



HEAD START
EARLY HEAD START

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



Dear LSF Board Members, Policy Council Members,
Community Partners, Staff and Families,

As we reflect on the 2023-2024 LSF Head Start school year, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each member of our LSF family. This includes our dedicated staff, bright children and families, committed childcare partners and supportive community collaborators. Your collective efforts have enabled LSF to serve over 4,900 children and families across Duval, Hillsborough, Palm Beach, Pinellas and now Okaloosa counties.

This past year has been another remarkable chapter for our LSF Head Start programs. While challenges arose, we embraced them as opportunities for growth and innovation. We have learned that it is not the challenges that define us, but how we respond to them. Through it all, we remained steadfast in providing high-quality early childhood education to thousands of children and families. Our commitment to seeking new facilities, forging new partnerships, fostering staff retention and expanding our reach continues to drive us forward.

Each week, we celebrate our LSF Head Start Rock Stars—and I firmly believe that our community partners, Policy Council members, LSF Board, staff and families are all deserving of this title. You are the driving force behind our success. Through your combined efforts, children's futures are being changed for the better every day.

Our Annual Report celebrates the diversity and unique attributes of the communities we serve and highlights key accomplishments, including:

- Academic outcomes for our children
- Family engagement and successes
- Staff education and qualifications
- Health and oral health services for our children
- Financial stability
- Initiatives supporting self-care for our staff and clients

As our CEO Sam Sipes has said, *"Our Head Start program provides the essential education, health care assistance, and family support needed to enhance our communities and foster growth opportunities."* This aligns seamlessly with our mission: to educate, equip, and empower children, families, and staff through partnerships and efficient, data-driven systems to close the achievement gap.

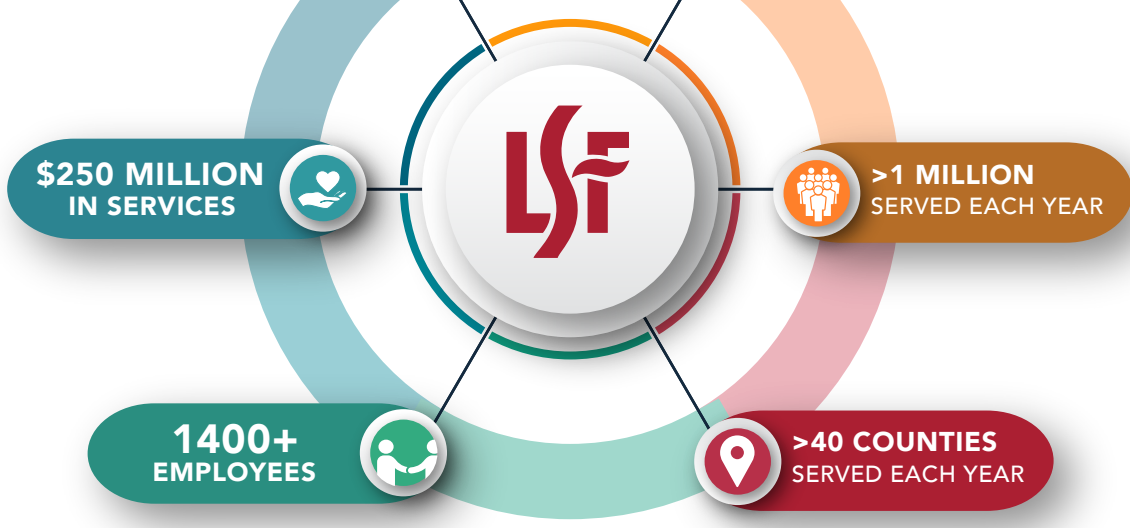
Our vision speaks to our enduring aspiration: to ensure our children are "Ready for School and Prepared for Life." This year's Annual Report will illustrate how we continue to bring this aspiration and vision to life. As you review key figures and data, I hope you also reflect on the numerous lives impacted by these statistics.

Thank you for all that you do for our children and families. Your contributions to LSF Head Start are such a large part of the prosperity we as an organization have experienced in the last year. My thoughts and prayers are with us all as we continue this vital work.



