

BUTLER COUNTY CHILDREN'S CENTER

dba



*SERVING ARMSTRONG, BEAVER, BUTLER, INDIANA, &
LAWRENCE COUNTIES*

ANNUAL REPORT

2023

139 RIEGER RD • BUTLER, PA 16001

724-287-2761

www.earlylearningconnections.org

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FORWARD

*2023 came with much activity. A hallmark of the year occurred as Early Learning Connections (ELC) celebrated **50 years** of service! ELC began as Butler County Children's Center in 1973 and has since grown in services, enrollment, locations, and capacities. ELC celebrated this important milestone in various ways, including an appreciation dinner for staff, policy council, board, and community members.*

ELC continued to make progress with agency goals, including systematic changes to the fiscal and personnel processes. These streamlined approaches provide efficiency and optimize resources. ELC also focused on providing quality services to consumers as well as strategic support for staff both monetarily and through a generous benefits portfolio.

ELC's 2023 achievements will pave the way for continued progress. The information below provides additional details on program highlights.

Education Programs

ELC was able to combine the Armstrong County and Butler County Head Start and Early Head Start grants into one grant. This change allows ELC to write only one grant for both counties. The merger also places both counties on the same fiscal schedule (July 1 – June 30).

ELC was also able to hire staff to fill many vacancies; a new onboarding system has made collecting new hire paperwork and orientation easier. ELC welcomed Jennifer Davis, the new director of the Bon Aire site programs (Infant/Toddler Contract Slots, Childcare, and Head Start).

ELC's Mount Chestnut and Bon Aire sites were recognized by the Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Supports Network for Fidelity of Implementation for Tier 1. ELC will be applying for Tier 1 recognition for all Butler County sites next program year.

ELC continues to maintain a strong partnership with local school districts in both counties to help children transition to kindergarten and ensure school readiness. Kindergarten checklists were updated according to school districts' requests, and staff are ensuring that parents are registering their children in plenty of time for adequate kindergarten placement. Pre-K Counts awarded ELC additional slots that were converted into a new classroom in the Freeport Area School District. This is ELC's first Pre-K classroom in Armstrong County.

Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) Region 3

ELRC 3 received excellent results in meeting all performance requirements with no findings during the annual performance monitoring report.

ELRC's subsidized Child Care Works (CCW) program had a total payout of over \$17.7 million to providers. Two Work Force Support grants totaled over \$6.8 million in additional dollars.

ELRC partnered with the Professional Development Organization to provide technical assistance to childcare staff looking to attain higher educational credentialing. 30 childcare staff members successfully earned their Child Development Associates (CDA) Credentials.

Fiscal

The finance department continued to improve internal controls by implementing segregation of duties. The department staff increased their education by completing virtual trainings and attending outside conferences. The MIP Accounting System continued to improve by adding modules to complete daily functions more efficiently. The finance department worked with auditors to develop a new fixed asset procedure and get ELC's audit report to be unqualified.

Human Resources

ELC's Human Resources team attended many events throughout 2023, including:

- Slippery Rock University Job Fair
- Indiana University of Pennsylvania Job Fair
- Butler County Community College Job Fair
- Butler High School Job Fair
- Pennsylvania Career Link Job Fair
- Veterans Job Fair
- Lenape Technical Center Job Fair

- Moraine State Park Regatta

ELC has added several billboards in heavily traveled areas to aid in both enrollment and staffing recruitment efforts.

ELC has continued to offer a generous sign on incentive, provide an affordable option for health insurance, and increase coverage for vision benefits.

ELC continues to strive to provide a sound educational and environmental experience for the communities served. The management team, policy council, and board are genuinely dedicated to ELC's mission, vision, and values of safety, kindness, and respect. ELC looks forward to serving families and children in 2024!

With Gratitude and Commitment,

Elisa Spadafora, CEO Early Learning Connections

ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

Mission

The mission of Early Learning Connections is to provide a variety of high-quality early learning programs that foster a safe and positive culture through kindness and respect to meet the comprehensive needs of families

Vision

The vision of Early Learning Connections is to be the leading provider of children's programs and quality services for families

Values

Quality...Integrity...Commitment

ORGANIZATIONAL DESCRIPTION

Early Learning Connections is a private nonprofit 501c3 that is run by a volunteer Board of Directors. Early Learning Connections was incorporated in 1973 for the purpose of providing childcare services for children in Butler County. Since 1973, Early Learning Connections has evolved into the leading childcare provider in the county and has developed additional social services to serve the needs of the community.

