



NEW DIRECTIONS EARLY HEAD START

2023-2024 Annual Report



Message From the Director

As Director of New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS), I am proud to share the accomplishments of our amazing families, dedicated staff, and community partnerships over the past year. This report gives you a picture of the services that were provided and the number of families and children impacted throughout the 2023-2024 program year. This is a snapshot of the highlights, as so much more happened during the year:

Relationships were built and strengthened,
Community collaborations were expanded,
and new program goals established.

As we begin this program year, we will focus on gratitude. The gratitude we have for the children and families, our community and each other. We will continue to remain committed to nurturing the wellness of employees through a variety of financial, physical, and emotional wellbeing opportunities. We believe that attending to the needs of teachers, family service workers, home visitors, etc. results in better-quality services to children and families.

We look forward to another year of celebrating successes with families and staff and remind ourselves of NDEHS Philosophies:

- **Our relationship with children and families is the primary focus for all that happens in our program.**
- **Young Children learn through daily routines.**
- **Infant and Toddler actively pursue their own curricula, thus activities should respond to children's interests, abilities and needs.**
- **Creating and maintaining a quality program is an ongoing journey.**

New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS) is not only an organization, but is a living and breathing entity that is vital to the community. For many families, NDEHS is their lifeline to a better tomorrow. The very important work by the staff and families is not lost on the Board of Directors. The sheer dedication of the staff speaks volumes of all those involved. As the Chair of the Board, each year, I am impressed with the continued work that goes in to supporting each and every family. I could not be more proud of the staff or families in showing how successful NDEHS is and how the strength of this community grows more and more everyday."

– Jessica Markowski-Kelly, NDEHS Board Chair

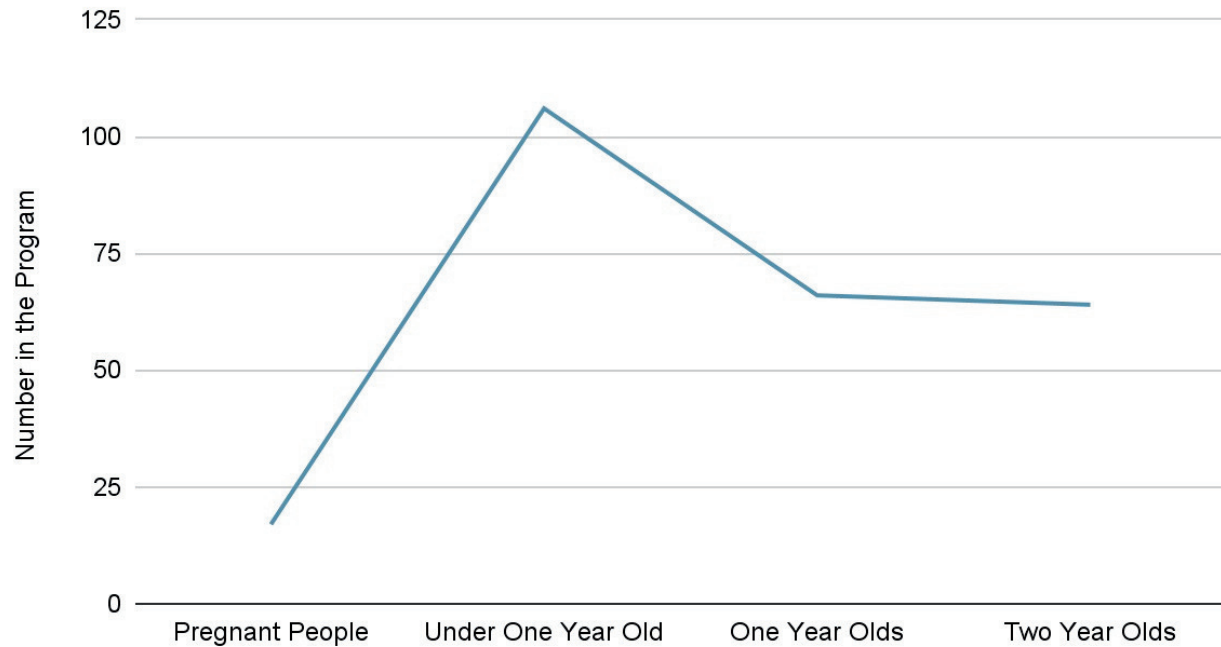


Heidi L. Beck
NDEHS Director

New Directions By Numbers

Program Demographic and Service Information

Program Demographic and Service Information for 2023-2024



198
Total Number of
Families Enrolled

- 70 Families/participants who do not speak/read English as their primary language
- 13 Families over income eligibility
- 83 Families with father participation
- 21 Homeless families served which include 24 children