Bob Bialas, EVP Children and Head Start Services

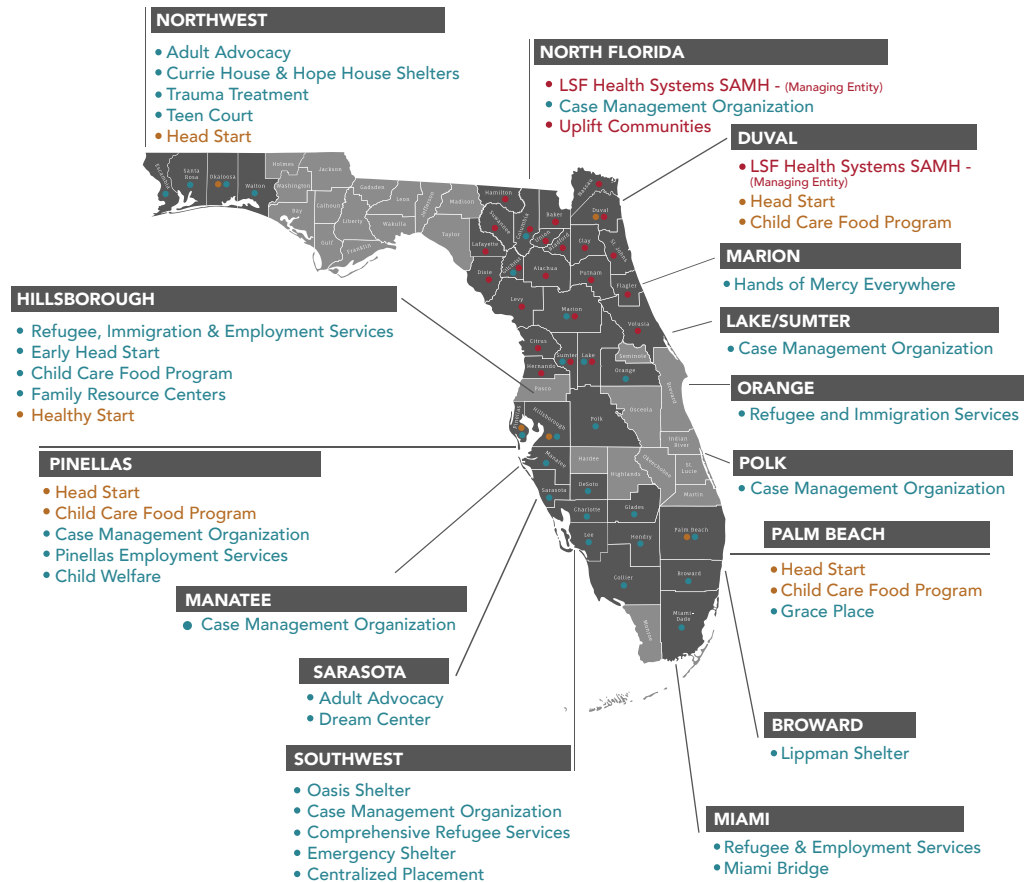




At LSF, we have continued to grow throughout the state of Florida. Our work to better serve the state's most vulnerable populations has expanded and while we have experienced this growth, we continue to operate with excellence as a social services industry leader. During the past few decades, we have partnered with everyone from large corporations to small volunteer church groups—all in the name of working together to providing funding and resources to those in need. It speaks to the collective responsibility to answer the call to care for our neighbors. These partnerships have resulted in our increased ability to serve teens struggling with family relationships, children living in poverty preparing for Kindergarten, children living in abusive and dangerous situations, and those who are battling substance abuse and mental health issues.

Whether its helping refugees find safe housing, providing mental health counseling to teens in crisis, or ensuring quality education for children who are often left behind, LSF exists to connect the most vulnerable people to the life-changing support that they need.

LSF's work began in 1980 as we mobilized in response to the Cuban refugee crisis. Forty years later, we are still answering the call of those in need, having expanded beyond refugee missions into childcare, education, and mental health support. We have seen the impact of taking a holistic approach to community advocacy, and we have developed dozens of programs to provide mercy to those facing serious hardship.





FUNDED
TO SERVE

4,422

CHILDREN
& FAMILIES

OUR PROGRAM
SERVED

4,904

OF OUR FUNDED
ENROLLMENT



Every child deserves the best start she or he can have, no matter their circumstances. That's why LSF has consistently provided the highest quality early childhood education to children who otherwise might have been left behind. The first five years of a child's life are essential in preparing her or him for a healthy, happy and successful future. When children receive the quality early childhood education they deserve, not only do children fare better, but communities do, too.

LSF Head Start/Early Head Start has been in operation since 1982 in the Belle Glade area where we opened the first program, serving 172 preschool children and families at the PEPPi (Preschool Enrichment Program with Parental Involvement). In 2009, LSF became a delegate, where we partner with Board of County Commissioners Hillsborough County to provide Early Head Start (EHS) services to 120 children and families in Hillsborough County. **Currently, we partner with 30 private Family Child Care Home Educators** in the local community to support and deliver education enrichment to our children. In 2013, LSF Children and Head Start Services statewide started the initiative to expand services throughout the state of Florida into Duval, Palm Beach, and Pinellas counties. **Today, LSF is one of the largest Head Start/Early Head Start program in the Southeastern part of the United States.**

LSF is proud to report with the challenges we faced during the school year our program managed to

**MAINTAIN
PARTNERSHIP WITH**
3
DELEGATE AGENCIES

SERVE
4,904 *in* **342** *at* **99**
STUDENTS CLASSROOMS LOCATIONS



LSF's commitment to early childhood education is simple: to enhance the development of very young children between birth and five years of age (the most critical time of growth) and to promote healthy family functioning.

We have been the leading provider of early childhood education throughout Florida, offering comprehensive education, family services, disability assistance, and health and nutritional services to all eligible children and families.

-serving



PINELLAS



PALM BEACH



DUVAL



HILLSBOROUGH

counties

LSF PINELLAS

Pinellas is a coastal county uniquely located on a peninsula on the coast of Central Florida and is home to over eleven (11) beaches. Despite being the second smallest county in the state by land area, Pinellas County has the highest county population density rate in the state, with the City of St. Petersburg, being the fifth most populous city in Florida. As the Head Start/Early Head Start grantee in Pinellas County, Florida, the LSF Pinellas HS/EHS program is currently **funded for 1,257 slots**, serving **1,023 Head Start** and **234 Early Head Start families**. Early Head Start services are also provided to expectant mothers. We provide preschool education.

LSF HILLSBOROUGH

In Hillsborough County, LSF Early Head Start provides the highest quality early childhood education to children who otherwise might be left behind. Through our Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships program, **we are funded and serve 120 Infants and Toddlers through 30 licensed family care home sites**. Our Family Care sites are located throughout Hillsborough County in selected zip codes. Each home provides services for four to six children enrolled from 6 weeks to 36 months in a family-based setting. LSF's commitment to early childhood education is simple: to enhance the development of young children between birth and three years old and to promote healthy family functioning.