Programs

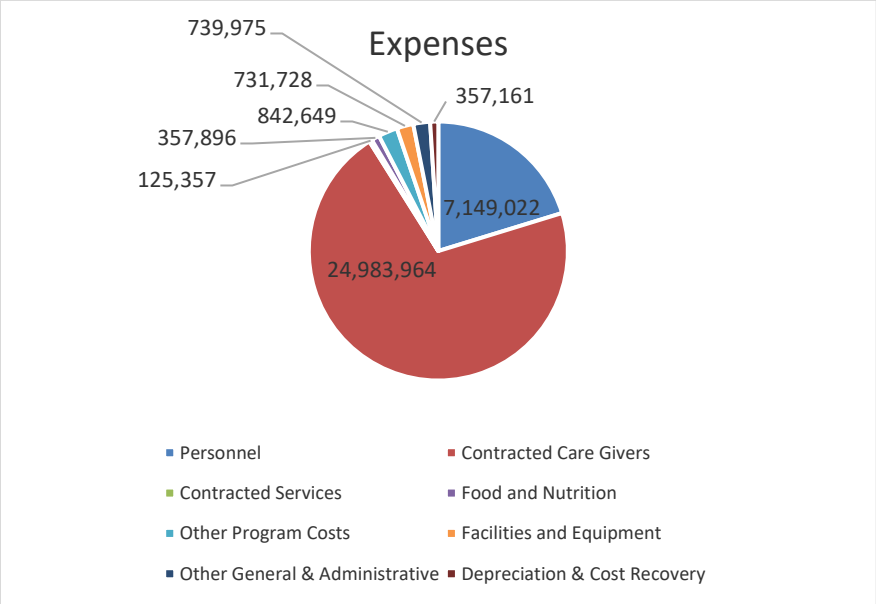
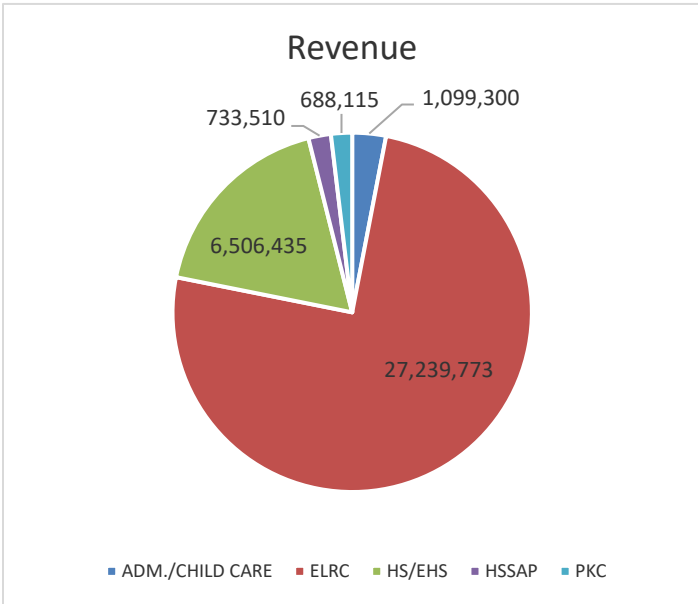
- Childcare
- Head Start
- Infant Toddler Contracted Slots (ITCS)
- Early Head Start
- Pre-K Counts
- Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

FUNDING AND BUDGET INFORMATION

JULY 1, 2022 – JUNE 30, 2023

Total Revenue by Source							
2022-23							
	Admin.	Child Care	ELRC	HS/EHS	HSSAP	Pre-K	Total
Government Grants				6,506,435	733,510	668,732	7,908,677
ELRC - Federal			21,215,832				21,215,832
ELRC- State			5,983,953				5,983,953
CACFP - Federal		334,063				19,383	353,446
Fees - DHS/ELRC – State		506,010					506,010
Other Grants - Keystone Stars - Federal		0					0
Other Grants - Keystone Stars - State		0					0
Other Grants - HSBG - State		0					0
Other Grants - CSBG - Federal (Net)		0					0
Total Government		840,073	27,199,785	6,506,435	733,510	688,115	35,967,918
Program Fees - Private		80,103					80,103
United Way (Net)/In Kind - Local		36,307		0			36,307
Other - Training Revenue - PA Keys		0					0
Other - Rent/Interest/Misc./Donations	71,497	71,320	39,988				182,805
TOTAL REVENUE BY SOURCE	71,497	1,027,803	27,239,773	6,506,435	733,510	688,115	36,267,133
Public	-	876,380	27,239,773	6,506,435	733,510	688,115	36,044,213
Private	71,497	151,423		0			222,920
TOTAL	71,497	1,027,803	27,239,773	6,506,435	733,510	688,115	36,267,133

	ADMIN/CC		ELRC		HS/EHS/HSSAP		Pre-K		Total	
	Dollars	%	Dollars	%	Dollars	%	Dollars	%	Dollars	%
Federal	334,063	30.4%	21,215,832	77.9%	6,506,435	89.9%	19,383	2.8%	28,075,713	77.4%
State	506,010	46.0%	5,983,953	22.0%	733,510	10.1%	668,732	97.2%	7,892,205	21.8%
Private	80,103	7.3%							80,103	0.2%
Other	179,124	16.3%	39,988	0.1%	0	0.0%			219,112	0.6%
Total	1,099,300	100.0%	27,239,773	100.0%	7,239,945	100.0%	688,115	100.0%	36,267,133	100.0%



HUMAN RESOURCES

JANUARY 1, 2023 – DECEMBER 31, 2023

Number of Employees:

Full Time	128
Part Time Plus	15
Part Time	9
Substitutes	4
Total	148

Employee Departures:

Terminations	44
Total Departures	44

Employee Hires:

Full Time	51
Part Time	3
Total Hires	54

Employee Turnover Rate = 22%

BUTLER COUNTY HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM ENROLLMENT JULY 1, 2022 – JUNE 30, 2023

Families Served:

Head Start – 228

Early Head Start – 71

Program Wide – 299

Children Served:

