Report will contribute to the work in Maine by providing this information to our citizens and decision makers.

Sincerely,

Cristina Salois, Director  
Southern Kennebec Child Development Corporation  
Chair, Maine Head Start Directors' Association

Nena Cunningham Ed.D., Director  
Head Start State Collaboration Office  
Maine Department of Education

# Grantee Service Regions

## **Aroostook County Action Program**

County served: Aroostook  
 P.O. Box 1116, 771 Main Street  
 Presque Isle, ME 04769  
 (O) 768-3045 ext. 670 or 554-4170  
 (C) 768-0745 (F) 768-3022  
 Sue Powers, Director  
[spowers@acapme.org](mailto:spowers@acapme.org)

## **DownEast Community Partners**

Counties served: Hancock & Washington  
 P.O. Box 648, Ellsworth, ME 04605  
 (O) 610-5163  
 (F) 667-2212  
 Melissa Mattes, Director  
[Melissa.Mattes@DowneastCommunityPartners.org](mailto:Melissa.Mattes@DowneastCommunityPartners.org)

## **Community Concepts, Inc.**

Counties served: Oxford & Franklin  
 17 Market Square, South Paris, ME 04281  
 (O) 739-6516 (F) 739-6672  
 Dianne Nelder, Director  
[DNelder@Community-Concepts.org](mailto:DNelder@Community-Concepts.org)

## **Kennebec Valley Community Action Program**

Counties served: North Kennebec & Somerset  
 97 Water Street, Waterville, ME 04901  
 (O) 859-1616 (C) 514-6446  
 Tracye Fortin, Child & Family Services Director  
[tracyef@kvcap.org](mailto:tracyef@kvcap.org)

## **Midcoast Maine Community Action**

Counties served: Sagadahoc, Lincoln & Greater Brunswick  
 34 Wing Farm Parkway, Bath, ME 04530  
 (O) 442-7963 ext. 214 (F) 443-7447  
 Barbara Moody, Child & Family Services Director  
[barbara.moody@mmcacorp.org](mailto:barbara.moody@mmcacorp.org)

## **The Opportunity Alliance**

County served: Cumberland  
 50 Lydia Lane, South Portland, ME 04106  
 Debra Flynn, Director  
 (O) 553-5917 (F) 874-1181  
[debra.flynn@opportunityalliance.org](mailto:debra.flynn@opportunityalliance.org)

## **Penquis Community Action Program**

Counties served: Penobscot, Piscataquis & Knox  
 P.O. Box 1162, Bangor, ME 04402  
 (O) 973-3616  
 (C) 745-2082 (F) 973-3699  
 Mary Lynn Hersey, Director  
[MHersey@penquis.org](mailto:MHersey@penquis.org)

## **Promise Early Education Center**

County served: Androscoggin  
 269 Bates Street, Lewiston, ME 04240  
 (O) 795-4040 ext. 316  
 (C) 713-8445 (F) 795-4044  
 Betsy Norcross Plourde, Director  
[bpourde@promisearlyeducation.org](mailto:bpourde@promisearlyeducation.org)

