

# Champlain Valley Head Start Annual Public Report 2022

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## About Us

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Head Start is a federally funded program through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Head Start programs prepare America's most vulnerable young children to succeed in school and in life beyond school. To achieve this, Head Start programs deliver high quality services to children and families with low incomes in core areas of early learning, health, and family well-being while engaging parents as partners every step of the way.

Head Start encompasses Head Start preschool programs, which primarily serve 3- and 4-year-old children, and Early Head Start programs for infants, toddlers, and pregnant people. Head Start services are delivered in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and in six U.S. territories through programs tailored to the local needs of families.

For the 2021-2022 program year, Champlain Valley Head Start (CVHS) was funded to serve 323 eligible children and families in Addison, Chittenden, Franklin and Grand Isle counties. CVHS is a program of Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO). CVOEO is one of five Community Action Agencies in Vermont also operating in Addison, Chittenden, Franklin and Grand Isle. CVOEO's mission is to address fundamental issues of economic, social, racial, and environmental justice and works with people to achieve economic independence.

The mission of CVHS is to provide high-quality early care and education services to help children and families thrive and reach their full potential. CVHS promotes the health, safety and well-being of children, and maintains strong collaborative partnerships to meet the changing needs of children, families, and communities.

CVHS provides early care and education in classrooms, as well as home-visiting programs for pregnant people, and children birth to age 5. The work of CVHS also includes providing comprehensive wraparound services based on families' goals, which are developed by the families. This style of service differentiates Head Start programs from other early care and education services providers. A few of the comprehensive wraparound services that CVHS provides to families include:

- Supporting families to find medical and dental services and providing extra support and troubleshooting with families that have a history of missed appointments or who have other barriers to attending medical or dental visits
- Providing access and opportunities to meet with mental health professionals, a Nurse Consultant, Dietitian, and Tooth Tutors (dental hygienists)
- Facilitating referrals to local housing, food, and employment resources, offering information, and providing ongoing support to families
- Providing individualized services for children with diagnosed disabilities
- Offering opportunities for parent involvement, education, and leadership; and
- Supporting parents to be advocates for themselves and their children



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## Community Needs Assessment Summary

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The Head Start Program Performance Standards require that programs conduct comprehensive community assessments at least once over the five-year grant period. Additionally, programs are required to annually review and update community assessments to reflect any significant changes within their program area. The Community Needs Assessment is used to inform program design decisions, including location of services, community partnerships, program options, and more.

The CVHS/CVOEO service region is home to approximately 40% of Vermont’s total population and just over 20% of its children under 5. CVHS strives to serve the most vulnerable families in these communities. Many families in the CVHS service area struggle to meet their basic needs like housing, food, child care, and/or internet access. This increases stress, which can challenge their ability to effectively care for themselves and their children.

### Children Living in Poverty

The Federal Poverty Guidelines, often referred to as the Federal Poverty Level, or FPL, are a set of income guidelines updated annually by the Department of Health and Human Services that are used to determine eligibility for various income-based programs. Families living at or below 100% of the FPL are automatically eligible for Champlain Valley Head Start’s services. During the 2021-22 program year, 100% FPL was \$27,750 for a family of 4.

Approximately 12% of Vermont’s families with children under the age of 5 are living at or below the Federal Poverty Level. Data shows there is a drastic disparity in levels of economic hardship between couples and single-parent households—with just over 42% of children under 5 experiencing poverty in single-parent female-led households<sup>1</sup>.

In the CVHS service region, there are approximately 12,060 children under age 5, of which 1,159 are estimated to be living at or below the Federal Poverty Level (100% FPL)<sup>2</sup>. Recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that the total number of children ages 0 – 5 living at or below FPL in the CVHS service area is as follows:

County	Number of Children ages 0-5 at or below 100% FPL within CVHS Service Region <sup>3</sup>
Addison	110
Chittenden	705
Franklin	330
Grand Isle	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,159</b>



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### **Children in Foster Care or Experiencing Homelessness**

Children in foster care and families experiencing homelessness are automatically eligible for Head Start services. Vermont continues to see lasting effects from the COVID-19 pandemic on the level of reports the Department of Children and Family Services are receiving. The Child Protection Line received 18,507<sup>4</sup> calls in 2021, an increase of almost 3,000 more than 2020, but still below pre-pandemic numbers. The estimated number of children in foster care served by CVHS declined during the pandemic, which mirrored a statewide decrease in the number of children under 5 in protective custody. We can likely contribute the lower number of reported phone calls and children under protective custody to the decreased access that mandated reporters had to children during the pandemic. During the 2021-2022 program year CVHS served an estimated 9 children in foster care.