LSF PALM BEACH

As the grantee for Palm Beach County, Florida, we provide high-quality Head Start and Early Head Start services for a **funded enrollment of 2,073 children**. We have a diverse population of nearly 1.5 million people living in thriving urban areas in eastern Palm Beach and suburban and rural areas in the rest of the county. To better serve the neediest children and families in Palm Beach County, we have strategically located high quality early learning centers in Belle Glade, Boynton Beach, Lake Worth, Riviera Beach, South Bay, Westgate, and West Palm Beach, where the highest concentrations of need reside. We also serve additional areas with concentrated pockets of poverty, including Jupiter and Boca Raton.

Our full-day Head Start and Early Head Start program provides **2,220 learning hours per child**, significantly exceeding the 1,020-hour Head Start annual requirement and 1,380-hour Early Head Start requirement. We will also continue to offer an **Expectant Parent Program (EPP) for 15 pregnant women** and expectant families until the child is born and then the child is eligible to receive Early Head Start services.

LSF DUVAL

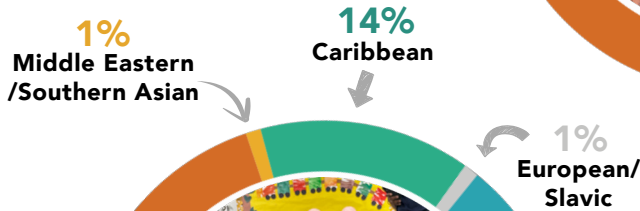
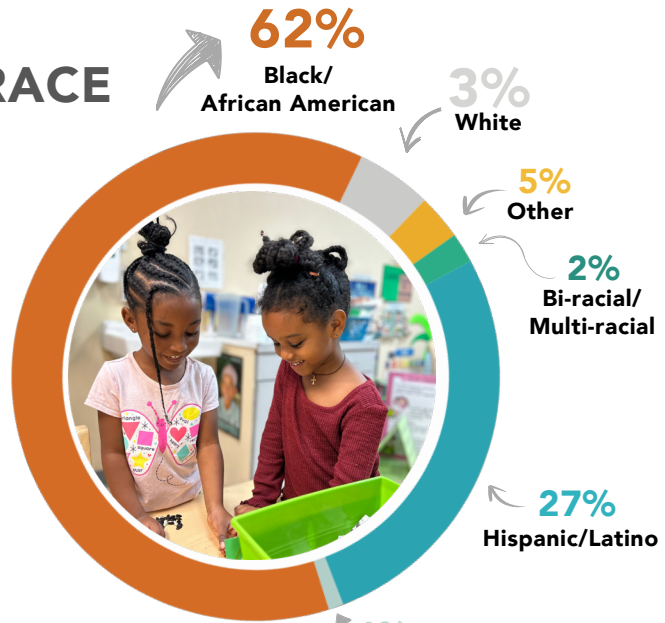
LSF Duval Head Start and Early Head Start CCP Program **serves 972 children** and their families throughout Duval County, including **172 Early Head Start children** and **800 Head Start children**. The program provides center-based option through directly operated centers, school district partnership, child care partnerships and family child care homes. Head Start operates a total of **174 instructional days** or 10 months. Early Head Start operates for **210 instructional days** and is a full year program. We have built strong partnerships with community organizations allowing us to meet the full spectrum of needs and deliver an unparalleled suite of comprehensive services to children and families.



ETHNICITY AND RACE

Our students are diverse in Race, Ethnicity, and Language.

More than 62% of our children are Black/African Americans, with more than 27% Hispanic/Latino.



LANGUAGE

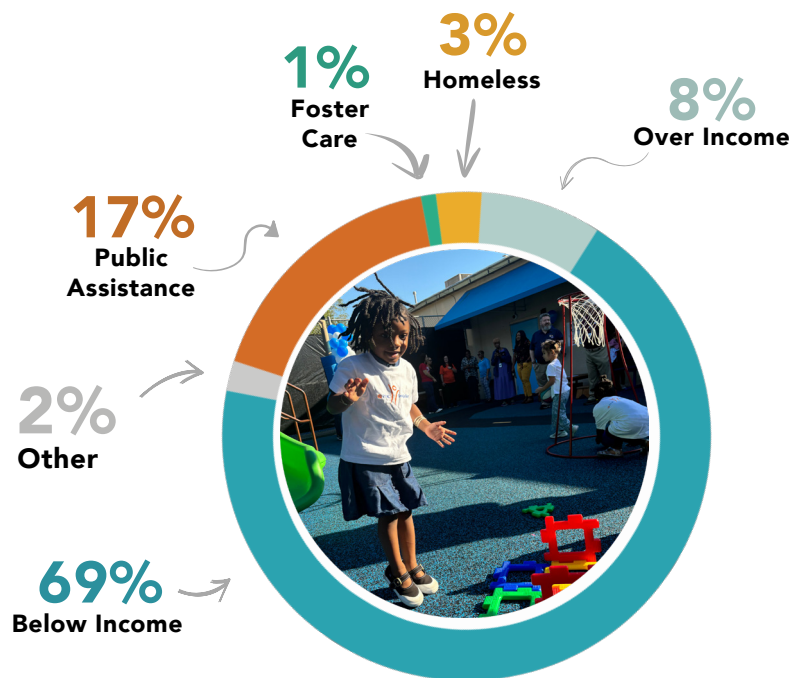
LSF understands to have an effective Head Start program for our children who are dual language learners (DLLs) we need to continue to facilitate their first language while learning english

LSF currently has 2,043 DLLs in our classrooms.

