



2008-2009

EARLY EXPLORERS HEAD START & EARLY HEAD START ANNUAL REPORT



HISTORY OF HEAD START

In 1965, the Office of Economic Opportunity launched Project Head Start as an eight-week summer program. Head Start was part of the War on Poverty, which embodied a basic belief in education as the solution to poverty. Head Start was designed to help break the "cycle of poverty" by providing preschool children of low income families with a comprehensive program to meet their emotional, social, health, nutritional, and psychological needs. Born of the civil rights movement and part of the new political thinking on the nature of poverty and the uses of education, was that the government was obligated to help disadvantaged groups in order to compensate for inequality in social or economic conditions. The concept of "maximum feasible participation" represented a new philosophy in federal government that low-income people should help plan and run their own programs. Education and child development specialists, community leaders, and parents enthusiastically received Head Start across the nation and recruited children age three to school-entry age.

Head Start now operates through the Administration of Children and Families in the US Department of Health and Human Services. The program has expanded from eight weeks to extended year services. Head Start serves many children and families from diverse backgrounds in all 50 states. The inception of Early Head Start became a reality in the mid 1990's and targeted expectant parents and children birth to age three.

Numerous changes have occurred over the past four decades. The most recent change occurred in December 2007, with the signing of the Head Start Reauthorization Bill by President George W. Bush. As of February 2008, Economic Recovery Plan announced by President Barack Obama in which he earmarked additional funding of \$2.1 billion, Early Head Start and Head Start programs across the nation are in a better position to continue this legacy providing opportunity for children and families.

Early Explorers Head Start began as Newport School District Head Start in the summer of 1966 in Towner serving 30 children as a summer program. Early Explorers Head Start and Early Head Start is a grantee agency of the Towner Granville Upham School District #60. The TGU School Board and the Early Explorers Policy Council, composed of enrolled parents and community representatives, govern Early Explorers. The TGU School District #60 Superintendent is the Executive Director and serves as a link between the governing board and the program. The Program Director is responsible for the operation of the programs. The Early Explorers administrative office is located in Towner.

Early Explorers Head Start is federally funded to serve 216 children ages 3-5 in Benson, Bottineau, McHenry, McLean, Pierce, Ramsey, Sheridan, Towner, and Wells Counties. Program services are based on the needs of the communities. The program has four five-day classrooms in Devils Lake, four-day classrooms located in Anamoose, Bottineau, Harvey, Rugby, Towner, Turtle Lake and Velva, three-day classroom in Maddock (with one home visit per month) and home-based services in Wells County with weekly home visits and monthly socialization opportunities. All classrooms operate from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm. The Head Start program services follow local school district calendars.

Early Explorers was awarded Early Head Start in 1997. Early Explorers Early Head Start is funded to serve 50 expectant parents, infants and toddlers in Ramsey and Wells Counties with sites located in Devils Lake and Harvey. The program has three center-based classrooms in Devils Lake for families who work or attend school full time. Classroom hours are 8:15 am to 5:15 pm. Home-based services provide weekly home visits and socialization opportunities in Ramsey and Wells Counties. Early Head Start is a year round program.

Early Explorers has served north central North Dakota for over 40 years. Early Explorers is committed to strengthening children and families for building stronger communities.

2008-2009
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[TGU School Board](#)

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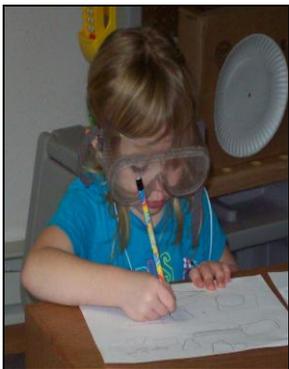
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Devils Lake
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Maddock
Rena Vetsch-
Rugby
Melinda Voeller-
Community Rep

The Head Start Performance Standards (45 CFR 1304, 1305, 1306, 1308, 1310) and administrative requirements are mandatory regulations that agencies must implement in order to operate a Head Start program. They provide a regulatory structure for the monitoring and enforcement of quality standards in the following categories:

- Child Health and Development Services
- Education and Early Childhood Development
- Child Health and Safety
- Child Nutrition
- Child Mental Health
- Children with Disabilities
- Family Partnerships
- Community Partnerships
- Program Governance
- Management Systems and Procedures
- Human Resources Management
- Facilities, Materials & Equipment
- Fiscal Management
- Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment & Attendance
- Staffing Requirements and Program Options



HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Early Explorers recognizes that every child must be healthy and well nourished to learn and grow to his or her full potential. Preventive health services are central to Head Start's comprehensive array of services. Health assessments and early identification of health related needs ensure each child receives medical, dental, mental health, and nutritional care, including medical, hearing, vision, speech/language screening and dental exams.