236
Total Children
Enrolled

- 83.06% Average daily attendance September 2023 – August 2024
- 89.33% Average monthly home visits completed September 2023 – August 2024
- 211 Children up to date on preventative care
- 218 Children as up to date on immunization as possible
- 39 Children with identified disabilities

17
Pregnant Participants
Enrolled

- 100% Of pregnant participants received prenatal care
- 12 received postnatal care; some participants were still pregnant at the end of the program year

2023-2024 Program Year

Family Partnerships and Services

In the 2023-2024 program year, 198 (100%) families engaged in a goal-setting process that led to the development of individualized Family Partnership Agreements. Each family received at least two family service referrals and accessed the services outlined in the Program Information Report (PIR) during the year.

NDEHS is currently supporting 21 families experiencing housing insecurities

100% of our families have had strengths identified and celebrated

80 fathers participated in the goal setting process

21 NDEHS children are receiving Early Intervention Services

164 participants had dental exams

96 families are participating in Financial Literacy Services

96 dual language learners, 25 families receiving English as a second language (ESL) services



2023-2024 Program Year (Cont.)

New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS) is proud to present its 2023-2024 Annual Report, highlighting a year of growth, collaboration, and commitment to serving expecting families and families with children from birth to age three. This year, we reinforced our mission through strong community partnerships and innovative programming that met the evolving needs of our families. Our collaboration with local organizations, including the Food Bank of Delaware, enhanced families' access to critical resources, such as fresh food, diapers, and household essentials, addressing economic barriers and promoting family well-being. The Policy Council, composed of parents and community representatives, played a vital role in guiding program decisions, ensuring that our services align with family and community needs while fostering meaningful parent leadership and advocacy.

A central focus of the year was supporting school readiness and strengthening family partnerships. Through tailored home visits, classroom engagement, and workshops, we equipped families with tools to nurture their children's early learning and development. Our comprehensive approach connected families to resources such as mental health services, job training, and housing support, building a foundation for long-term success. Together with our community collaborators, NDEHS remains committed to empowering families and fostering a bright future for the youngest members of our community.

Community Partnerships

- **Food Bank of Delaware**

New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS) is grateful for its continued partnership with the Food Bank of Delaware, which has been instrumental in promoting healthy living and addressing food security for our families. This collaboration has provided engaging cooking demonstrations that teach families how to prepare nutritious, budget-friendly meals, fostering lifelong healthy eating habits. The Food Bank has also supplied valuable resources, such as recipes and nutritional guides, empowering families to make informed food choices. Their guidance in food distribution has enhanced our ability to deliver fresh, high-quality groceries and essential items directly to those in need. Together, this partnership strengthens our mission to support family well-being and ensure that all children and parents in our program have the tools to thrive.



2023-2024 Program Year (Cont.)

- **UD Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders**

New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS) is honored to partner with the University of Delaware's Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, which has provided expert support to advance the health and development of the children in our program. This year, audiology fellows conducted hearing screenings for infants and toddlers at our ELC-N site, ensuring early detection of potential hearing concerns that could impact language acquisition and developmental milestones. They also offered valuable training and guidance to our Home Visitors, Family Support Specialists, and leadership team, equipping them with the knowledge to better support families in promoting healthy hearing practices. Early screening is essential for identifying and addressing hearing issues during critical developmental years, ensuring that children have the best possible foundation for school readiness.



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
HEALTH SCIENCES

- **DAPI**

New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS) is excited to announce a new partnership with the Delaware Adolescent Program, Inc. (DAPI) to recruit and support teen families. This collaboration seeks to provide comprehensive resources and services to adolescent parents, helping them balance the demands of parenting while pursuing their educational and personal goals. Through this partnership, NDEHS will offer early childhood education and family support services tailored to the unique needs of teen families.