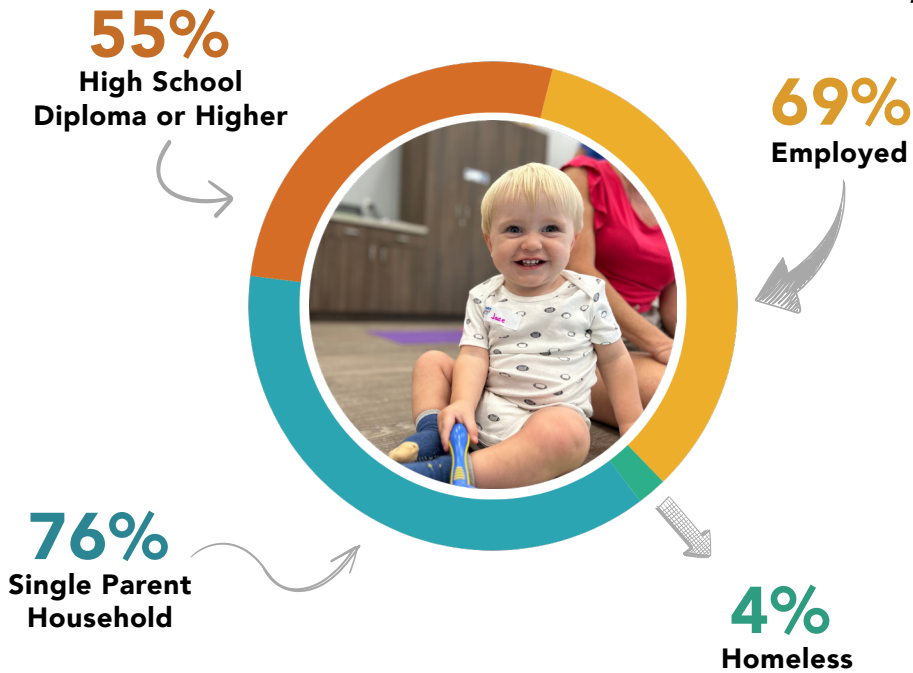


ELIGIBILITY TYPE

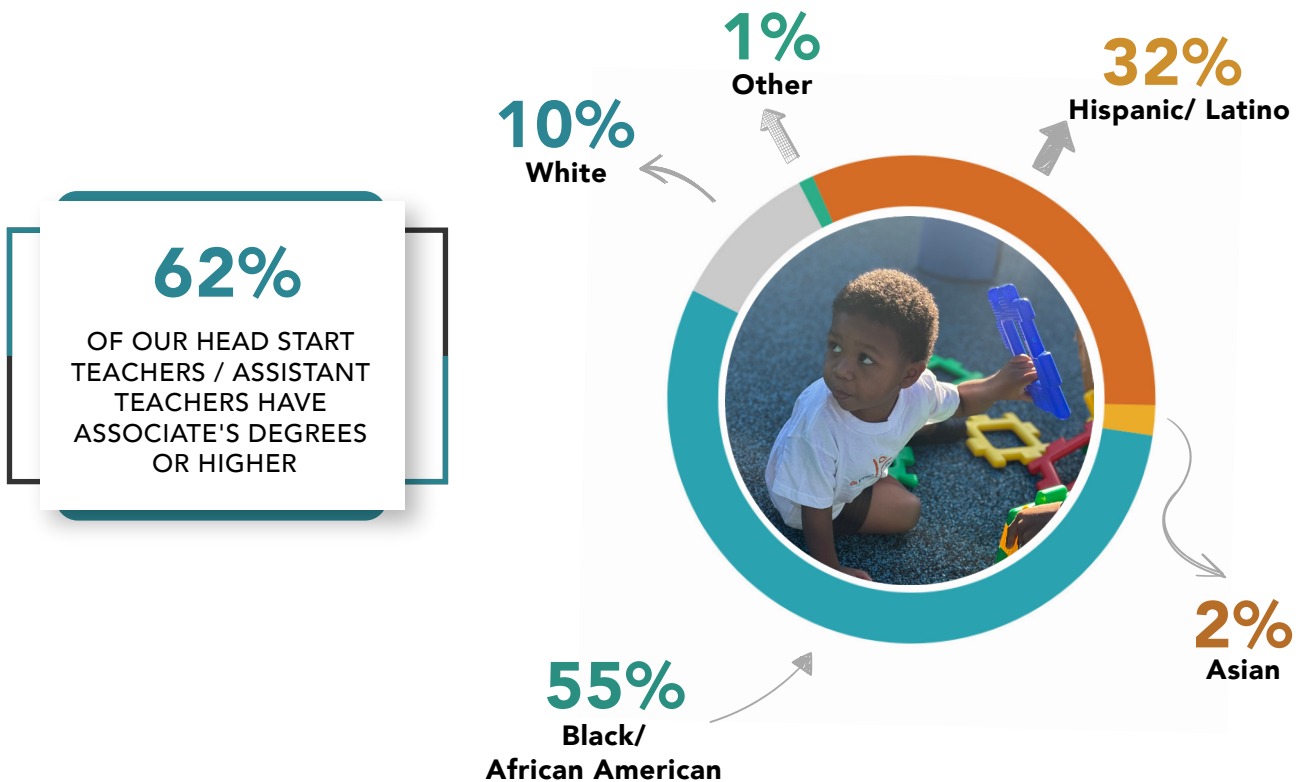
Federal eligibility regulations require that the majority of families we serve fall below the federal poverty guidelines, in order to ensure that all families have access to high quality educational services regardless of their income.



