

Early Learning and Family Services Annual Report

Program Year | 2021-2022



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Department Overview and Mission

Early Learning and Family Services (ELAFS) is a department of the Opportunity Council. Our programs focus on child and family wellbeing, and enhance the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social, and other services to enrolled children and families. We engage parents in their children's learning and help them in making progress toward their own educational, literacy and employment goals.

We work with parents, families, childcare providers and early childhood educators, businesses and community organizations to promote the availability of high-quality early childcare and education programs in Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom counties.

Additionally, we help parents and families find quality childcare environments for their children, and assist childcare providers in supporting every child's learning and development. The following are summaries of the many programs of ELAFS.

Our Mission

The Opportunity Council (OC) helps people improve their lives through education, support, and direct assistance while advocating for just and equitable communities.

In support of the Opportunity Council's mission, the Early Learning and Family Services Department (ELAFS) ensures that all children and families have the knowledge, skills, and support for success in school and all future opportunities.

We are...

- Committed to working with families and communities to increase access to quality early learning experiences and family support.
- Strong believers in families as the best resource for children, and
- Confident that healthy, resilient, well-educated children will be successful in the changing world of the 21st Century and beyond.

Accountability

Monitoring the goals and activities of Early Learning and Family Services (ELAFS) is an ongoing process. Through the use of regular self-assessments, federal, state and local reviews, routine monitoring tools, site visits, and an annual fiscal audit, ELAFS maintains high quality programs and participates in continuous program improvements.

Audit Results

The Opportunity Council is the grantee for all Administration for Children, Youth and Families-Office of Head Start funds, the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and State of Washington financial support for ECEAP, Child Care Aware/Early Achievers, Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (Part C IDEA), and more. Annually, according to the grantee's fiscal year of January to December, the Opportunity Council has a financial audit conducted by independent auditors according to OMB Circular A-133, and 2 CFR Part 200. The financial audit for the grantee's Fiscal Year 2021, which covers half of the Early Learning and Family Services Department's 2021-22 contract year with ACF-OHS and State of Washington Department of Early Learning, was "unmodified" or absent of any findings.

Monitoring Report Results

Quality Child Care – Early Achievers & Core Services

Last program year, Child Care Aware of Washington conducted a "desk review" of the Opportunity Council's Child Care Aware of Northwest Washington program. The Opportunity Council was found to be in full compliance. In the 2021 – 2022 program year, Child Care Aware had a bye and did not receive a monitoring visit. The program's next monitoring visit will take place in 2023.

Early Support for Infants & Toddlers

Every year, Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) submits a compliance report to the state to ensure the program is meeting the requirements set out in the program's contract. Throughout January into March of 2022, ESIT compiled this report and submitted it. ESIT received confirmation of compliance in September of 2022.

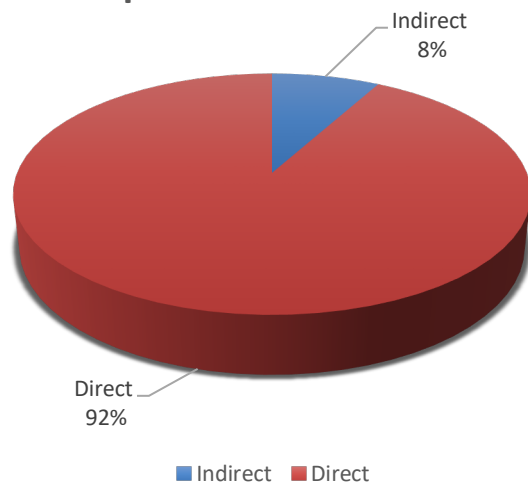
Single Entry Access to Services (SEAS)

In 2021, the Opportunity Council's Single Entry Access to Services program (SEAS) was audited by the Whatcom County Health Department. SEAS was found to be in compliance with its contractual obligations. A couple recommendations for further improvement were given. These recommendations have been a focus as the program continues to grow in the agency.