The total number of Vermonters experiencing homelessness is on the rise, as is the number of families experiencing homelessness. The 2022 point-in-time homelessness survey data shows a 130% increase in the number of households with children experiencing homelessness when compared with pre-pandemic levels.<sup>5</sup> The Vermont Agency of Education identified 24 students under the age of 6 within CVHS' service region who met the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness during the 2021 school year. CVHS has seen an almost 95% increase in the estimated number of children served who were experiencing homelessness from PY2020-21 to PY2021-22—a trend that will likely continue as the housing market struggles to keep up with demand. While Vermont has a number of emergency and permanent programs in place to assist families and individuals who are experiencing homelessness, with a rental vacancy rate of 3.8% statewide, and rates ranging between 1.6% and 5.8% in the counties CVHS serves, children and families are facing a housing crisis—the 3<sup>rd</sup> worst in the nation.<sup>6</sup>

### **Diversity**

Due to the geographic footprint of Champlain Valley Head Start's service area, the children and families we serve have a diverse range of needs and experiences. While Addison, Franklin, and Grand Isle counties are very rural, and primarily white, there is a significant population of immigrants and refugees in Chittenden County. This community, often referred to as New Americans, encompasses a large percentage of our enrolled children and families in Chittenden County. As a whole, state-level census data tells us that the majority of Vermonters identify as white. Historically, CVHS has served a population of children and families more diverse than the state's population as a whole. During the 2021-22 program year, just over 50% of CVHS families identified as non-white (as compared with 13.2% statewide<sup>7</sup>).

### **Universal Pre-Kindergarten & Child Care Availability**

Levels of Universal Pre-Kindergarten enrollment dropped during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the Vermont Agency of Education reporting an estimated 2,719 children enrolled during 2021<sup>8</sup>—down by almost 800 children from pre-pandemic levels. While we are beginning to see a rebound in the number of children enrolled in UPK, we have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. The availability of high-quality child care is not meeting the demand. As of 2022, of those likely to need care (defined by *Let's Grow Kids* as having all available parents within a household in the labor force), 76% of infants, 54% of toddlers, and 52% of preschoolers do not have access to regulated programs that are deemed high quality (4- or 5-star ratings).<sup>9</sup>



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## Number of Children & Families Served

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*The total number of children and families served, the average monthly enrollment (as a percentage of funded enrollment), and the percentage of eligible children served*

### Total Number of Children & Families Served

For the 2021-2022 program year, CVHS served 319 program participants throughout northwest Vermont, including pregnant people, children ages birth through 5, and their families. CVHS served 144 Early Head Start participants, and 175 Head Start participants.

### Average Monthly Enrollment

Head Start (HS)	81.8%
Early Head Start (EHS)	73.5%

*It should be noted that lower enrollment percentages can be attributed to program options not running at capacity, or at all, due to lack of staffing. Additionally, extensive work was done to build enrollment for newly expanded home visiting programming.*

### Percentage of Eligible Children Served

Approximately 92.6% of Head Start participants served were from income-eligible families, and approximately 93.1% of Early Head Start participants served were from income-eligible families.

## Medical & Dental Exams

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*The percentage of enrolled children that received medical and dental exams*

For children enrolled during the 2021-2022 program year, approximately 90% of preschool children received physical exams, and 82% of children birth to 3 were up to date on age-appropriate well child care at the end of enrollment. Approximately 65% of preschool children received dental exams, and 64% of children birth to 3 were up to date on dental care according to Vermont's EPSDT schedule. We continue to see the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in barriers to dental care in the form of long wait times to get into dental homes, and missed/difficult to reschedule appointments due to symptoms of illness that exclude children from being seen by providers.



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## Parent Involvement Activities

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Parent involvement in CVHS occurs most commonly through home visits or as parents spend time in Head Start classrooms.

Parents may also be involved in activities such as: Group socializations; Local Parent Committee Meetings; Parent-Teacher conferences; Open House or classroom orientation sessions; Parent Education sessions; CVHS Health Services Advisory Committee and other program committees; Policy Council meetings; IEP meetings; Volunteering as classroom helpers, attending field trips, participating in home activities, and assisting in administrative offices; CVHS interview teams to hire new staff; the CVHS Self-Assessment and Community Assessment processes; attending events such as VT Early Childhood Day at the Legislature and meetings of the VT Head Start Association; and attending conferences such as the New England Head Start Association Conference.