## **Southern Kennebec Child Development Corporation**

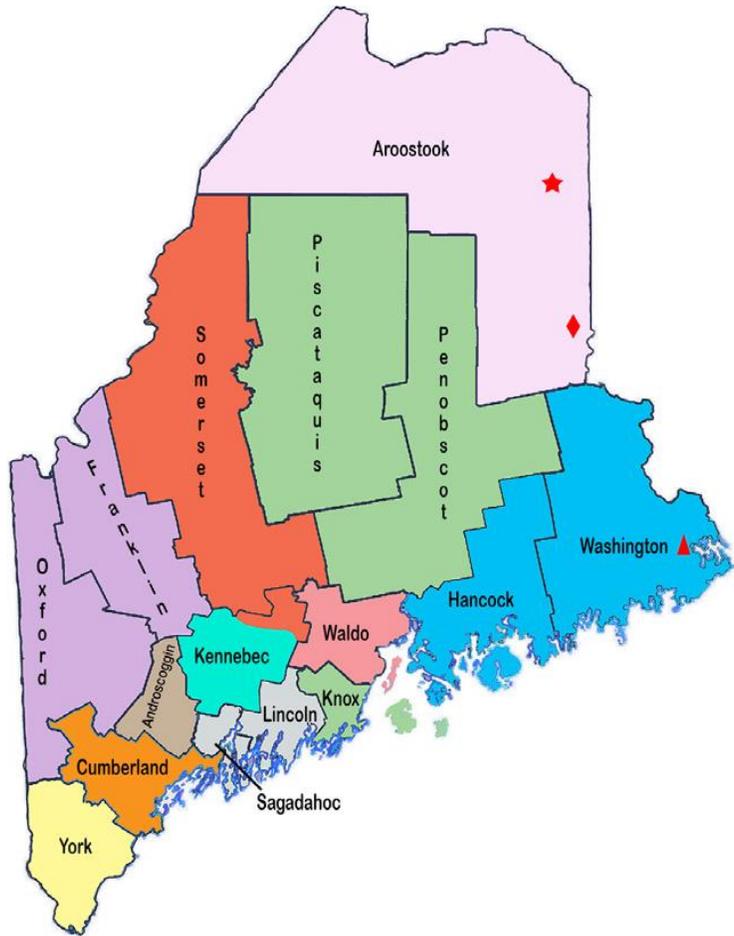
County served: Southern Kennebec  
 337 Maine Avenue, Farmingdale, ME 04344  
 (O) 582-3110 ext. 101  
 (C) 462-9459 (F) 582-3112  
 Cristina Salois, Director  
[cristina.salois@skcdc.org](mailto:cristina.salois@skcdc.org)

## **Waldo County Community Action Partners**

County served: Waldo  
 P.O. Box 130, Belfast, ME 04915  
 (O) 338-3827 ext. 203  
 (C) 200-6474 (F) 338-4437  
 Jamie Williams, Director  
[jwilliams@waldocap.org](mailto:jwilliams@waldocap.org)

## **York County Community Action Corporation**

County served: York  
 6 Spruce Street  
 P.O. Box 72, Sanford, ME 04073  
 (O) 324-5762 (F) 324-4197  
 Michelle Fleagle, Director  
[michelle.fleagle@yccac.org](mailto:michelle.fleagle@yccac.org)



## **Tribal Programs**

- ★ **Little Feathers Head Start Aroostook Band of Micmacs**  
 Area served: Houlton and Presque Isle  
 13 Northern Road, Presque Isle, ME 04769  
 (207) 768-3217  
 Tammy Deveau, Director  
[tdeveau@micmac-nsn.gov](mailto:tdeveau@micmac-nsn.gov)
- ◆ **Maliseet Head Start**  
 Area served: Houlton  
 1 Maliseet Drive, Houlton, Maine 04730  
 (207) 521-2410  
 Tracie Botting, Director  
[tbotting@maliseets.com](mailto:tbotting@maliseets.com)
- ▲ **Passamaquoddy Head Start**  
 Area served: Perry  
 P.O. Box 344, Perry, ME 04667  
 (207) 853-4388  
 & (207) 454-2128  
 Jasmine Bussett, Director  
[passamaquoddyheadstart@roadrunner.com](mailto:passamaquoddyheadstart@roadrunner.com)

# Head Start Matters

## What is Head Start?

*“Head Start is designed to ensure that all children - regardless of their family’s income, race, or ethnic background - are able to enter kindergarten ready to learn”*  
~ Lucille Roybal-Allard

When Head Start was first launched in 1965, the idea of providing comprehensive health, nutrition, and education services to children in poverty was revolutionary, if not radical. The Head Start model, developed over the decades, has been built on evidence-based practices and is constantly adapting - using the best available science and teaching techniques to meet the needs of local communities. The Head Start program was designed to help break the cycle of poverty, providing preschool children of low-income families with a comprehensive program to meet their emotional, social, health, nutritional and psychological needs. A key tenet of the program established that it be culturally responsive to the communities served, and that the communities have an investment in its success through the contribution of volunteer hours and other donations as nonfederal share.