Head Start – 233

Early Head Start – 112

Program Wide – 345



BUTLER COUNTY

Month/Year	Head Start		Early Head Start	
	Enrolled	% of Funded Enrollment	Enrolled	% of Funded Enrollment
July 2022	-	-	56	55%
August 2022	-	-	56	55%
September 2022	192	63%	58	57%
October 2022	204	67%	63	62%
November 2022	204	67%	62	61%
December 2022	209	70%	70	69%
January 2023	203	67%	73	72%
February 2023	209	69%	69	68%
March 2023	210	70%	70	69%
April 2023	208	69%	72	71%
May 2023	204	68%	71	70%
June 2023	189	63%	68	67%

ARMSTRONG COUNTY HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM ENROLLMENT JULY 1, 2022 – JUNE 30, 2023

Families Served:

Head Start – 133

Early Head Start – 41

Program Wide – 174

Children Served:

Head Start – 141

Early Head Start – 50

Program Wide – 191

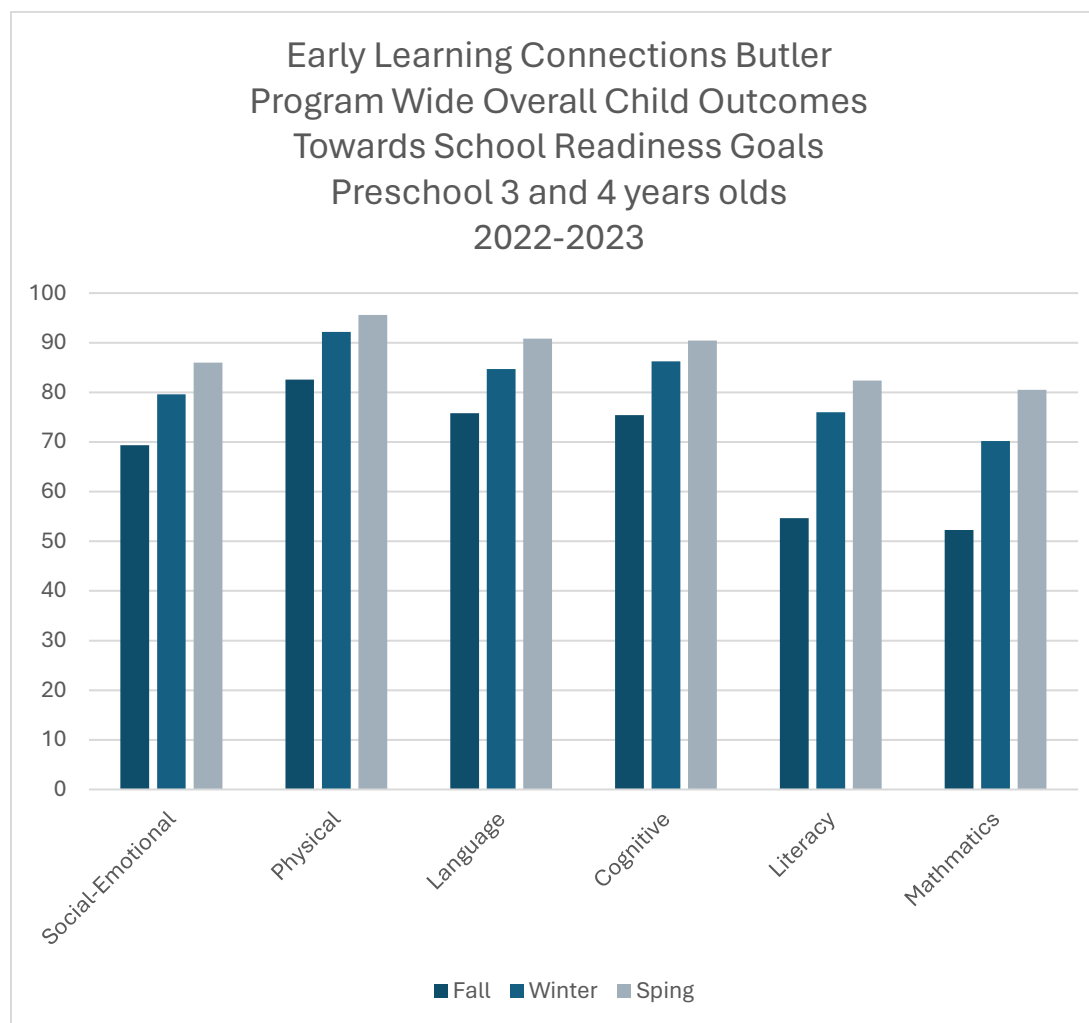


ARMSTRONG COUNTY

Month/Year	Head Start		Early Head Start	
	Enrolled	% of Funded Enrollment	Enrolled	% of Funded Enrollment
July 2022	-	-	23	64%
August 2022	-	-	22	61%
September 2022	132	77%	23	64%
October 2022	134	78%	24	67%
November 2022	134	78%	29	81%
December 2022	135	78%	25	69%
January 2023	133	77%	30	83%
February 2023	125	72%	31	86%
March 2023	128	74%	30	83%
April 2023	127	73%	30	83%
May 2023	128	74%	34	94%
June 2023	81	84%	34	94%