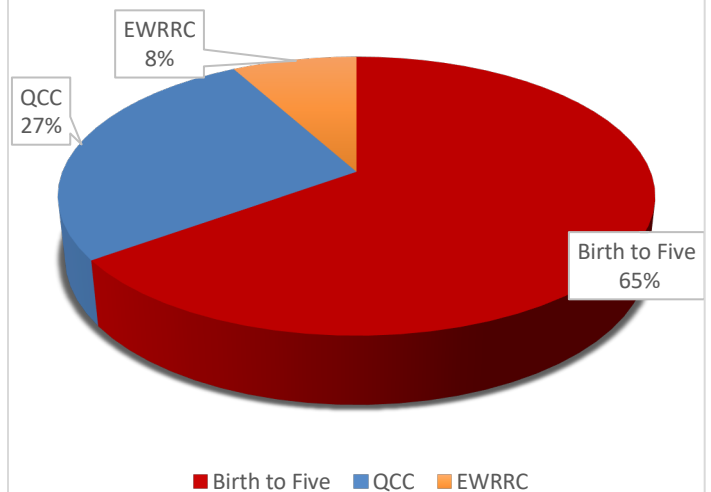
Financials – Revenue and Expenditures

2021-22 Revenue	Amount	2021-22 Expenses	Indirect	Direct
Birth to Five	\$7,923,475.63	Birth to Five	\$760,111.68	\$7,163,363.95
Quality Child Care	\$3,264,280.94	Quality Child Care	\$167,296.82	\$3,096,984.12
EWRRC & Other	\$915,028.33	EWRRC & Other	\$30,281.61	\$283,777.87
Total	\$12,102,784.90	Total	\$957,690.11	\$10,544,125.94

Expenses 2021 - 2022



Total Revenue 2021 - 2022



Division Revenue and Expenditures

Birth to Five Services	Total	Indirect	Direct
Early Head Start	\$600,894.12	\$64,201.15	\$536,692.97
Early Intervention (ESIT)	\$1,881,995.41	\$175,135.94	\$1,706,859.47
ECEAP (Early Childhood Education)	\$2,155,865.16	\$213,806.27	\$1,942,058.89
Head Start	\$2,953,412.30	\$278,503.36	\$2,674,908.94
Head Start Donations	\$31,119.01	\$3,334.18	\$27,784.83
Lynden School District	\$78,120.09	\$3,004.97	\$75,115.12
USDA-Lunch Program	\$93,079.08	\$9,138.31	\$83,940.77
Whatcom County - SEAS	\$126,769.08	\$12,967.50	\$113,801.58
Whatcom County Intervention Services	\$2,221.38	\$20	\$2,201.38
Total	\$7,923,475.63	\$760,111.68	\$7,163,363.95

Quality Child Care and Support Services	Total	Indirect	Direct
CACFP (Nutrition Program)	\$63,161.27	\$5,879.60	\$57,281.67
Child Care Resource and Referral	\$2,377,540.90	\$121,961.45	\$2,255,579.45
Child Care Retention and Expansion	\$595,697.10	\$26,299.23	\$569,397.87
NWWA Mobilization	\$2,939.56	\$15.03	\$2,924.53
Fee for Service	\$16,553.33	\$1,301.99	\$15,251.34
QRIS	\$156,857.17	\$7,269.87	\$149,587.30
United Way - Vouchers	\$17,567.92	\$0.00	\$17,567.92
United Way - WELA	\$33,963.69	\$4,569.65	\$29,394.04
Total	\$3,264,280.94	\$167,296.82	\$3,096,984.12

Other	Total
ABC Dental	\$45,322.60
Early Head Start Non-Federal Share	\$122,728.51
EWRRRC	\$243,300.05
Head Start Non-Federal Share	\$478,240.34
WSDFI Flare	\$11,165.69
WECU X-it	\$14,271.14
Total	\$915,028.33

Birth to Five Services

Program Descriptions and Data

Early Head Start

This federally-funded comprehensive child development program for families of low-income with infants, toddlers, and/or pregnancies enhances children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development; assists pregnant people in accessing comprehensive prenatal and postpartum care; supports parents' efforts to fulfill their parental roles; and helps parents move toward self-sufficiency. It also features individualized planning and case management for children and parents. Services are provided in a home-based model.