- 99% of Head Start and 100% of Early Head Start children had health insurance during the 2008-2009 program year.
- 100% of Head Start and Early Head Start children completed a health screening by a health care professional.
- 100% of Head Start and Early Head Start children were up to date on immunizations.
- 98% of Head Start children received a dental exam by a dentist.
- 92% of Early Head Start children received a dental screening by a health care professional.

Early Explorers Health Coordinators completed fluoride varnish applications on all enrolled children during the program year.

All enrolled children complete a nutrition assessment conducted by the local WIC agency or through the program's contracted registered dietician. Nutritious meals and snacks are part of every school day. Each of the nine sites contract with the local school district to provide food service. In the past year, Head Start served 26,020 breakfasts, 26,241 lunches and 24,374 snacks. In addition, children received monthly nutrition experiences providing opportunities for children to try new foods in the classroom and learn about healthy eating.

Promoting good nutrition is just one of the ways that Early Explorers is working to combat childhood obesity. Head Start was the recipient of the Nike Go grant, providing an early childhood physical activity program. The two-part grant provided \$10,000 in physical fitness equipment, training and a "playbook" of activities that are fun, inclusive, developmentally appropriate and aligned with Head Start child outcomes.

Early Head Start was one of 24 programs selected to participate in a new Early Head Start pilot initiative focusing on healthy movement and nutrition with infants and toddlers. Early Head Start received extensive training and was chosen to be one of the programs used in the development of training videos.

Early Head Start - Infants and Toddlers Child Development Services

Experiences in the first three years become the building blocks for school readiness, the acquisition of language and literacy skills, and the foundation of trusting relationships necessary for a child to gain confidence as a learner.

Early Head Start (EHS) is a year-round program serving families and children prenatally to age three. The program is designed to provide early support to families of infants and toddlers, which will enhance the child's development through healthy beginnings and the continuity of responsive and caring relationships. The goal of Early Head Start is to foster the intellectual, social, and emotional growth of both parent(s) and child.

Upon enrollment, all children receive a developmental screening with tools that gauge social emotional wellness and developmental milestones. Individual ongoing assessment focuses on six developmental domains; social/emotional wellness, language/ communication, cognitive development, approaches to learning, gross and fine motor development and physical health. Child progress/outcomes are monitored through observations and parental input using the Galileo child outcomes system. Galileo is a web-based assessment system that includes the most current research on how and what children learn. Galileo assists in planning and implementing activities that focus on the child's interests and challenges their skill levels, encourages problem solving, builds attention span and promotes curiosity. It recognizes that all learning happens in the context of physically and emotionally safe environments and relationships.

Early Head Start utilizes research-based curriculum, which is aligned with best practices in early care and education. The foundation of EHS curriculum includes the Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers, HELP at Home, Creative Curriculum for Infants/Toddlers, the Nurturing Program and Partners for a Healthy Baby-Prenatal to 36 months.

Early Head Start center based services are reserved for parents who are working or attending school full time. Children receive early care and education in an environment that is intentionally planned, based on the goals/educational outcomes of the individual, yet flexible to follow the lead of each child. The program provides home based services for stay at home parents, parents who work part time or expectant parents. Prenatal services focus on providing information on fetal development, nutrition, labor and delivery, breast-feeding and postnatal care. Early Head Start has a collaborative agreement with Devils Lake Public Schools to provide support to expectant parents/teen parents.

Early Head Start builds partnerships with families to share information, set goals for the child and increase the parent's knowledge of child development. In addition to classroom/home-based services, the program provides parent education/meetings, home visits, parent-teacher conferences, Early Explorers Playgroups, 100-book challenge and other activities that focus on the importance of the child/parent relationship.



"It will be the goal of this administration to ensure that every child has access to a complete and competitive education- from the day they are born to the day they begin a career- We have dramatically expanded early childhood education and will continue to improve its quality, because we know that the most formative learning comes in those first years of life."

-President Barack Obama-address to joint session of Congress



Head Start- Preschool Education/ Child Development Services

Developmental research indicates that preschool children learn best in carefully designed environments that tap their natural curiosity and support learning through play and active exploration of their surroundings. Strong standards outline the skills, knowledge and dispositions children need to ensure a successful transition into kindergarten.