Within the confines of its budget, Champlain Valley Head Start provides interpreters for families that do not speak English so that they can be involved in the program and attend various activities.

## Efforts to Support School Readiness

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*The agency's efforts to prepare children for kindergarten*

CVHS supports children in preparing for school readiness and lifelong success. The CVHS classroom-based curriculum, *The Creative Curriculum*, is based on five fundamental principles that help to guide CVHS practice in providing services to children and families enrolled in our classroom-based options:

- Positive interactions and relationships with adults provide a critical foundation for successful learning
- Social-emotional competence is a significant factor in school success
- Constructive, purposeful play supports essential learning
- The physical environment affects the type and quality of learning interactions
- Teacher-family partnerships promote development and learning

The CVHS home-visiting curriculum, *Growing Great Kids*, is an evidence-based curriculum that aligns with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. The research-based principles of Strengthening Families and The Protective Factors Framework were foundational in the development of the Growing Great Kids, or GGK curriculum. Protective factors are characteristics or strengths of individuals, families, communities or societies that act to mitigate risks and promote positive well-being and healthy development. The five key protective factors include<sup>10</sup>:

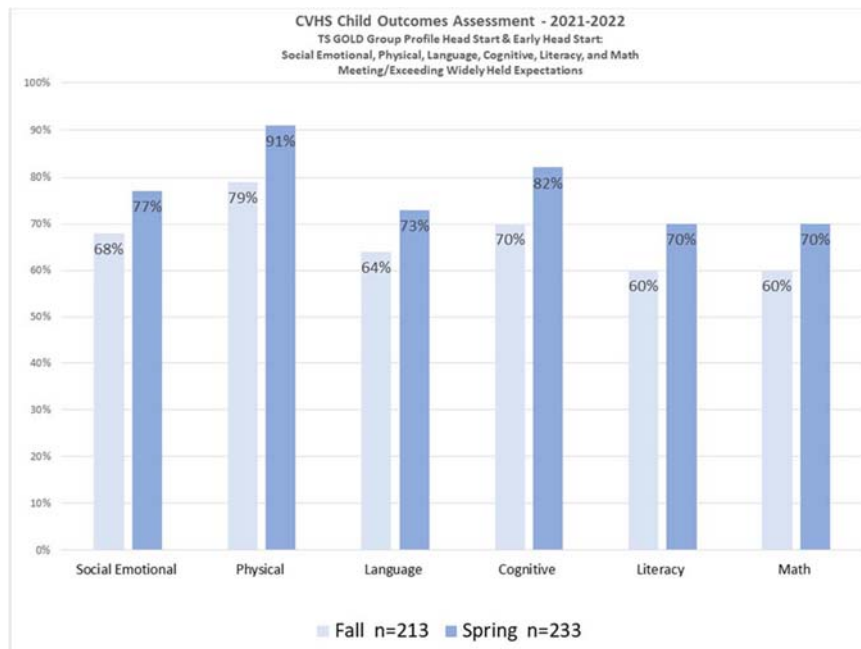
- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development
- Concrete Support in Times of Need
- Social and Emotional Competence of Children



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CVHS staff plan curriculum to include goals in the areas of social emotional development, approaches to learning, literacy, language development, math, science, logic and reasoning, social studies, creative arts, and physical health and development. These areas of development and learning guide staff in the provision of materials and activities offered to prepare children for kindergarten. Experiences are provided to meet each child's individual needs and stimulate learning, with strong emphasis on language/cognitive skills, early literacy skills, and the development of positive social skills. Health educational activities include daily tooth brushing and monthly nutrition activities. Staff utilize an individualized observation and planning process for each child/family. Staff assess, with the parent, the child's developmental strengths and needs. Information is obtained through informal interviews with the parent, observations of the child, developmental screenings, and the Teaching Strategies Gold, or TS GOLD, online assessment. This information is then used to individualize services for children and families.