BACKGROUND OF FAMILIES served by LSF



BACKGROUND OF TEACHING STAFF



CHILD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Our health services prioritize prevention, aiming to address each child's health and dental needs comprehensively. We collaborate with local community partners and healthcare providers to bring essential services directly to our centers, removing barriers to access. LSF is committed to supporting families in the following ways:

- Helping families connect with a medical and dental home
- Identifying funding sources for health and dental care
- Partnering with Medicaid and local agencies to assess children's eligibility for medical assistance
- Monitoring and tracking health services
- Providing health promotion and education opportunities for parents, including guidance on child health and development



Because of our focus on child health and well-being, our families experience better health outcomes:

93%

MEDICAL INSURANCE

97%

MEDICAL HOME

98%

IMMUNIZATIONS

96%

DENTAL HOME

COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

LSF provides the following additional services to infants and children enrolled in the program:

- **Developmental Screenings:** We conduct screenings to assess various areas of child development, including sensory, behavioral, motor, language, social, cognitive, perceptual, and emotional skills. These screenings are conducted with sensitivity to each child's cultural background.
- **Disabilities Service Plans:** The plans outline strategies to support the specific needs of children with disabilities, including procedures for screenings, referrals for evaluations, accessibility to facilities, and the provision of special equipment and materials. We are committed to continuously meeting and exceeding the mandated 10% enrollment requirement for children with disabilities.
- **Comprehensive Mental Health Services:** (see next page)
- **Support for Homeless Families:** We served 159 homeless families ensuring they received the resources and support necessary for their children's well-being.



PROVIDED COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES TO MORE THAN

492

CHILDREN WITH INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS OR FAMILY SERVICE PLAN

WE SERVED MORE THAN

159

HOMELESS FAMILIES

MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES STATEWIDE IN HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAMS

At our Head Start and Early Head Start programs, we are committed to fostering a supportive and compassionate environment for families, children, and staff. Grounded in the Head Start Performance Standards, our mental health services are designed to strengthen the emotional and social foundations critical for lifelong success. To achieve this, we have assembled a dedicated team of licensed clinical therapists, behavioral specialists, and external mental health consultants who work collaboratively to build the mental health capacity of our programs and ensure the social and emotional well-being of everyone in our community.

Our approach to mental health and wellness is inherently multidisciplinary. We believe that a comprehensive support system is essential to address the varied needs of children, parents, and staff. Therefore, mental health professionals are available at any time to provide individualized and timely support, ensuring that emotional needs are met promptly and effectively. This accessibility is vital, especially in early childhood development, where responsive intervention and emotional reinforcement can shape positive developmental outcomes.

To deepen our trauma-informed practices, we have integrated the Trust-Based Relational Intervention® (TBRI®) model across all Head Start and Early Head Start Programs statewide. Developed by Dr. Karyn Purvis and the Institute of Child Development at Texas Christian University, TBRI® is a trauma-informed, attachment-based approach that recognizes the complex needs of children who have experienced adversity. This model provides us with a framework to nurture trust and connection with each child, enabling us to create a stable and healing environment that encourages resilience.

Our holistic approach also recognizes the significance of parent well-being in shaping the child's environment. By supporting parents' emotional health, we not only benefit their personal growth but also reinforce their ability to create a nurturing atmosphere at home. Through counseling, group sessions, and community resources, we provide parents with tools to manage stress, set healthy boundaries, and engage positively with their children.

Equipped with licensed mental health professionals, a trauma-sensitive educational framework, and a commitment to collaboration, we continue to build a Head Start community where emotional health and resilience thrive. Together, we are not just supporting children's mental and social well-being; we are building a foundation for lifelong success for families and staff across our programs.



PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Head Start recognizes parents as the most significant influence on their child's development and values their active participation in program planning and decision-making. Parents play a vital role in various aspects of the program and benefit from monthly trainings held during parent meetings. These sessions, alongside other initiatives, ensure parents are actively engaged in their child's educational journey.

To support family involvement, Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Specialists organize additional trainings and activities tailored to the collective interests and needs identified through parent interest questionnaires. Topics include affordable housing and first-time homeownership, family literacy, developmentally appropriate practices and parent appreciation activities. These efforts are further enriched by events that encourage active participation and community building, such as summer picnics, parent/family projects, and specialized trainings to support the mental health of the family unit.

Innovative family engagement strategies further enhance parent involvement. Programs like LOVE (Ladies of Victory and Empowerment) and aMEN (A Man Everybody Needs) provide targeted support for mothers and male role models, respectively. LOVE offers monthly events focused on empowering mothers and mother figures through networking, skill-building, and opportunities for professional growth, including conference participation to enhance résumés. Similarly, aMEN fosters a supportive environment for male figures through dedicated events, dialogue and professional development opportunities.