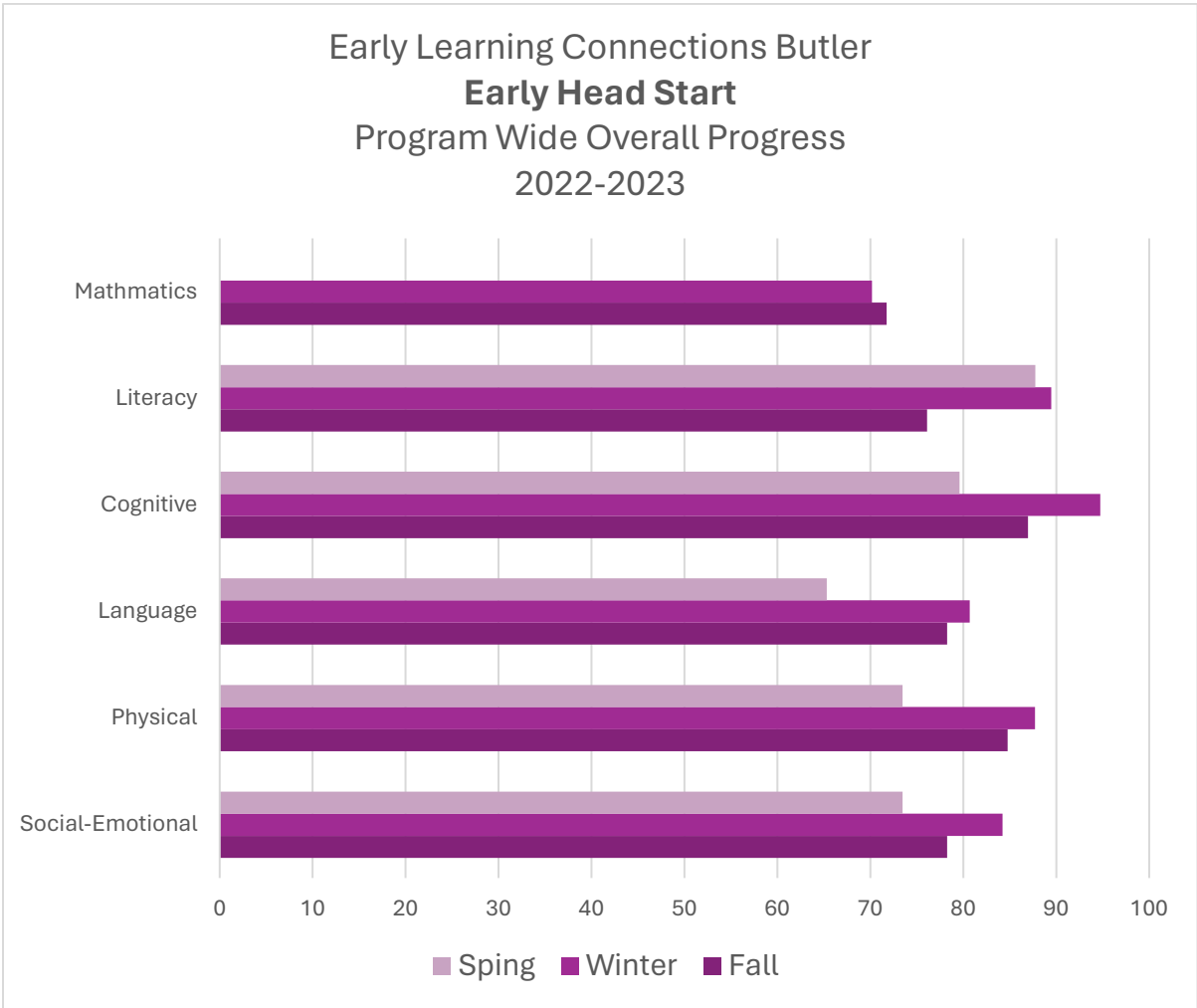
SCHOOL READINESS/CHILD OUTCOMES

BUTLER COUNTY HEAD START



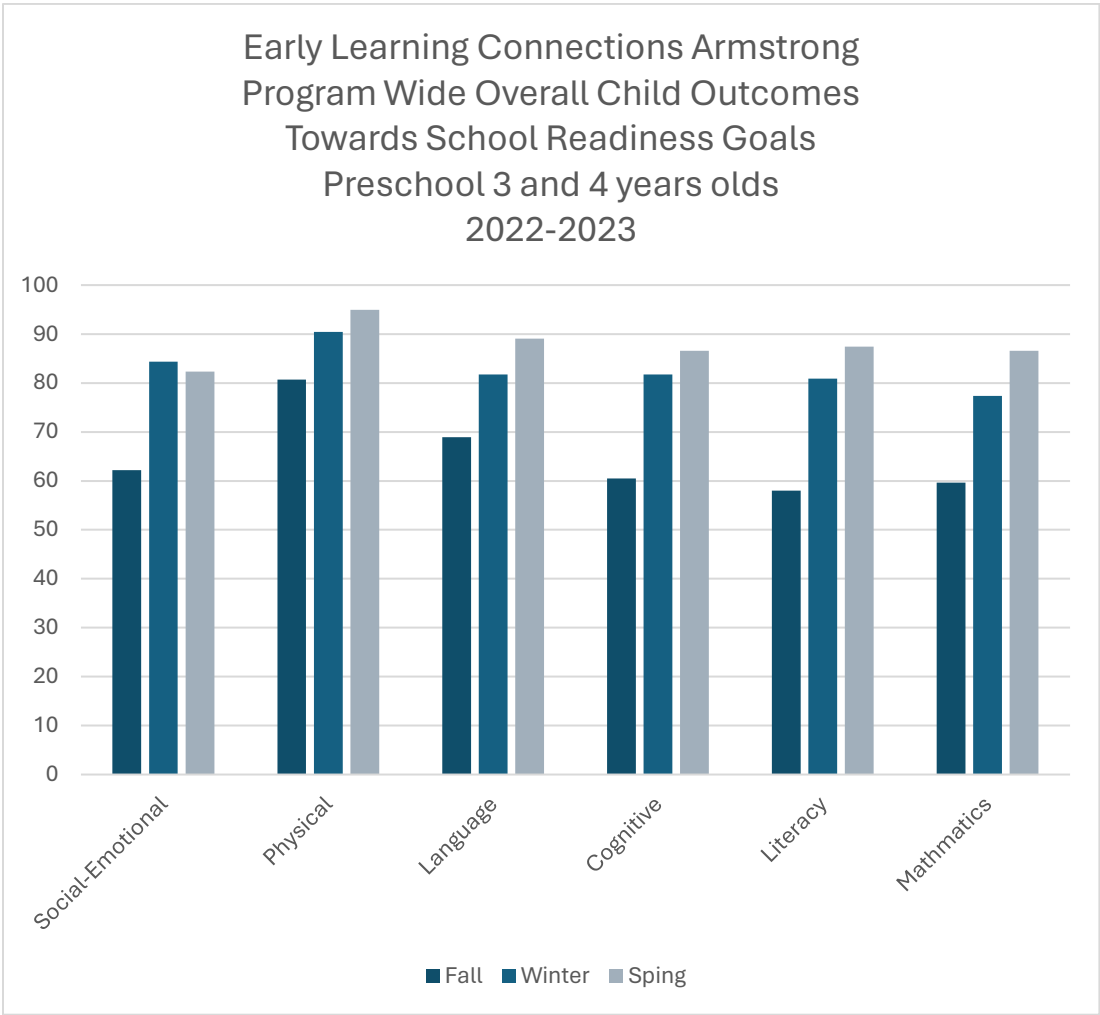
SCHOOL READINESS/CHILD OUTCOMES

BUTLER COUNTY EARLY HEAD START



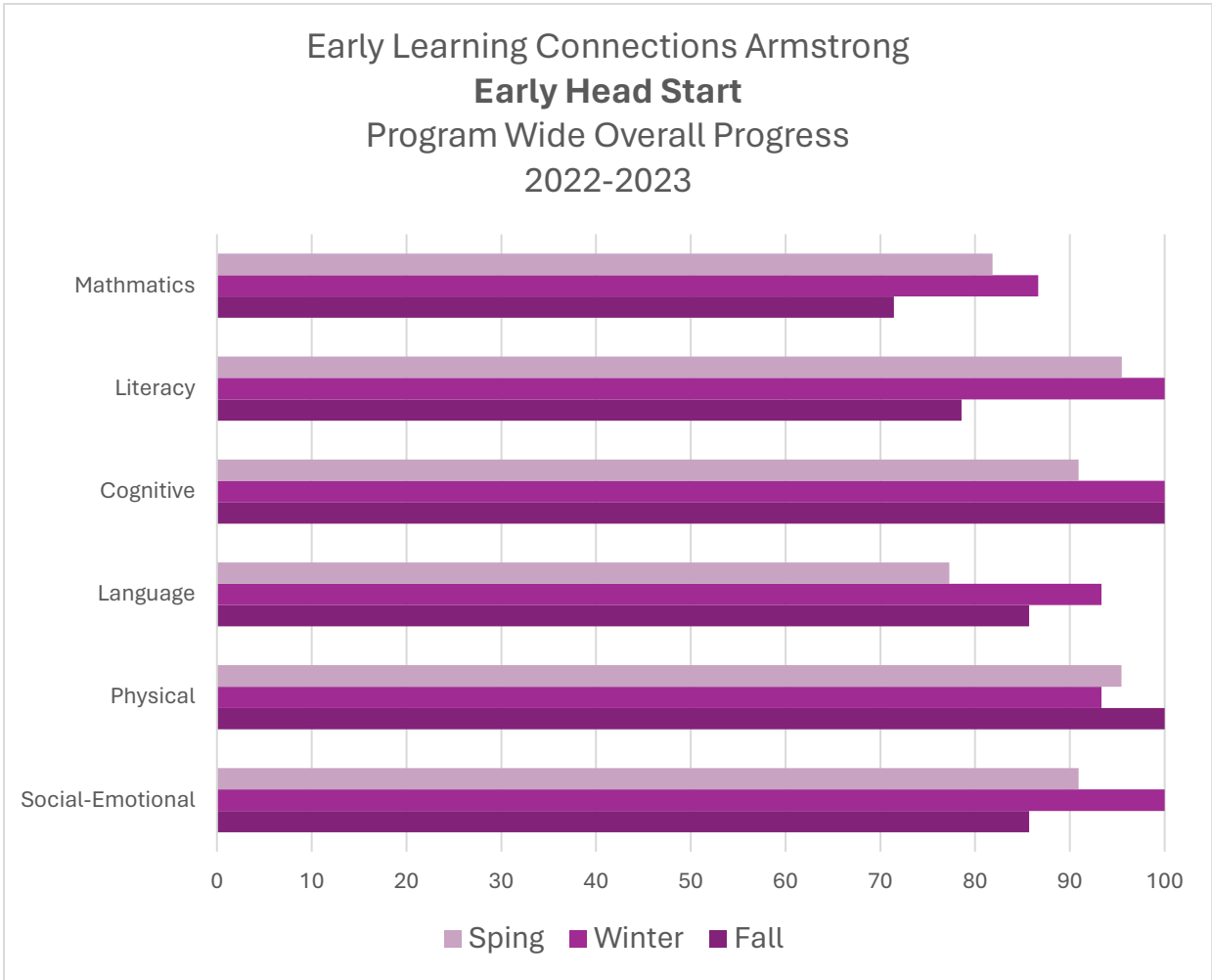
SCHOOL READINESS/CHILD OUTCOMES

ARMSTRONG COUNTY HEAD START



SCHOOL READINESS/CHILD OUTCOMES

ARMSTRONG COUNTY EARLY HEAD START



SPECIAL SERVICES REPORT 2022-2023 PROGRAM YEAR

Butler Head Start Preschool Disabilities Services

41 children enrolled in the program had an Individualized Education Program (IEP) during the enrollment year and were eligible to receive special education and related services provided by the Local Education Agency (LEA). Of the 41 children identified, 17 were determined to be eligible to receive special education and related services prior to the start of the program year and 24 were found to be eligible during the program year.

Early Head Start Infant and Toddler Part C Early Intervention Services

10 children who participated in the EHS program had an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) during the enrollment year, indicating they were eligible by the Part C Agency to receive early intervention services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA). Of the 10 children identified, 2 were determined eligible to receive early intervention services prior to the program year and 8 were found eligible during the program year.

Head Start Mental Health Consultation

The Mental Health Consultants provided consultation and/or referral services to 70 families during the program year and 26 were referred to outside services.

Pre-K Counts Disabilities Services

12 children enrolled in the program had an active Individualized Education Program (IEP) during the enrollment year and received special education and related services from the Local Education Agency (LEA). 9 of the children were determined eligible to receive special education services prior to the start of the program year and 3 were found to be eligible during the program year.