All enrolled children receive a developmental screening within 45 days of enrollment. Individual plans are designed to foster intellectual, physical, social, emotional and language growth. Head Start classrooms focus on language, literacy, mathematics, science, creative arts, physical health, social and emotional development and approaches to learning. Child progress/outcomes are monitored through the Galileo child outcomes system. Galileo is a web-based assessment system that includes the most current research on how and what children learn. It allows teachers to use assessment information to plan learning opportunities appropriate to children's developmental needs.

Galileo, Opening the World of Learning, Scaffolding Early Literacy, Creative Curriculum and Circle/Step Literacy Project are the research-based curriculums, which provide the foundation of child development services.

Information is shared with parents to ensure that learning objectives are continued at home. Parents are recognized as partners in their children's education. Early Explorers provides opportunities to enhance parent knowledge of child development through parent meetings, educational handouts, parent teacher conferences, home visits and parent/child activities in the classroom.

In 2009, Early Explorers was awarded the Early Reading First grant as one of three Head Start programs working in partnership with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and McRel Institute. It is the largest Early Reading First grant in the nation and the only one in North Dakota. This grant is a multifaceted approach that is grounded in the science of reading and instructional best practices. The approach features eight strategies:

- Increase time for learning
- Research based literacy curriculum, Pearson's **Opening the World of Learning**
- Print and language rich classrooms
- Research-based instructional practices that support individual learning needs
- Ongoing assessment and progress monitoring
- **Scaffolding Early Literacy**, which is research – based professional development led by Dr. Elena Bodrova and Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning
- Home-school linkages; and a comprehensive preschool to kindergarten transition program

Early Reading First is designed to transform existing early education programs into centers of excellence that provide high quality, early education to young children, especially those from low-income families. The overall purpose of the Early Reading First Program is to prepare young children to enter kindergarten with the necessary language, cognitive and early reading skills to prevent reading difficulties and ensure school success.



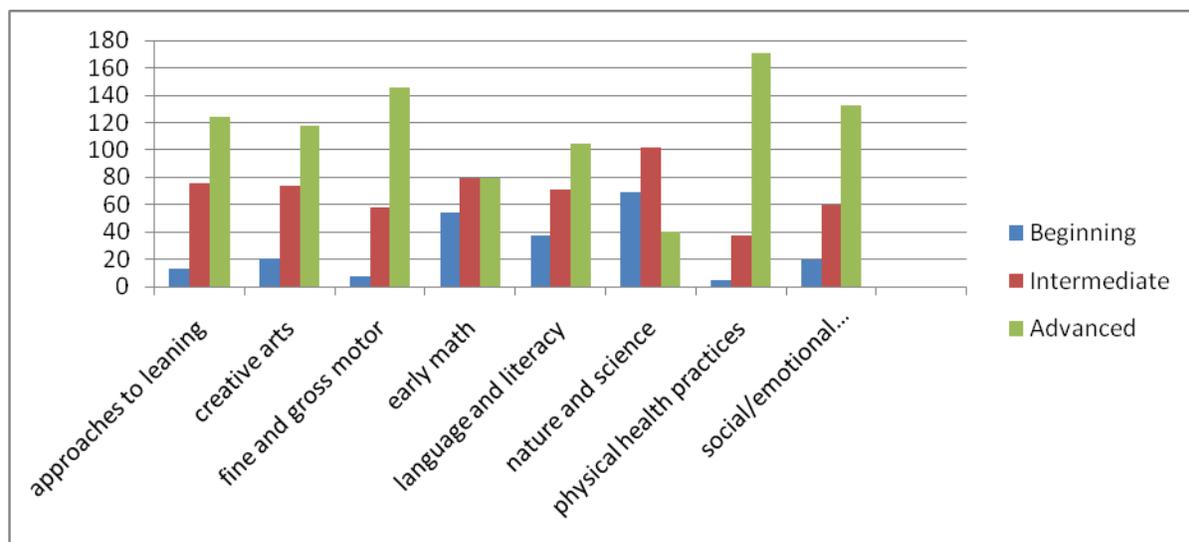
Preschool Child Outcomes 2008-2009

Early Explorers utilizes the Galileo system to track and monitor child educational outcomes to assure program effectiveness. Reports are generated three times yearly (October, January and May). Galileo reports are used throughout the year as a means of improving teaching effectiveness through professional development.