Parent involvement extends through monthly center-level or program-wide activities, conducted either in-person or virtually, which engage families with meaningful resources and activities. These events strengthen parent-child relationships while connecting families with vital support services. Program-wide collaboration is further supported by the Parent Engagement Plan, developed by committee members to guide family engagement efforts, and the ERSEA/Family Service Advisory Committee, which hosts quarterly meetings with parents, staff and stakeholders. These meetings address community trends and challenges, adapt program selection criteria annually, and ensure family needs are met effectively.

The impact of these efforts is profound, fostering trust and meaningful relationships among families, staff and community partners. Parents are empowered with tools and resources for personal and professional growth, while the program's ability to address community-specific challenges is strengthened through collective input and collaboration.



VOLUNTEERS, PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Volunteers play a crucial role in the success of our programs, offering their time, skills and resources. They come from diverse backgrounds, including churches, fraternities, sororities, partner organizations, students and community agencies. Many volunteers actively serve on our policy council and advisory committees.



Community engagement is another key component of our success. FACE staff attend monthly meetings with local organizations and stakeholders to share updates and resources about Head Start/Early Head Start programs. These meetings promote collaboration and strengthen partnerships within the community. Additionally, staff participate in various monthly community outreach events, assisting families with applications and providing important program information. This outreach ensures that the LSF Head Start program remains accessible and visible within the community.

These community engagement efforts and partnerships are essential in providing families with the resources and support they need to thrive.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



United Way Suncoast



SCHOOL READINESS AND CHILD OUTCOMES



LSF Children and Head Start Services define school readiness in terms of the knowledge and skills children display in five major areas of development: **Approaches to Learning**, **Social Emotional Development**, **Language and Literacy**, **Cognition**, and **Physical Development**. Therefore, our goal each year is to promote school readiness by providing developmentally appropriate learning experiences based on the individual needs of the children in preparation for kindergarten. As part of LSF's school readiness goals, we have set the expectation that at least 80% of the children we serve will be functioning at kindergarten level in each domain before entering kindergarten.



LSF Head Start approaches school readiness by focusing on the knowledge and skills children demonstrate across five key developmental areas: Approaches to Learning, Social-Emotional Development, Language and Literacy, Cognition and Physical Development. Each year, our objective is to foster school readiness by delivering developmentally appropriate learning experiences tailored to the unique needs of each child, preparing them for success in kindergarten. As part of our readiness goals, LSF aims for at least 80% of the children we serve to meet kindergarten-level proficiency in all domains before they begin school.

During the 2022-2023 school year, our Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Belle Glade, Duval, Hillsborough, Palm Beach and Pinellas utilized a range of assessment tools to measure children's progress, including Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) and the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Assessment. Informal methods, such as child portfolios and parent observations, were also used. Teaching Strategies GOLD provided insights into student progress in areas such as social-emotional development, gross and fine motor skills, language, cognition, literacy, and mathematics. These benchmark assessments help establish goals that maximize children's potential for success, ensuring alignment with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and the Florida Standards for children from birth to age five.

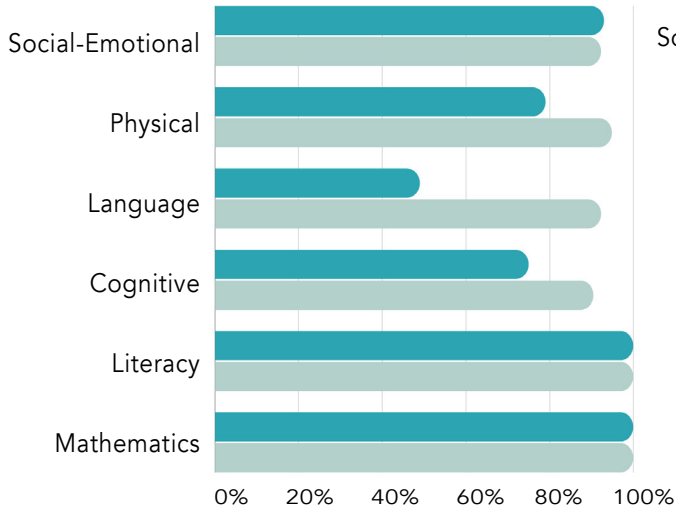
Innovative strategies introduced during the 2022-2023 school year included the integration of Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) practices in the classroom. TBRI is a trauma-informed, attachment-based approach designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. It incorporates Empowering Principles to address physical needs, Connecting Principles to foster attachment, and Correcting Principles to address fear-based behaviors. As part of this initiative, sensory rooms were added at all sites statewide. These spaces support children by helping to regulate emotions, improve focus, release excess energy and reduce aggressive behaviors. Additionally, TBRI strategies extended to staff support, with wellness bags distributed to promote their wellbeing.