Childcare Disabilities Services

1 child enrolled in the Infant/Toddler Childcare Program had an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) during the enrollment year and received all services on site in the childcare environment. 1 child enrolled in the Preschool Childcare Program had an IEP during the enrollment year.

Referrals Head Start, Pre-K Counts, and Pre-K Childcare for Further Assessment

A total of 36 children were referred to the Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV for further assessment based on their Developmental Screening Results.

Armstrong Head Start Preschool Disabilities Services

13 children enrolled in the program had an Individualized Education Program (IEP) during the enrollment year and were eligible to receive special education and related services provided by the Local Education Agency (LEA). Of the 13 children identified, 11 were determined to be eligible to receive special education and related services prior to the start of the program year and 2 were found to be eligible during the program year.

Early Head Start Infant and Toddler Part C Early Intervention Services

9 children who participated in the EHS program had an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) during the enrollment year, indicating they were eligible by the Part C Agency to receive early intervention services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA). Of the 9 children identified, 4 were determined eligible to receive early intervention services prior to the program year and 5 were found eligible during the program year.

Head Start Mental Health Consultation

The Mental Health Consultant provided consultation and/or referral services to 30 families during the program year; 16 were referred for outside services.

Referrals Head Start for Further Assessment

7 children were referred to the ARIN Intermediate Unit 28 for further assessment based on the Developmental Screening Results

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Head Start recognizes the importance of supporting parents' efforts to be their child's first and most important teacher. Early Learning Connections' approach to family involvement includes providing opportunities for parents to plan and carry out activities and events:

- To connect with peers as Head Start/Early Head Start families
- To build positive parent-child relationships
- For children and the males who are involved in the children's lives

BUTLER COUNTY

<u>Event</u>	<u>Number of Children</u>	<u>Number of Adults</u>
Open House	86	112
Stay and Play	96	103
Parent Meeting	-	97
Moving On and Moving Up	132	241
Slippery Rock Univ. Events	22	13

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

ARMSTRONG COUNTY

<u>Event</u>	<u>Number of Children</u>	<u>Number of Adults</u>
Open House	67	77
Stay and Play	84	93
Parent Meeting	-	37
Moving On and Moving Up	204	339
Slippery Rock Univ. Events	27	29

2022 – 2023 IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

BUTLER COUNTY

MONTH	HEAD START	EARLY HEAD START	TOTAL
April 2022	\$70,380	\$21,812	\$92,192
May 2022	\$112,991	\$24,952	\$137,943
June 2022	\$45,796	\$3,864	\$49,660
July 2022	\$45,003	\$55,854	\$100,857
August 2022	\$46,049	\$38,688	\$84,738
September 2022	\$102,282	\$28,184	\$130,466
October 2022	\$129,593	\$38,701	\$168,294
November 2022	\$122,139	\$27,992	\$150,131
December 2022	\$124,425	\$25,741	\$150,166
January 2023	\$162,180	\$23,928	\$186,107
February 2023	\$105,632	\$45,378	\$151,010
March 2023	\$186,644	\$48,148	\$234,792
April 2023	\$108,605	\$1,757	\$110,362
May 2023	\$119,504	\$56,716	\$176,220
June 2023	\$93,314	\$43,452	\$136,766