Early Head Start 21-22

Cumulative Enrollment:	93
Number of Funded Slots:	50
Average Monthly Enrollment:	100%
Number of Home-Based Slots:	50
Percent of Children w/Health Insurance at End of Enrollment:	93%
Percent of Enrolled Children with continuous accessible health care at End of Enrollment:	88%
Percent of Children with continuous, accessible dental care provided by a dentist:	100%
Percent of Enrolled Children who are Income Eligible:	96%

Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT)

ESIT serves families with children birth to three years old who have special needs and need support to maximize each child's development for up to three years. ESIT provides early diagnosis and intervention services for infants and toddlers with developmental delays in their natural environments, and includes family resource coordination, screening and evaluation to determine eligibility, ongoing assessment, and therapy services.

Early Support for Infants and Toddlers 21-22

Average New Referrals per Month	19
Average New/Initial IFSPs per Month	8
Total New IFSPs	422
Total Children Transitioned to Part B Services in School Districts	38
Total Children Transitioned Typically Developing	58
Total Children Transitioned for any reason	120

Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)

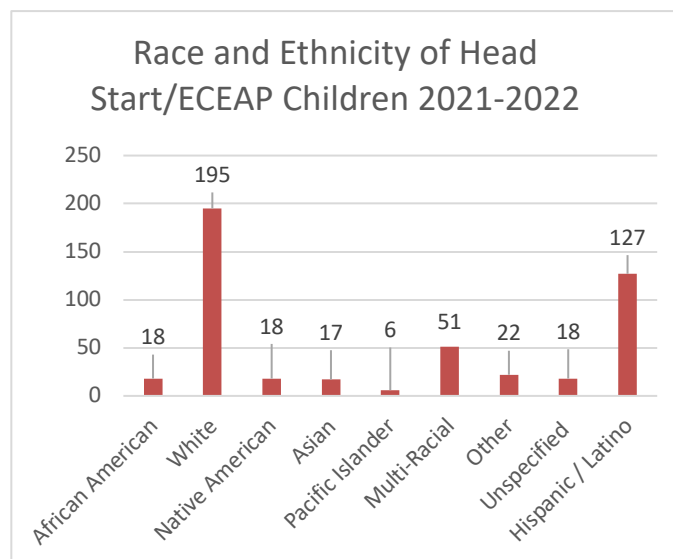
These federally and state-funded comprehensive preschool programs provide free services and support to eligible children and their families. The programs promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other services to enrolled children and families. Our programs work systemically to assure alignment between prenatal to third grade services in our community (P-3 alignment).

Head Start and ECEAP engage parents in their children's learning and help them in making progress toward their educational, literacy and employment goals. Significant emphasis is placed on the involvement of parents in the administration of the program through the parent Policy Council and other means. Included in parent preparation is the readiness to advocate successfully for their child in the K-12 system.

The goal of both programs is to help ensure all Washington children transition well and enter kindergarten ready to succeed. The program, which offers both part-day, full day and extended day options, includes:

- Early learning preschool
- Family support and parent involvement/leadership development
- Child health coordination and nutrition
- Linkages and referral to both other OC and community partners' services

Head Start and ECEAP 21-22	ECEAP	Head Start
Cumulative Enrollment:	155	193
Number of Funded Slots:	174	220
Average Monthly Enrollment:	100%	100%
Number of Center Based Classrooms:	6	10
Meal Count:	17,960	22,858
Percentage of Enrolled Children who are Income Eligible	76%	89%



EcSA (Formerly Project X-It)

This year, our internally-designed financial resiliency program Project X-it was expanded and rebranded as Economic Security for All. In partnership with the Northwest Workforce Council, EcSA now provides support in finding employment, in addition to the program's popular incentivized goal plans, trained volunteer mentors, and dual-generational financial curriculum. Additionally, EcSA is now available community-wide to eligible individuals and families beyond our Head Start and ECEAP program enrollees.