KINDERGARTEN READINESS

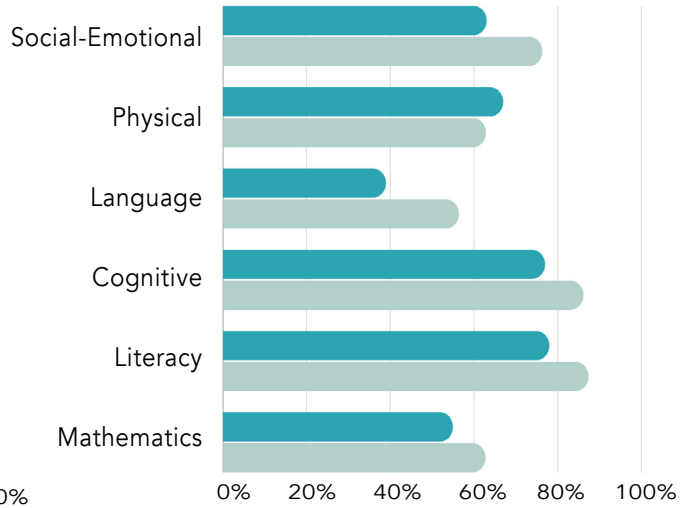
1,114

4 YEAR OLDS

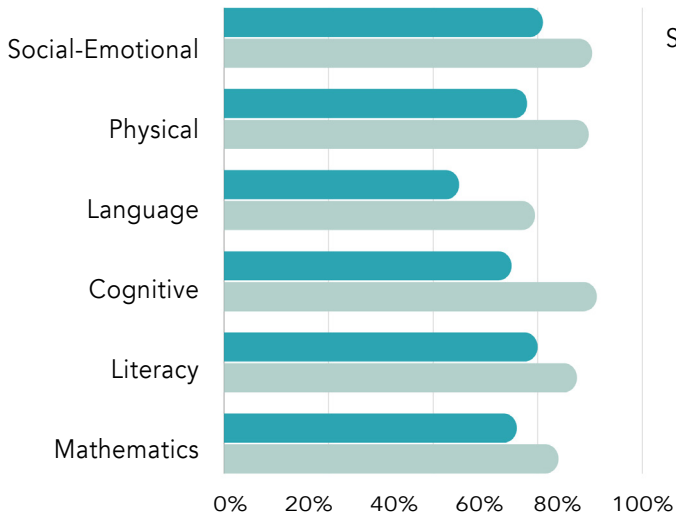
BIRTH - 1 YEAR OLDS



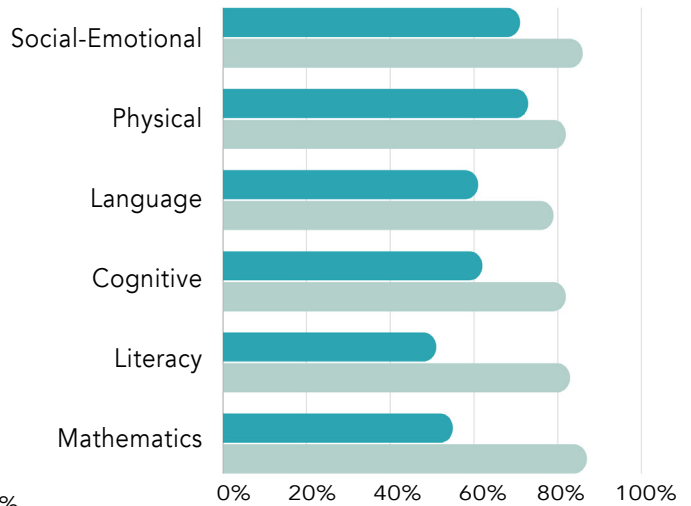
1 - 2 YEAR OLDS



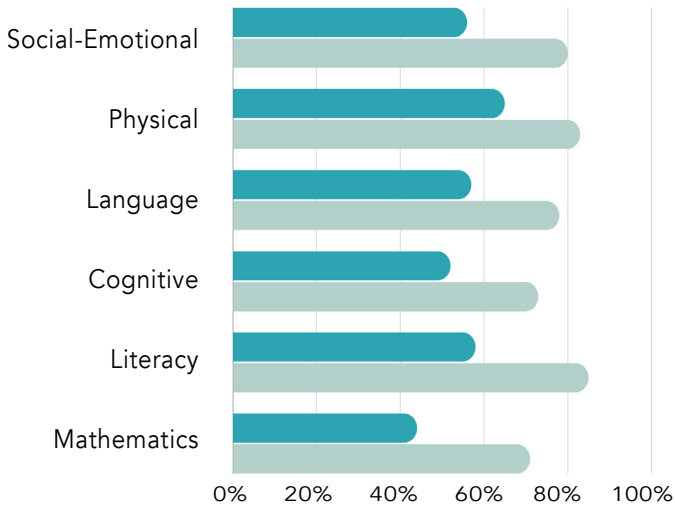
2-3 YEAR OLDS



3 YEAR OLDS



4 YEAR OLDS



■ BEGINNING OF YEAR ■ END OF YEAR

Social Emotional - Children will develop healthy and secure relationships and interactions with adults and peers. Children are able to understand thoughts and feelings, and are able to relate to others.

Physical - Children will possess good overall health and get sufficient rest and exercise. As well as the development of both gross motor skills and fine motor skills

Language - Involves the development of the skills used to communicate with others through languages. It also looks at a child's ability to communicate in a manner that adults are able to understand what is being said.

Cognitive - The cognitive domain of development refers to the ability to mentally process information, to think, reason, and understand what's happening around you.

Literacy - Focuses on the ability to read and write. It also has a focus on phonological awareness, print and alphabet knowledge, as well as comprehension and text structure

Math - Math is about problem-solving and logical thinking. It involves being able to recognize numbers, understanding of how to quantify, measuring, patterning, classifying, and sequencing.