- **AmeriHealth Caritas**

New Directions Early Head Start has partnered with Caritas AmeriHealth to offer infant massage classes at their facility. In addition, we've been referring families to the community wellness classes that Caritas offers. Through this collaboration, we have been able to support our enrolled , helping them improve their bonding with their infants and enhance their overall well-being. We are grateful for this partnership and the opportunity to continue supporting families in our community.



2023-2024 Program Year (Cont.)

Family Engagement

Policy Council

The Policy Council plays a vital role in New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS), serving as a collaborative decision-making body that ensures program policies, procedures, and budgets align with the needs of families and the community. This year, the Policy Council championed an initiative to provide every family with a book cubby, creating a dedicated space for the monthly books distributed through the program. This initiative reflects the shared belief among NDEHS staff and Policy Council members that early literacy is essential for fostering strong parent-child bonds and preparing children for school success. By encouraging families to engage in daily reading and building a home environment rich in literacy resources, the Policy Council has reinforced the program's commitment to nurturing a lifelong love of learning. Their leadership continues to drive innovative efforts that support families and promote optimal outcomes for children.



2023-2024 Program Year (Cont.)

Parent Committee

The Parent Committee is an essential component of New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS), fostering strong parent involvement and ensuring families have a voice in shaping program activities such as cooking demos, visits to the zoo etc. With representatives from each of the five sites. Their input has been instrumental in tailoring workshops, family events, and activities that promote meaningful participation and address site-specific interests. Parent Committee members have also contributed to the interview process for potential staff, participated in surveys to guide decision-making, and helped refine engagement activities to ensure they are relevant and impactful. This active collaboration strengthens the program and ensures that NDEHS continues to empower families and build supportive, community-centered environments for children's growth and development.



2023-2024 Program Year (Cont.)

Center Teacher/Family Support Specialist Home Visits

Center directors and New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS) have gone above and beyond to ensure that teacher and Family Support Specialist home visits are completed effectively. Through collaboration, strategic planning, and flexible scheduling, these visits have become a priority, recognizing their vital role in building strong connections with families. Home visits provide an opportunity to understand each family's unique needs, foster trust, and deliver tailored support that promotes child development and well-being. This extra effort highlights NDEHS's commitment to empowering families and creating a foundation for success at home and in the classroom.



Male Engagement

At New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS), we recognize the critical role fathers and male figures play in a child's development and have made a concerted effort to enhance male engagement across our program. This year, we introduced the "Come Read with Me" initiative, inviting fathers and father figures into classrooms to read to their children and peers. This activity fostered meaningful connections, strengthened parent-child bonds, and underscored the importance of literacy in early learning. While this event was a success, we are actively brainstorming additional ways to engage fathers more intentionally and inclusively. Our goal is to create a welcoming environment that encourages ongoing participation and highlights the unique contributions male figures bring to their children's lives. As we continue to grow in this area, we remain committed to supporting fathers and ensuring they feel valued as vital community members. Currently, we have 80 fathers participating in the goal-setting process in NDEHS.



2023-2024 Program Year (Cont.)

Book Distribution

At New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS), fostering a love for literacy is a cornerstone of our program, and our monthly book distribution reflects this commitment. Each month, every family receives a carefully selected book to add to their home library, ensuring that children have access to high-quality, age-appropriate reading materials. But our efforts go beyond simply providing books—we also design engaging activities tied to the monthly selection, encouraging families to explore the story together through interactive and creative experiences. These activities, whether introduced during a home visit or shared with families in our classrooms, extend the learning beyond the program setting and strengthen family bonds. By empowering parents to take an active role in their child's literacy journey, we help build a foundation for language development, school readiness, and a lifelong love of reading.



2023-2024 Program Year (Cont.)