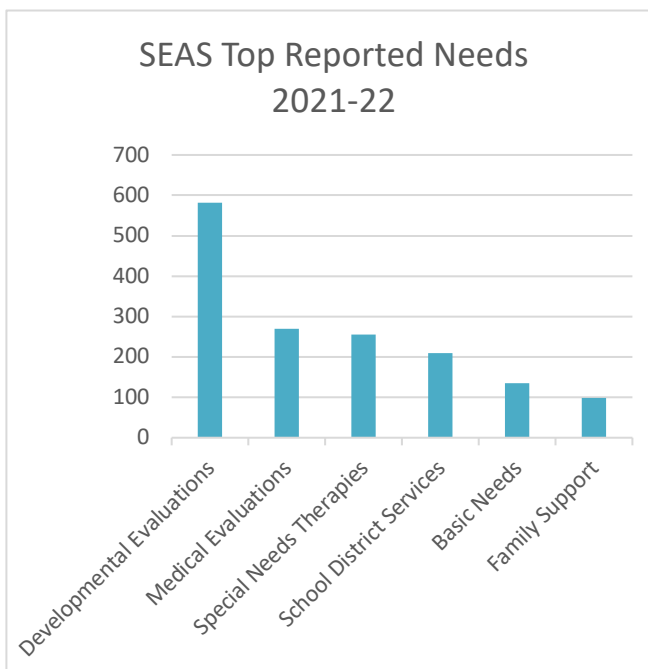
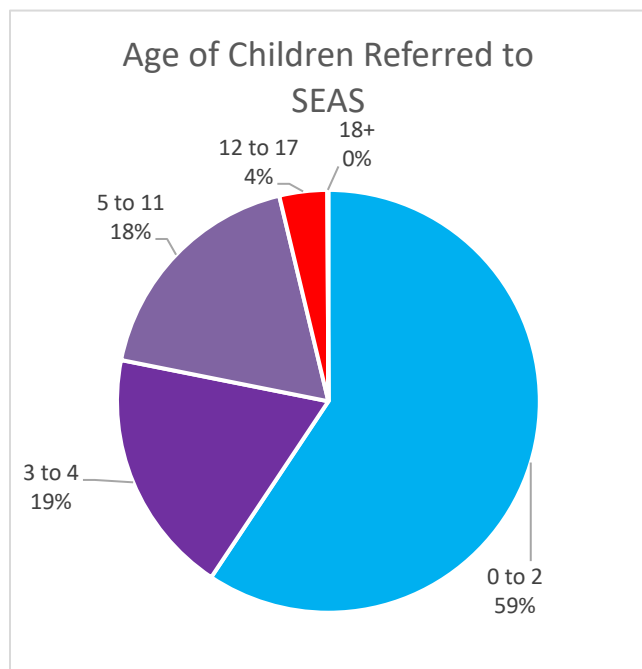
EcSA Cohort 21-22	Started February 2021 - Completed June 2022
Families Completed Program	12
Number of Goals – All participants	35
Amount Earned in Incentives	\$23,550

Single-Entry Access to Services (SEAS)

Housed within Early Learning and Family Services, this program of Whatcom Taking Action provides a centralized intake system for families and medical professionals looking for services for children and youth in Whatcom County with known or suspected special needs.

Single Entry Access to Services 2021-2022

Total Number of Referrals	1,230
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Quality Child Care

Program Descriptions and Data

Child Care Aware of Northwest Washington

Child Care Aware of Northwest Washington is one of six regions across the state that works with families, educators, businesses, and community partners to advance high-quality early learning opportunities in childcare settings. As part of a statewide network of childcare information and referral services, Child Care Aware helps families learn about their child care options and how to locate high-quality child care that works best for their children. Child Care Aware also champions advocacy efforts to benefit children and families, increase the number of licensed child care businesses, expand access to high-quality child care, and improve supports for child care providers and early educators. In addition, Child Care Aware of Northwest Washington provides one-on-one coaching and supports through Early Achievers and professional development opportunities for child care providers in Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, Island, and San Juan Counties.