INDEPENDENT AUDIT

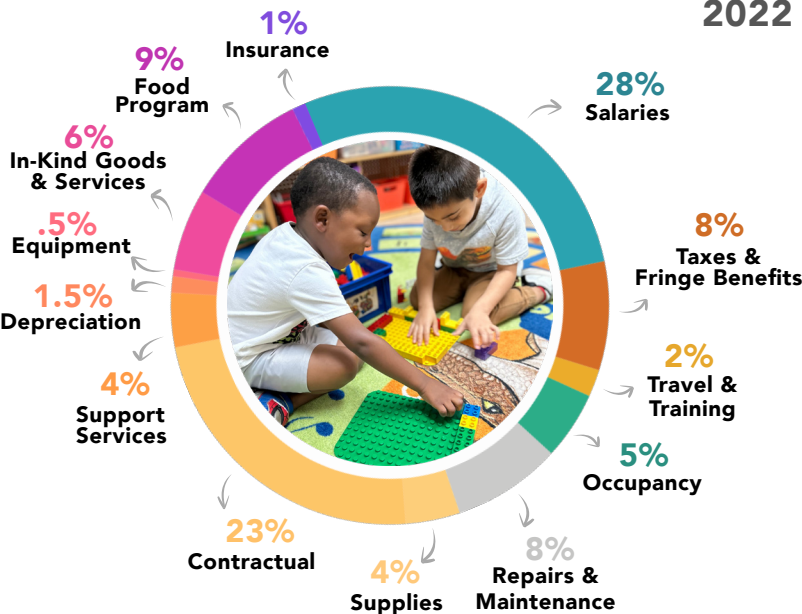
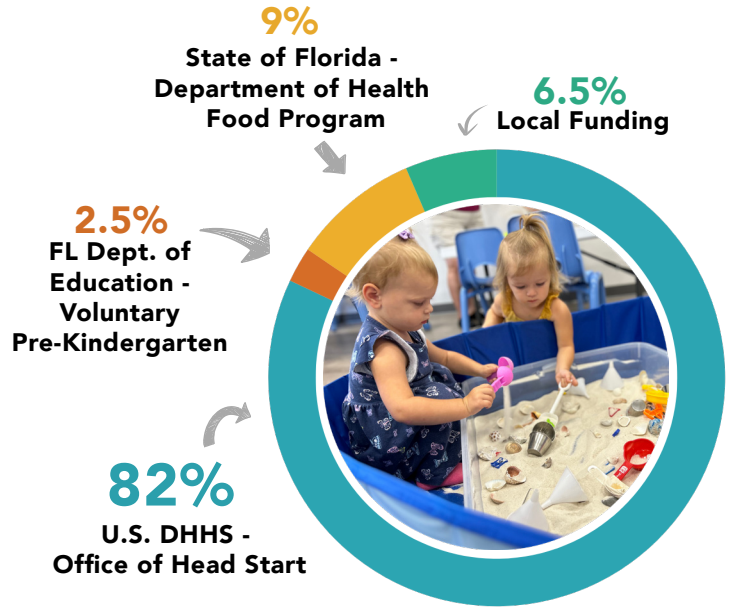
As part of the Head Start grant requirements, each organization receiving Federal funds must have a Financial Audit, conducted by an independent auditor. LSF had their audit conducted for fiscal year ending, **2023**, with the following outcome; et. al., "the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Lutheran Services Florida, Inc. and its subsidiary as of June 30, 2023 and 2022, and the changes in their net assets and their cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America".

2022-2023 OPERATING REVENUE

U.S. DHHS - OFFICE OF HEAD START . . .	\$67,652,734
FL DEPT. OF EDUCATION -	\$1,956,149
VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGARTEN	
STATE OF FLORIDA - DEPARTMENT	\$7,413,990
OF HEALTH FOOD PROGRAM	
LOCAL FUNDING	\$5,217,892

TOTAL OPERATING REVENUES

\$82,240,766



2022 - 2023 OPERATING EXPENSES

SALARIES	\$23,374,510
TAXES & FRINGE BENEFITS	\$6,655,832
TRAVEL & TRAINING	\$1,317,266
OCCUPANCY	\$4,449,656
REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE	\$6,427,999
SUPPLIES	\$3,414,226
CONTRACTUAL	\$19,512,560
SUPPORT SERVICES	\$3,606,936
DEPRECIATION	\$1,017,069
EQUIPMENT	\$439,906
IN-KIND GOODS/SERVICES	\$4,997,488
FOOD PROGRAM	\$7,413,990
INSURANCE	\$725,239
OTHER	\$284,312

TOTAL EXPENDITURES *

\$83,636,990

*Certain expense categories will not match Independent Audit Functional Expenses due to GAAP Audit Reporting requirements.

LSF BOARD MEMBERS

OFFICERS

Susan Scroggins, Chair
Christine Franklin, Vice-Chair
Alonzo Batson, Jr., Secretary
Dan Young, Treasurer

REGULAR MEMBERS

Fred Kraegel
Lorenzo Cobiella
Chris Danford
Jessica Gordon, PhD
Mark Heckler

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Bishop Pedro M. Suarez
Reverend James Rockey

HEAD START ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Alonzo Batson Jr.
Jessica Gordon
April Leopold
LaTanya Wynn Hall
Alison Stanford

POLICY COUNCIL CHAIRS

Roderick Fedd, Duval PC Chair
Felicia Campbell, Palm Beach Chair
Ashley Gibson, Pinellas Chair



MISSION

To educate equip and empower children, families and staff through partnerships and efficient data driven systems to close the achievement gap.

VISION

Ready for School, Prepared for Life.



Lutheran Services Florida Head Start
Statewide Administrative Offices
3627 W. Waters Ave. Tampa, Florida 33614
Phone: 813-875-1408
Fax: 813-530-2802

[LSFHEADSTART.ORG](https://www.lsfheadstart.org)