2022 – 2023 IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

ARMSTRONG COUNTY

MONTH	HEAD START	EARLY HEAD START	TOTAL
July 2022	\$35,798	\$2,325	\$38,123
August 2022	\$38,297	\$12,407	\$50,703
September 2022	\$39,851	\$6,373	\$46,224
October 2022	\$90,804	\$16,777	\$107,581
November 2022	\$76,036	\$15,190	\$91,225
December 2022	\$84,409	\$19,419	\$103,829
January 2023	\$75,174	\$24,569	\$99,743
February 2023	\$92,805	\$115	\$92,920
March 2023	\$109,232	\$45,644	\$154,877
April 2023	\$75,831	\$33,023	\$108,855
May 2023	\$114,651	\$18,512	\$133,163
June 2023	\$81,029	\$25,898	\$106,927

HEALTH SERVICES REPORT 2022-2023 PROGRAM YEAR

Child's Health Status – Grantee agencies must ensure that all children have:

- An ongoing source of health care
- Up to date well checkups and immunizations
- A dental exam and follow-up treatment if necessary
- A visual and auditory screening (within 45 calendar days of entry into program – this may be completed by the child's pediatrician or at the agency)

HEALTH REPORT JULY 1, 2022 – JUNE 30, 2023

HEAD START – Total number of children served: 332

Number of children with:

- A source of ongoing health care – 329 (3 with a provider outside of USA)
- Up to date well checkups – 312 (20 overdue)
- Up to date immunizations – 291 (34 overdue)
- Exempt from immunizations – 7
- Up to date dental exam – 278 (54 overdue)
- Total number of children who have been screened:
 - Vision – 300 (within the first 45 days)
 - Hearing – 300 (within the first 45 days)

EARLY HEAD START – Total number of children served: 97

Number of children with:

- A source of ongoing health care – 97
 - Up to date well checkups – 71 (26 overdue)
 - Up to date immunization – 68 (26 overdue)
 - Exempt from immunizations – 3
 - Number of children who have been screened:
 - Vision – 74 (within the first 45 days) *unable to screen children under 1 year
 - Hearing – 90 (within the first 45 days)
-
- Some enrolled children are here on Visa; therefore, their ongoing health care is not in the United States. These children's care came from MedExpress or Faster Care.
 - COVID-19 put some children behind on well checkups and immunizations. Children's primary care physicians have plans to catch children up.
 - Some families are experiencing difficulties finding dental care providers who will take the children's insurance and/or see children before the age of 5. Families across Pennsylvania have experienced this problem. Early Learning Connections has relied on Golden Onsite Dental to provide mobile dental clinics in both counties.

PRE-K COUNTS

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts is a state funded program established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to provide a preschool education to children who are:

- Between the ages of 3 and entry age for kindergarten
- Part of families that are earning up to 300 percent of the federal income poverty level

Early Learning Connections' Pre-K program operates during the academic school year of corresponding school districts:

- Sugarcreek Elementary School (Karns City SD)
- Dassa McKinney Elementary School (Moniteau SD)
- Connoquenessing Valley Elementary School (Seneca Valley SD)
- ELC's Bon Aire Building (Butler SD)

CLASSROOM	2022 – 2023 ENROLLMENT
Sugarcreek Elementary	16
Dassa McKinney Elementary	18
Connoquenessing Valley Elementary	20
Bon Aire	20
TOTAL	74

- Early Learning Connections has served over 620 Pre-K students over 13 years
- Early Learning Connections' Pre-K Counts Head and Assistant Teachers have the following credentials:
 - 2 Head Teachers hold a Pennsylvania Department of Education Level 2 Certification (1 Head Teacher is working toward their certification)
 - All Assistant Teachers have either a Bachelor (BA) or Associate (AA) degree

- Pre-K Counts teachers gather progress on each student throughout the school year:

Social-Emotional

Mathematics

Physical

Science and Technology

Language

Social Studies

Cognitive

Arts

Literacy

- Information is obtained from child observations, portfolio work, and assessments
- Gathered information is used to plan children's individual goals
- Parent conferences are held 4 times throughout the school year
- Information that is gathered is documented and reported to the state
- Each child in Pre-K Counts is given a unique identity number from the Department of Education; this number is used to follow each student's outcomes from preschool until 12th grade

CHILDCARE SERVICES

Committed to Quality

Early Learning Connections (ELC) operates a private, nonprofit licensed childcare program at the Bon Aire location. The childcare program adheres to all licensing regulations required by the state of Pennsylvania's Department of Human Services and the Office of Child Development and Early Learning. The center has a strong commitment to providing high quality childcare services to children and families. This commitment is demonstrated by ongoing participation in Pennsylvania's quality rating and improvement system, Keystone STARS. The organization also participates in the Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support (PaPBS) Network and implements Program Wide Positive Behavior and Interventions and Supports to promote the development of children's social and emotional skills. The Bon Aire facility achieved official recognition from the PaPBS Network for Fidelity of Implementation of Tier 1 in the Spring of the 2022-2023 program year.