Early Achievers:

Early Achievers is a framework for improving the quality of early care in Washington. It provides a rating system for child care providers based on observable elements of quality that are optimal for kids. By participating in Early Achievers, early learning professionals show a commitment to improving quality in their programs. Early Achievers Coaches provide consultation, professional development training, and technical assistance to instill excellence in child care programs.

Supporting Child Care Providers

Providers receiving personalized, one-on-one COVID-19 support	154
Providers Enrolled in Early Achievers	435
Total hours providing COVID-19 support	57 Hours

Professional Development Training

Total number of training hours	377
Total number of training participants (duplicated)	1,327

Kaleidoscope Play and Learn Groups (KPL):

Kaleidoscope Play and Learn groups help families prepare their children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life. Child Care Aware of NW Washington supports expansion, advocacy, and data collection from KPL groups in its five-county region, reporting monthly to Child Care Aware of Washington and the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). Child Care Aware of NW Washington is also the primary grantor for the seven Mother Mentors Playscape (KPL groups) throughout Whidbey Island.

QRIS Birth to Three Quality Initiatives

QRIS Birth to Three Quality Initiatives provides coaching and consultation services to infant and toddler programs enrolled in Early Achievers. Coaching builds on strengths, improves caregiver skills, and expands high-quality care for young children and their families. Areas of expertise include infant and early childhood mental health, developmental screening, onsite behavioral and mental health consultation, the Filming Interactions to Nurture Development (FIND) model of intervention, the Infant and Toddlers Environmental Rating Scale (ERS), and Infant and Toddlers Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).

Birth to Three Quality Initiatives

Total of Infant-Toddler programs served by the FIND project	19
Total of Infant-Toddler programs connected with coaching and consultation	58

Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Project

Number of Focus Children	72
Number of providers/teachers who received consultation services	88

Emergency Child Care Voucher Program

When parents cannot access child care, they cannot work. The Emergency Child Care Voucher Program provides temporary financial assistance to help families obtain or maintain high-quality, licensed child care during times of financial need. Child care vouchers prevent income loss for working families with low incomes, and help ensure children continue to receive high-quality child care when they need it most during critical developmental growing periods.

Emergency Child Care Vouchers 2021

Unduplicated families who received assistance	38
Unduplicated children who received assistance	59
Total support given via vouchers	\$59,204.44

Family Child Care Nutrition Program

The Child Care Nutrition program is part of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a USDA federally-funded program to help family home child care providers serve nutritious meals to the children in their care. Child care providers enrolled in the program receive meal reimbursements, onsite coaching / technical assistance monitoring, and nutrition education to promote healthy eating.

Child Care Nutrition Program

Total Reimbursed Meals:	136,698
Average number of Reimbursed Meals Per Month	11,391
Average Number of Children Served Per Month	557

Center for Retention & Expansion of Child Care - Northwest

In 2020, Opportunity Council and the Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce joined forces to open the new Center for Retention & Expansion of Child Care NW (C-RECC NW). C-RECC NW exists to expand the region's market of childcare providers by developing collaborative partnerships between business organizations and local communities across all sectors, while providing current and would-be childcare providers with technical assistance, business and planning help.

East Whatcom Regional Resource Center

Program Description and Data

The East Whatcom Regional Resource Center is a Whatcom County Parks facility, managed by the Opportunity Council and located in Maple Falls. The facility opened in September 2011, and provides space for a preschool program, youth and teen programming, community meetings, neighborhood events, and private events, as well as a variety of information, resources and events throughout the year for residents in Eastern Whatcom County.