In 1995, the first Early Head Start grants were provided to serve children ages from 0-3 years. Since that time, Head Start and Early Head Start programs continue to thrive and serve children and families throughout the country. See the [Head Start Timeline](#) to delve into key moments of Head Start’s history!

### What are the components of a Head Start/Early Head Start program?

Head Start takes a *comprehensive approach* to meeting the needs of young children. There are four major components to Head Start:

- **Early Education:** Providing a variety of learning experiences to help children grow intellectually, socially, emotionally, and early identification of learning differences.
- **Health/Nutrition:** Providing health services such as immunizations, dental, medical, mental health, nutritional services, and early identification of health problems.
- **Parent & Community Engagement:** Engaging parents/families in the planning and implementation of activities. Parents serve on policy councils and committees that make administrative decisions; participate in classes and workshops on child development; and volunteer in the programs.
- **Social Services:** Providing outreach to families to determine what services they need and collaborating with community providers to assure families have access to needed services.

Click on the links  
throughout the  
document to see  
more!

Link



# Supporting Children & Families During COVID-19

2020 was a challenging year for everyone. Head Start programs worked hard to implement the health and safety regulations set by the CDC. Their ability to adapt, to change and to utilize the expertise of their staff allowed programs to keep operating. With sheer determination, local Head Start programs continued to support children and families and serve as a resource in the community.



The family-centered approach of the Head Start program reinforced the ability to provide services during the public health emergency. When the programs were not able to provide in-person services during the shut-down period, programs quickly shifted gears. Head Start 'remained open' and served children and families through a variety of creative avenues, until in-person services could resume.



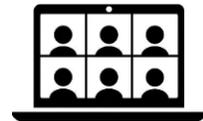
Home/Community Visits



Tele-Communications & Routines



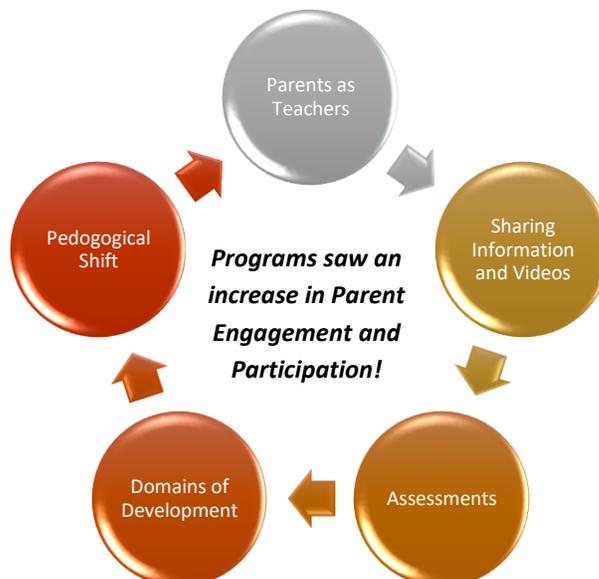
Learning Packets & More



Video/Virtual Connections

**Parents and Families** all over the state found themselves not only parenting their young children, but taking on the role of teacher. Together, with support from staff, families provided appropriate activities, safe and nurturing environments, and had access to needed resources such as food, diapers, and formula.

Many parents sent photos and videos of their children to teachers while spending time at home. Teachers were able to use these sources and provide parents with guidance and understanding of development. In turn, parents noticed new development in their child's growth and identified a newfound understanding of child development.





**Home and Community Visits**, while assuring safety precautions, were one of the top strategies in supporting children and families. Classroom teaching staff, Family Services staff, and others provided parent-child activities, parent education, nutrition supports, and educational supports. Families were given the option of classroom-based services or home-based services. Staff went above and beyond their regular job expectations to assure children and families received the services they needed. Many teaching teams drove by children's homes to wave to children through windows, bringing smiles across the state. Since the pandemic began, the number of children living in households with food insecurity has more than tripled. Head Start programs have provided families with emergency food since the beginning of the pandemic in collaboration with local community partners.