- ELC provided childcare services for 18 children ages 3-5 years old during the 2022-2023 program year
- 9 children ages 9 months-3 years old were served through the Infant Toddler Contracted Slots Program
- ELC also provided preschool childcare before and after Head Start classroom hours as well as full day childcare on school vacation and in-service days
- ELC provided inclusive childcare to 9 children with special needs during the 2022-2023 school year with help from funding from the United Way of Butler County

EARLY LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER (ELRC) REGION 3

Serving Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Indiana, and Lawrence Counties

Services for Families

ELRC's provide a single point of contact for families, early learning service providers, and communities to gain information and access services that support high-quality childcare and early learning programs.

- Services include:
 - Child Care Works (CCW), Pennsylvania's childcare subsidy program
 - Keystone STARS, Pennsylvania's quality improvement program for childcare providers
 - PA Pre-K Counts, Head Start, and Infant Toddler Contracted Slots
 - Early Intervention Services

New ELRC 2023 – 2024 Initiatives

- Administering Continuous Quality Improvement Grants for 2023 -2024
- Collaborate with the newly formed Rapid Response Team to help reduce suspension and expulsion of children in childcare settings
- Partnering with Professional Development Organizations to continue to provide technical assistance in helping childcare workers attain higher educational levels and credentialing
- Providing additional programming to both families and providers focusing in the areas of mindfulness, behavioral health, and developmental supports

ELRC PROGRAM INFORMATION AND ESTIMATED DATA

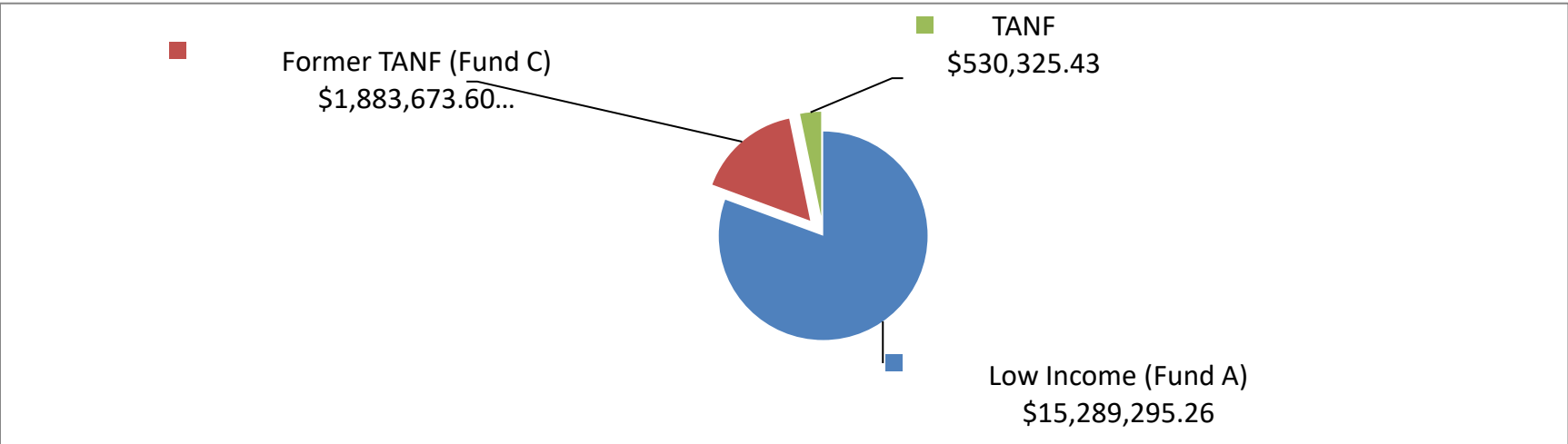
JULY 1, 2022 – JUNE 30, 2023

- **3,107 CCW estimated subsidized children enrolled 2022 -2023**
 - Help families maintain employment
 - Educate families on quality early education programs
 - Referral services (help find childcare and other services)
- **372 CCW estimated childcare provider sites paid in 2022 -2023**
 - 238 certified childcare providers and 134 relative providers
 - **Total subsidy payments for 2022 – 2023: \$17,703,294.00**
- **Grants and Awards 2022 – 2023**
 - ELRC 3 administered over **\$3.8 million in Work Force Support 1.0 Awards**
 - ELRC 3 administered over **\$3.0 million in Work Force Support 2.0 Awards**
 - Grants are focused on improving upon quality and the stability of the childcare workforce
- **Infant Toddler Contracted Slots Program (ITCS)**
 - Four ITCS sites in Region 3 were awarded **\$768,000.00** during 2022 -2023
 - ITCS continues focus on quality programming while building strong transitions from infant-toddler to pre-kindergarten classrooms
 - ITCS serves up to 40 CCW eligible infants and toddlers

ELRC CHILDCARE SUBSIDY PAYMENTS BY FUND TYPE

JULY 1, 2022 – JUNE 30, 2023

<u>FUNDING TYPE</u>	<u>AMOUNT PAID</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Low Income (Fund A)	\$15,289,295.26	86%
Former TANF (Fund C)	\$1,883,673.60	11%
TANF	\$530,325.43	3%
ELRC Total	\$17,703,294.29	100%



CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM

- Early Learning Connections participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- CACFP is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (federal) and Pennsylvania Department of Education (state)
- The program contributes to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of children in all Early Learning Connections programs

- Early Learning Connections receives reimbursement by adhering to regulations set forth by CACFP:
 - Provide annual training to all staff
 - Monitor meals at all classroom sites three times per year
 - Submit a monthly claim
 - Pass in-person evaluation every three years