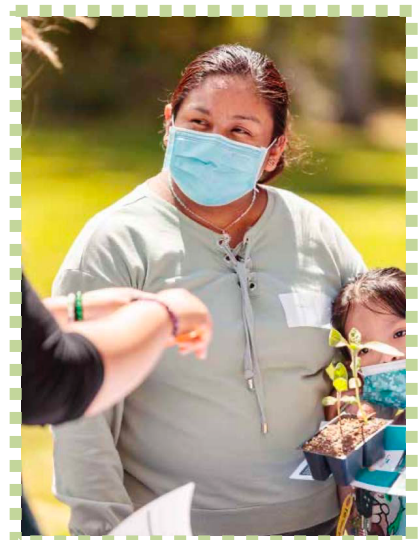
Type of Clientele	Number Served in 2022 Calendar Year
Total Referrals	3,200
Total Visits	1,700
Total New Visitors	644
Total Calls	609

Kids Days of Summer 2021	
Number of youth served (unduplicated)	79
Number of partners involved	22
Number of volunteer hours	83
Meals Cooked	698
Number of teen volunteers	6

Top Five Requested Services in 2022	Number of Service Instances
Healthcare	703
Computer/Fax/Copy/Phone	432
Clothes	365
Community Engagement	256
Donation / Volunteers	195

Community Health Fair

The EWRRC's first Catherine Mahaffey East Whatcom Wellness Fair was held May 21, 2022. The 235 adults and children in attendance received services ranging from medical, dental and even vision care at the event. The fair was a wonderful success and the East Whatcom team is already hard at work preparing for 2023's event.