Staff Wellness

At New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS), staff wellness has become a cornerstone of our program, recognizing that a healthy, supported team is essential to providing the best possible services for our families. The Fun, Unity, Nurturing (F.U.N) Committee has played a pivotal role in advancing this initiative, spearheading a variety of activities and events that prioritize staff well-being and foster a sense of community. From wellness challenges to team-building exercises, the committee has created spaces for staff to connect, recharge, and support one another. Staff wellness is not only embedded in our daily practices but also deeply rooted in the core values of Head Start, reinforcing the importance of self-care and collaboration. We believe that by nurturing our staff, we create a positive ripple effect that extends to the families we serve, promoting well-being and resilience throughout our entire community.



Piñata Class

One of our dedicated home visitors, Rosario, brought her vibrant Mexican heritage to life by leading a piñata-making class for New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS) staff. Her enthusiasm and pride in sharing her culture created a joyful, educational experience that fostered connection and inclusivity. Staff learned about the tradition of piñatas and had the opportunity to engage in a hands-on activity that celebrated creativity and cultural appreciation. Rosario's excitement for her heritage highlights how sharing diverse backgrounds enriches our program and deepens relationships within our community. At NDEHS, we recognize the importance of celebrating staff uniqueness and promoting wellness through opportunities to have fun and connect as a team. By honoring the diverse cultures and traditions of our staff, we create a supportive environment that benefits both employees and the families we serve.



Walktober

This October, New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS) proudly participated in Walktober, the University of Delaware's walking initiative, as part of the team "Miles and Smiles." Focused on promoting wellness and camaraderie, our group embraced the challenge with enthusiasm, logging countless steps throughout the month. Out of 150 participating groups, Miles and Smiles ranked an impressive 52nd, a testament to our team's commitment to staying active and supporting one another. The Walktober experience not only brought smiles to our team but also strengthened our sense of community and well-being, proving that small steps can lead to big achievements.



2023-2024 Program Year (Cont.)

NDEHS Professional Development

The "Bloom and Grow" end-of-year celebration, sponsored by New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS), was held at the beautiful Thousand Acre Farm, offering the perfect setting for a day of reflection, learning, and fun. This event brought together all staff, teachers, and family support specialists to celebrate the year's accomplishments and reconnect with the core values of the Head Start program. The day began with a Head Start 101 session, where we were reminded of the importance of our work and the profound impact we have on the families we serve. Afterward, participants engaged in a variety of hands-on activities such as bouquet making, a succulent bar, and joining in a drum circle, fostering creativity and team bonding. The "Time to Talk" session provided an opportunity for staff to connect, and the day ended with a relaxing apple-picking activity, allowing everyone to enjoy the farm's natural beauty. The "Bloom and Grow" celebration highlighted the importance of wellness, teamwork, and the deep connections that make NDEHS a truly special community.