The CVHS Education Coordinator analyzes data to generate individual and program-wide TS GOLD reports three times per program year (four for EHS). Child outcomes data is shared with all staff, families, Policy Council, collaborative partners and CVOEO Board outlining strengths and areas for improvement. Teachers and home visitors use individual and group profile reports to plan curriculum which offers materials, activities and experiences for learning through play in all areas. Staff and families review child specific reports to share each child's strengths and set goals together. Group profile reports are generated to help guide curriculum for specific groups, and identify areas of support/supervision. TS GOLD is used to track and measure school readiness goals. After the culmination of each program year, a summary of trends in all component areas assists staff in determining progress towards overall school readiness goals. This information is used to help gather resources for staff and families, plan trainings, purchase materials, and guide future school readiness goals.



CVHS assists parents in monitoring their child's developmental growth and supports parents in accessing additional resources for their children, as needed. CVHS staff collaborates with Special Education and Early Intervention providers, and children's services are often provided in our classrooms. CVHS staff, parents and collaborating agencies plan activities to support children's transition to kindergarten. Such opportunities may include Head Start children and families attending school functions or libraries, going on classroom visits, meeting with kindergarten teachers, principals and special educators, attending school-sponsored "transition fairs," utilizing school facilities, and accessing school meal programs.



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## Funding

The total amount of public and private funds received and the amount from each source

For the period starting 11/01/2021 to 10/31/2022 CVHS received funding as follows:

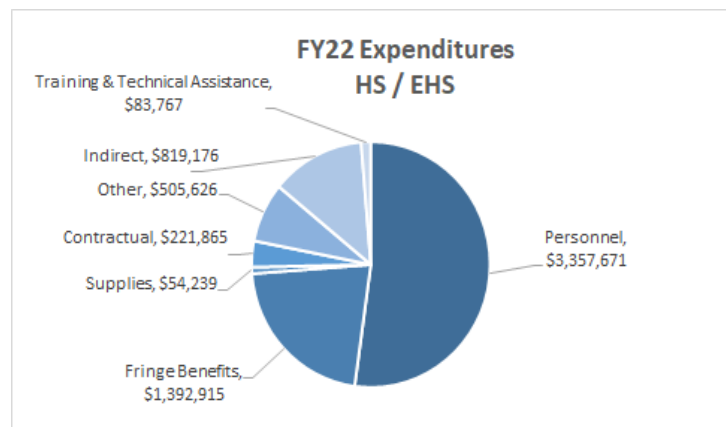
Funding Source	Amount
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	\$6,435,259
ARPA- HS/EHS	\$224,185
Delta Dental Foundation	\$20,342
USDA	\$89,003
Vermont State Funds	\$228,965
CRRSA Childcare	\$95,446
Building Bright Futures	\$3,800
Miscellaneous Donations	\$1,094

## Expenses

An explanation of budgetary expenditures and proposed budget for the fiscal year

Budgetary Expenditures November 1, 2021 - October 31, 2022

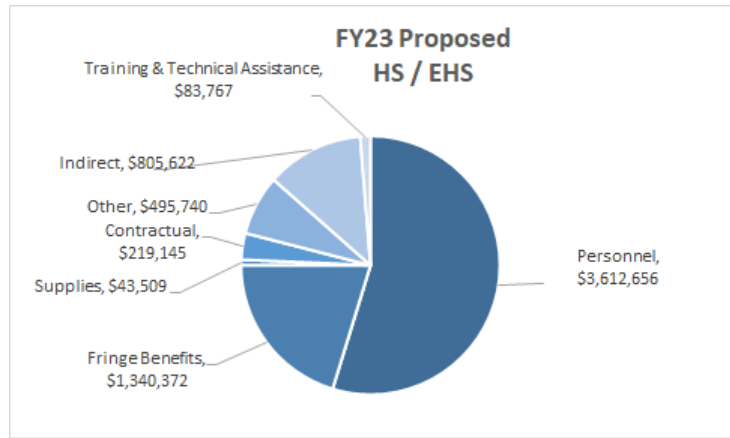
FY22 HS / EHS Expenditures	
Personnel	\$ 3,357,671
Fringe Benefits	\$1,392,915
Supplies	\$54,239
Contractual	\$221,865
Other	\$505,626
Indirect	\$819,176
Training & Technical Assistance	\$83,767
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,435,259</b>





**Proposed Budgets: HS/EHS FY23 (11/01/2022 – 10/31/2023)**

FY23 HS / EHS Proposed	
Personnel	\$3,612,656
Fringe Benefits	\$1,340,372
Supplies	\$43,509
Contractual	\$219,145
Other	\$495,740
Indirect	\$805,622
Training & Technical Assistance	\$83,767
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,600,811</b>



## Results of Recent Audit & Reviews

*The results of the most recent review by the Secretary and the financial audit*

### Financial Audit

CVOEO’s most recent audit looked at CVOEO for the period of October 1, 2021 through September 30 2022, which is CVOEO’s fiscal year. The audit was for the whole of CVOEO which includes CVHS, Weatherization, Financial Futures, Voices Against Violence, and all of CVOEO’s other programs combined.