Galileo focuses on the following eight domains:

- **Approaches to Learning**- describe how a child approaches the gathering, organization and use of knowledge. Includes initiative and curiosity, learning about objectives and events, engagement and persistence, goal setting and planning and reasoning and problem solving.
- **Language and Literacy** – a precursor to later reading and language development – focuses on stories, poems, directions, receptive and expressive vocabulary, self-expression, phonological awareness, print awareness, early reading and writing and alphabet knowledge.
- **Nature and Science**- skills that help children make sense of the world around them including learning, observing, gathering data describing, classify living things and making predictions
- **Early Math**- focuses on one to one correspondence, addition, subtraction, geometric shapes, spatial sense and concepts of time. This includes counting, sorting, seriation, concepts, shapes, patterns, measurement, and graphing.
- **Creative Arts**- enhances readiness in the arts including music, movement, dramatic play, dance and visual art.
- **Social/Emotional** – knowledge of self, family and community, diversity, cooperation, resolving conflicts, self-control behaviors, independence in daily activities, initiating and maintaining social relations (understanding and following rules, sharing, making friends and listening to adults).
- **Fine and Gross Motor Development**- gross motor control and balance, coordination, fine motor dexterity and control and hand-eye coordination (pre-writing skills).
- **Physical Health Practices**- includes eating practices, nutrition, hygiene, exercise, dressing, toileting and health and safety practices

The graph represents the gains children made by the end of the program year. In all eight domains, there was significant progression of children to the advanced stages of learning.



FAMILY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The Family Development component focuses on family and community partnerships. Parents are the first educators of their children and partners in determining services and goals that will enhance the family's quality of life. The program recognizes the importance of self-sufficiency and developing a support system within the community to ensure parents have the resources to be successful. This includes connecting parents to resources, goal setting, providing parent education and encouraging parent leadership roles by membership on community boards, voting or serving as their child's advocate after they leave Head Start. Decades of research show that when parents are involved students have higher grades, test scores and graduation rates, better school attendance, increased motivation, better self-esteem, lower rates of suspension, decreased use of drugs and alcohol and fewer instances of violent behaviors.

Early Explorers follows the national standards for parent/family involvement programs by focusing on communication systems, parenting skills, student learning (parent involvement and at home learning), volunteering (parent child activities), school decision making and advocacy (parent committees and Policy Council) and collaborating with communities resources. Parent involvement strengthens children, families, schools and communities.

Families complete a Family Partnership Agreement identifying family goals and opportunities for growth. Parents are also encouraged to set literacy goals for themselves and their children. The program utilizes the Family of Readers Program from Reading is Fundamental with a portion of each monthly parent education opportunity is devoted to literacy. This project provides book distributions to families throughout the year. Parent support/education and goal setting are managed through case management.

Monthly parent meetings are offered providing the opportunity of peer support networks for families. The parent topics at the meetings focus on the educational needs identified by the parent groups. Popular parent meeting topics include child development, language and literacy, child guidance, stress reduction, budgeting, health and wellness, communication, community resources, etc. Parents also receive a monthly newsletter focusing on parenting issues, family emotional wellness and male/ fatherhood involvement.

Early Explorers maintains an environment that welcomes parents to visit the classroom for observations or participate in all classroom activities. Parents are encouraged to participate in activities/educational opportunities to enhance their experience with the program. Some of these activities include monthly parent/child activities, monthly parent committee/education opportunities, parent-teacher conferences, special events (RIF – Reading is Fundamental events, Parent/Child Literacy Night; etc.), male involvement activities and Policy Council Meetings.

Early Explorers works closely with school districts, agencies, business and communities to ensure the needs of young children and families are advocated in community planning and service operations. Early care and education is a critical component in economic development, educational success in the public schools and higher education, housing and human services. Early Explorers strives to work with local partners to maximize resources and community impact. In collaboration with community partners, the program offers car seat safety check clinics, field placement opportunities for student teachers and nurses, trainings to child care providers, sponsorship of community speakers and educational fairs. Staff represents the best interest of young children and families on numerous community boards.



2008-2009 PROGRAM SERVICES DATA

Early Explorers by the Numbers

216	Number of funded slots 0-5
310	Number of children served during the year 0-5
279	Number of families served 0-5
8	Number of pregnant moms served
87%	Average monthly attendance rate
58	Number of staff
59%	Percentage of single parent families in Early Head Start
36%	Percentage of single parent families in Head Start
127	Number of fathers who participated in activities
256	Number of families who participated in parent education
2	Number of homeless families served
3	Number of English as Second Language families
42%	Percentage of families with a high school degree or less
9	Number of Mental Health Referrals
57	Children with a diagnosed disability 0-5
85%	% of parents who complete family partnership agreement goals
324	Number of community volunteers

Services to Children with Disabilities

Children with special needs often require a variety of services to ensure that their individual developmental needs are appropriately addressed. As federally mandated, 10% of the program's enrollment is dedicated to children/families with special needs. Early Head Start collaborates with area services agencies, including two infant development programs, to ensure a full range of services, opportunities and activities both on family visits as well as in inclusive care rooms. Head Start collaborates with four special education units and ten school districts to provide services to preschool children. 22% or 13 infants and toddlers and 19% or 44 preschoolers had diagnosed disabilities and received special education services during the 2008-2009 program year.