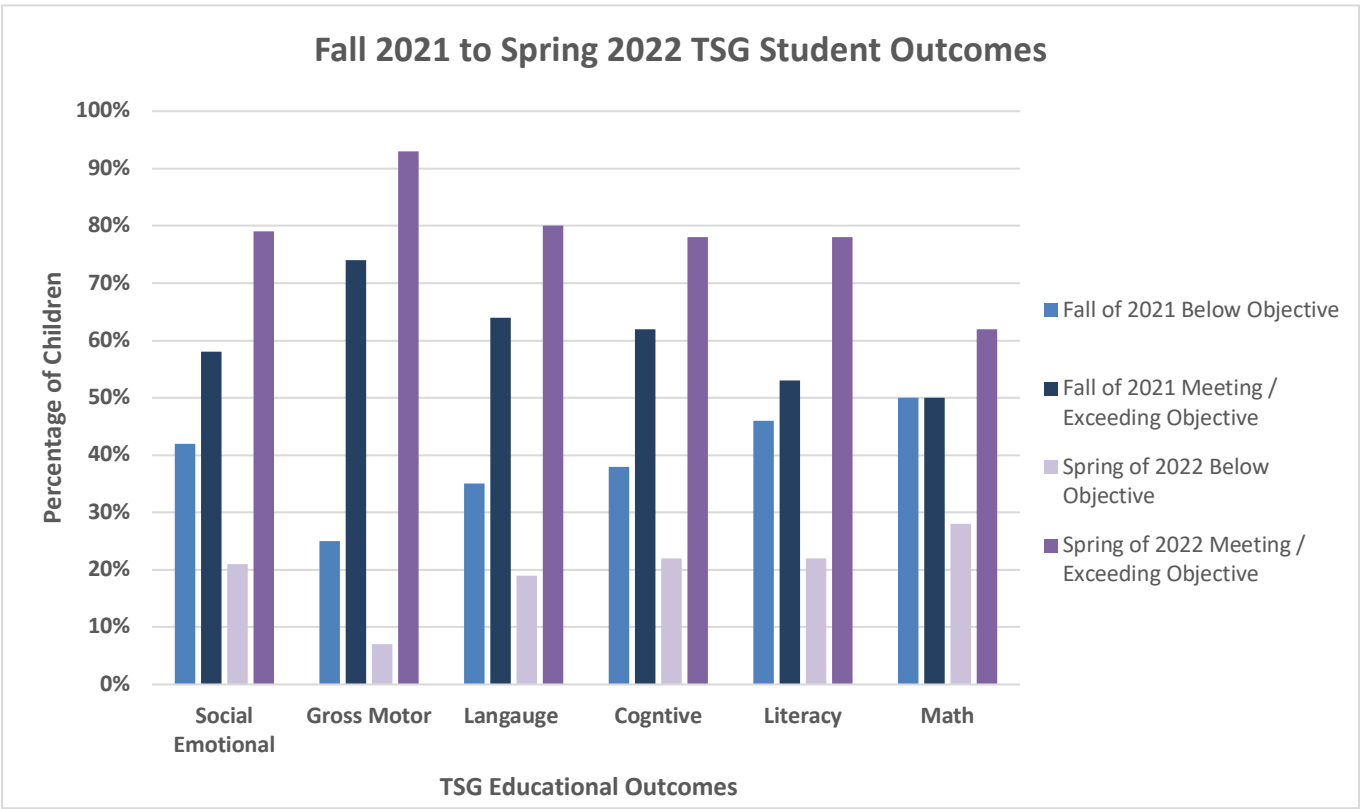
School Readiness Efforts

ELAFS school readiness goals are based on collaborative efforts with local school districts toward Preschool-3rd grade (P3) alignment. The agreed upon goals include all five domains required by the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF).

Head Start and Early Head Start programs are required to measure and report children’s progress based on the HSELOF. The framework was developed to guide programs in curriculum planning and ongoing assessment of children’s progress and development. It includes seven general domains, and numerous domain elements relating to children’s skills, abilities, knowledge, and behaviors. Similarly, Washington’s Early Learning and Development Guidelines (ELDG) have early learning outcomes that direct our work. Our program uses Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG), a valid and reliable research-based assessment, as our measuring tool. TSG has been cross-walked with both Head Start’s ELOF and Washington’s ELDG, meeting all elements of both program requirements.

The 2021-2022 school year’s COVID surges resulted in frequent closures it challenging to collect quality documentation to complete TSG checkpoints. As the year, progressed decisions to maintain classrooms open starting fall 2022 the quality of documentation collected increased, allowing for our program to meeting our checkpoints with reliable and usable documentation.

When comparing the data collected in Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 our program did see an improvement in children’s scores across all the TSG objectives measured.



Policy Council's Teddy Bear Picnic!

Policy Council is the parent/family-led governing body that works in conjunction with staff, community members, and the Opportunity Council Board of Directors to oversee our Head Start, Early Head Start and ECEAP programs for children ages 0-5. Policy Council meets monthly to review program financials, budgets, staffing, attendance, and other program monitoring. Policy Council also annually reviews grant submissions, the ELAFS Community Needs Assessment, and the Head Start/Early Head Start Program Information Report (PIR).

Since the onset of the pandemic, Policy Council and HSAC have been meeting via Zoom; this practice continued in 2021-22. Despite the challenges present in such a meeting model, virtual meetings have significantly lowered attendance barriers for our families and actually increased participation.

In Spring 2022, Policy Council hosted a “Teddy Bear Circus Picnic” for families at Bellingham's Squalicum Creek Park, with games and activities, prizes, face painting, food, and even a juggler!



Funding Sources & Collaborations

In addition to these key funders and collaborators, ELAFS is proud to also benefit from the support of other local private and community foundations, as well as individual donors who support our work.

Child Care Aware



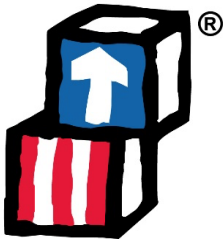
City of Bellingham



Chuckanut Health Foundation



Head Start



Puget Sound Energy



Mount Baker Foundation



North Sound Accountable Communities of Health



Skagit County



Snohomish County



Funding Sources & Collaborations Continued

United Way of Whatcom
County



USDA



Washington State Dept. of
Children, Youth & Families



Washington State Dept. of
Commerce



Whatcom Community
Foundation



Whatcom County



Whatcom Educational
Credit Union



Whatcom Taking Action



Whidbey Community
Foundation