2023-2024 Our Year in Pictures

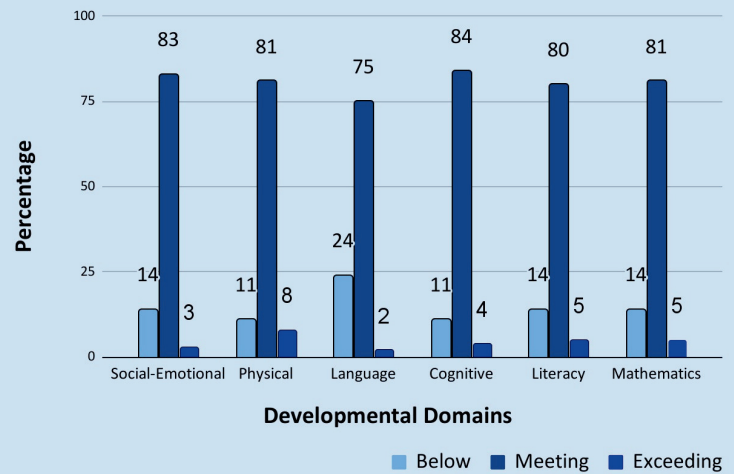


2023-2024 Child Outcomes

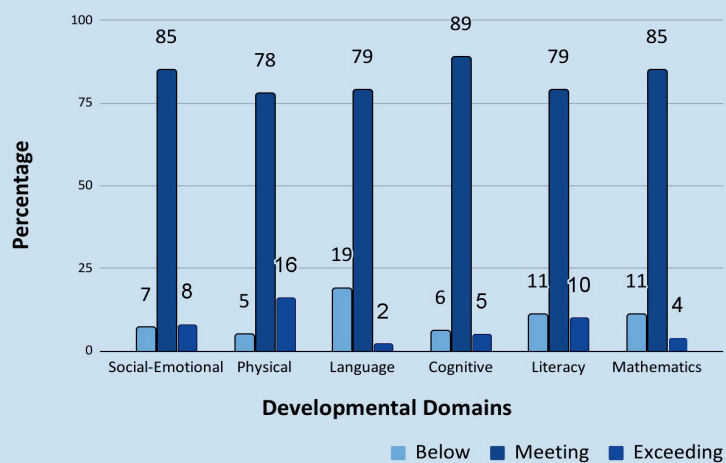
Key Outcomes

During The 2023-2024 program year, NDEHS children demonstrated largely stable outcomes at the program level. Language continues to be the domain where children need the most support. At the individual child level, we responded to this by supporting families in accessing early intervention services for children who qualify. During the spring data collection, 17% of NDEHS children were receiving early intervention services through an IFSP.

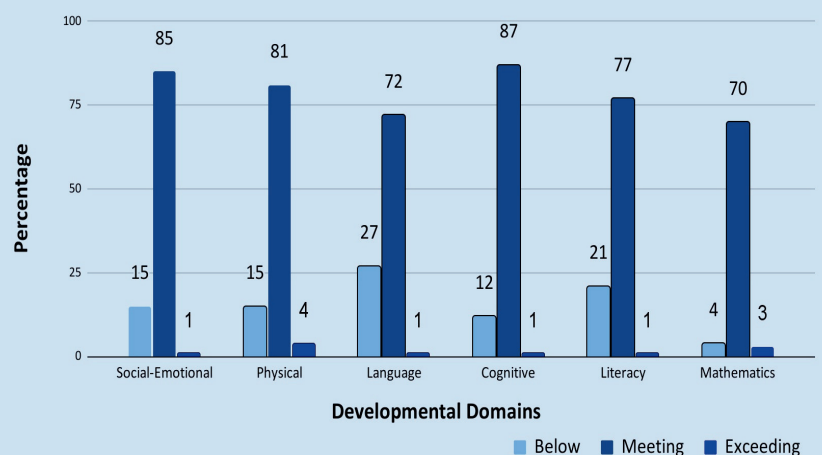
**NDEHS Child Outcomes
Fall 2023/2024**



**NDEHS Child Outcomes
Winter 2023/2024**



**NDEHS Child Outcomes
Spring 2023/2024**



2023-2024 NDEHS Financials

FEDERAL	
Federal Funding from HHS Available	\$3,093,284
Carryover	\$-
Total Federal Funding	\$3,093,284
Expenses	
Total HHS Expenditures	\$2,861,180
Breakdown	
Personnel	\$1,004,013
Fringe Benefits	\$373,760
Travel	\$-
Equipment	\$7,400
Supplies	\$35,019
Contractual	\$1,199,977
Other	\$84,703
Pending Equipment	\$27,400
Indirect Cost	\$128,909
TOTAL	\$2,861,180
In-Kind/Non-Federal Match	\$773,321

UD program audit available: <https://sites.udel.edu/vpfinance/reports/single-audit-reports/>



Planting Hope for Bright Futures

Our NDEHS Director places a blue pinwheel, symbolizing the joyful childhood every child deserves. Together, we create loving, supportive spaces where children thrive.
 💙🌟 #PinwheelsForPrevention #NDEHS

TOTALS 9/1/23-8/31/24

Federal	\$2,861,18
Federal Carryover	\$-
State	\$370,917
Donations	\$2,369
Other	\$3,324
Total Expenditures (from all funding sources)	\$3,237,791



A Special Thank You to Our 2023-2024 Supporters and Partners



- *Henfunder supporters and numerous individual donors*
- *College of Education and Human Development -Dean's*
- *Office and Department of Human Development and*
- *Family Sciences (HDFS) University Wellness College of*
- *Engineering Central Business Office (CECB) Lab Preschool*
- *Prospect Department of Behavioral Health & Nutrition*
- *Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood (DIEEC)*
- *The Nathaniel M. Robinson, Md, Legacy Foundation, Inc.*

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