*Head Start served over 500,000 meals to children and their families in 2020!*

*An increase by 1/3 of families identified having food insecurities*



Each year, hundreds of preschool children transition from Head Start classrooms into school systems across the state. This year was no different as children, their families, and teachers celebrated their time in Head Start programs. Children, families, and teachers created new traditions to celebrate!





**Tele-Communications and Routines** were vital strategies Head Start programs faced as they navigated CDC guidelines and recommendations, while continually meeting the needs of children and families. Research shows that maintaining consistent routines, schedules, and expectations for children, supports their overall growth and development (Thelen & Klifman, 2011). However, teachers were faced with integrating minor changes to their regular routines such as wearing masks, increasing hand washing, and supporting children to maintain physical distancing when possible. Children across the state demonstrated flexibility and adapted to changes with minimal disruptions.



Technology options promoted an alternative to face-to-face interactions. They offered children and families ways to interact and talk with staff during everyday family routines and activities. The apps and websites offered engaging, interactive experiences that support educational learning in multiple domains. Teachers shared these tools with families and incorporated them into distance learning activities. One Head Start Director stated “During COVID, staff have continued to build supportive and growing relationships with families utilizing various means to communicate such as ZOOM, text, SeeSaw, email, in person outside, physically distant home visits”.

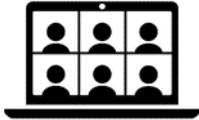


**Learning Packets** provided materials, ideas and experiences for children and their families while participating in virtual services. Head Start staff created bags for children filled with books and other materials.



They also provided families with needed supplies like toothpaste, toilet paper, cleaning supplies, and food! Families shared their gratitude through emails, phone calls, and some created videos of their time exploring the materials with their children!

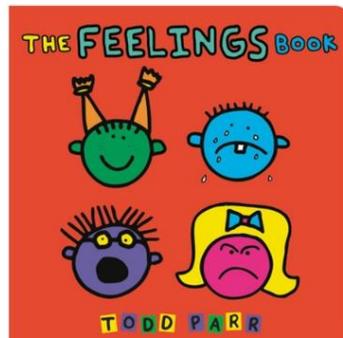




**Video and Virtual Connections** were other strategies programs utilized as they continued to provide best practices for learning to children and supported families in their homes. Programs utilized technology to highlight necessary changes to drop off routines, classroom expectations and information families needed to know before returning to in person learning.



Head Start programs provided technology options to families who requested access. This supported engagement efforts, increasing equity and access across the state as all programs identified an increase of Parent, Family and Community Engagement efforts. A Head Start Director highlighted the use of technology that helped to “provide a strong focus on family-child relationships and enhancing communities supports such as wellness, enhanced parenting skills, financial stability, and life-long learning. We invite all families to participate in family group meeting opportunities where we offer leadership opportunities, decision making for the program based on family interests and needs, socialization opportunities and activities with the intent of supporting family’s interaction to strengthen their relationship with their child(ren)”.



## Additional Funding/Partnerships to Support Programming

Head Start/Early Head Start programs across the country received [\\$2,653,997 of CARES Act funding](#) to continue to provide services to children and their families and to assure state COVID related expectations were met.

- 498 Pre-K children participated in additional summer programming prior to entering school systems
- Purchased additional sanitation supplies and personal protection equipment
- Hired and maintained staffing to meet program and family needs
- Purchased technology equipment to assure families stayed connected while participating in virtual services

Communication was the catalyst for positive partnerships and the implementation of services throughout the 2019-2020 school year. Head Start/Early Head Start programs partner with a wide variety of individual, community, and state level partners.

- |                                       |                               |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ➤ Public School Districts             | ➤ Mental Health Practitioners |
| ➤ Women, Infants and Children (WIC)   | ➤ Dental Providers            |
| ➤ Maine Department of Education       | ➤ Pediatric Care Providers    |
| ➤ Office of Child and Family Services | ➤ Child Development Services  |



## References

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For more information contact:

**Nena Cunningham Ed.D.**

MHSSCO Director

Department of Education

23 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

Cell (207) 441-5852

[nenam.cunningham@maine.gov](mailto:nenam.cunningham@maine.gov)

\* All photos/videos were supplied by Head Start and Early Head Start programs throughout Maine