Eligibility 2008-2009

Eligibility	Head Start	Early Head Start
Income below 100% of federal poverty line	206	59
Receipt of public assistance such as TANF, SSI	17	7
Status as a foster child upon enrollment	1	2
Over Income	14	4

Transitions to Kindergarten

106 children transitioned from Head Start into Kindergarten in fall 2009. Transitioning to Kindergarten means adapting to different people and surroundings and learning new rules and expectations. The Head Start program meets with local school district personnel during the program year to discuss Head Start curriculum, child outcomes, transition planning and expectations of Kindergarten teachers of students entering the public schools. Head Start works with school administrators and parents to ensure successful transitions. Following signed releases of information, Head Start will transfer records to the school district, assist with Kindergarten registration, facilitate a transition parent meeting, field trip to tour the school including visiting Kindergarten classroom and cafeteria and provide a Kindergarten Readiness Booklet to prepare families. The seven Early Reading First classrooms provide a six-week summer program for children transitioning into Kindergarten.

EARLY EXPLORERS ANNUAL BUDGET

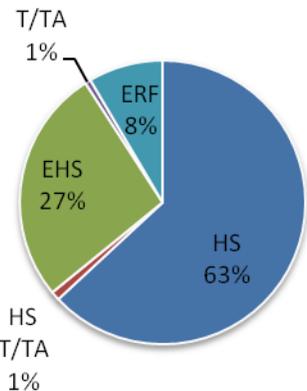
Head Start- Operating Budget		Early Head Start Operating Budget	
Personnel	\$762,872	Personnel	\$342,117
Fringe Benefits	\$247,206	Fringe Benefits	\$101,117
Supplies-		Supplies-	
Office & Other	\$38,250	Office & Other	\$14,982
Child & Family Supplies	\$17,000	Child & Family Supplies	\$7,500
Food Service Supplies	\$5,000	Food Service Supplies	\$750
Contractual-		Contractual-	
Health/Disability	\$14,000	Health & Disability	\$1,500
Other-		Other-	
Rent (7 sites)	\$70,000	Rent	\$31,000
Utilities & Insurance	\$36,750	Utilities & Insurance	\$7225
Repairs & Renovations	\$7,500	Repairs & Renovations	\$2,500
Local Travel	\$22,129	Local Travel	\$10,000
Nutrition Services	\$16,000	Nutrition Services	\$5,000
Parent Services	\$4,500	Parent Services	\$1,000
Accounting & Legal	\$1,500	Accounting & Legal	\$1,500
Other	\$2000	Other	\$2,000
Total	\$1,244,707	Total	\$528,191

2008-2009 FUNDING SOURCES

Source	Budget
HS Operating Grant- DHHS	\$1,244,707
HS Training Grant- DHHS	\$20,240
EHS Operating Grant- DHHS	\$528,191
EHS Training Grant- DHHS	\$12,806
Early Reading First – DPI	\$167,348
Total Funding	1,973,292

Program Fiscal Year- December 1 To November 30

FUNDING



“Studies show that children in early childhood education programs are more likely to score higher in reading and math, more likely to graduate from high school and attend college, more likely to hold a job, and more likely to earn more in that job. For every dollar we invest in these programs, we get nearly \$10 back in reduced welfare rolls, fewer health care costs and less crime.”
President Barack Obama

HEAD START AS A COMMUNITY BUSINESS

\$ 1,104,989 was paid to 58 employees in salary
 \$ 12,473 was spent in fuel and vehicle maintenance
 \$ 33,766 was spent on site supplies and food expenses not covered under food contracts
 \$ 144,975 was paid in facility/rent and utility costs

An independent audit was conducted by Emil Schoenfish, Certified Public Accountant. No reportable conditions were disclosed during the audit of the basic financial statements of the TGU School District. The district was determined to be a low-risk auditee.

WHY SUPPORT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN NORTH DAKOTA?

High quality preschool has both significant educational benefits and lifelong positive impacts for children. Research has found reduced special education placements, improved test scores, and increased rates of high school graduation as well as higher lifetime earnings, decreased criminal activities, and reduced dependence on welfare services in adulthood. Albert Wat, Pre-K Now, 2007