The audit was completed on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and was presented to the CVOEO Board of Directors on February 28<sup>th</sup>. The auditors gave CVOEO an “unmodified opinion” which is the highest grade that the auditors can assign.

### Focus Area Two Monitoring Review

CVOEO/Champlain Valley Head Start had a Focus Area Two review for Head Start and Early Head Start during the week of April 11, 2022. The review was facilitated with a team of reviewers in a hybrid model— with two remotely offsite, and two reviewers present in Vermont for site visits. Focus Area Two reviews provide grant recipients (CVHS) the opportunity to demonstrate the ability to track and assess their program’s progress and performance, use data to drive results, and make adjustments and corrections as needed. The review includes in depth conversations around health services, management systems, education/child development services, parent/family/community engagement services, and financial/administrative services.

The Office of Head Start Monitoring Review Report reflects the excellent performance of CVOEO/CVHS in systems and services, as well as compliance with the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), Public Law 110-134, *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007*, and other applicable laws, regulations, and policy requirements.



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## Programmatic Updates

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*A summary of upcoming programmatic changes for CVHS*

In June 2022 CVHS submitted a Change of Scope application to the Office of Head Start. Change of Scope (COS) requests must be submitted if a grant recipient would like to take programming in a different direction than what was proposed in the original grant application. COS may be submitted at any time during a program's project period—which are generally 5-year grant cycles.

The COS submitted by CVHS requested permission to operate an Early Head Start locally-designed option (LDO), specifically tailored to meet the needs of New American families. Programs are permitted to operate LDOs, which are often alternative approaches to providing services, and include a combination of program options, to better meet unique needs of their communities. CVHS proposed to establish the *Family Connections Program*, an LDO that would build off current models in the community through the parent-child network, while providing a slightly more structured environment. A goal of the option is to capitalize on caregiver-child interactions, the opportunity to build trust and safety in relationships within families, with peers and community, and within our program.

The *Family Connections Program* is slated to begin during the 2022-2023 program year, pending approval from the Office of Head Start.



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## For Reference

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Head Start agencies that provide services to children and families must meet the Head Start Program Performance Standards and the requirements set forth in the Head Start Act of 2007. The relevant regulations affecting the Annual Public Report are outlined below.

### [Head Start Performance Standard 1302.102- Achieving Program Goals](#)

Annually, a program must publish and disseminate a report that complies with section 644(a)(2) of the Act and includes a summary of a program's most recent community assessment, as described in §1302.11(b), consistent with privacy protections in subpart C of part 1303 of this chapter.

#### **Head Start Act Section 644(a)(2):**

Each Head Start agency shall make available to the public a report published at least once in each fiscal year that discloses the following information from the most recently concluded fiscal year, except that reporting such information shall not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual child or parent:

- The total amount of public and private funds received and the amount from each source
- An explanation of budgetary expenditures and proposed budget for the fiscal year
- The total number of children and families served, the average monthly enrollment (as a percentage of funded enrollment), and the percentage of eligible children served
- The results of the most recent review by the Secretary and the financial audit
- The percentage of enrolled children that received medical and dental exams
- Information about parent involvement activities
- The agency's efforts to prepare children for kindergarten
- Any other information required by the Secretary



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<sup>1</sup> American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2017-2021 Table S1702

<sup>2</sup> American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2017-2021 Table S1701

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Vermont Department For Children & Families, *Child Protection in Vermont Report for 2021*, <https://outside.vermont.gov/dept/DCF/Shared%20Documents/FSD/Reports/2021-CP-Report.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness and Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (2022) *Vermont's Annual Point-in-Time Count of Those Experiencing Homelessness*. <https://www.cchavt.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022-Statewide-PIT.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2017-2021 Table DP04

<sup>7</sup> American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates 2017-2021 Table DP05

<sup>8</sup> Vermont Education Dashboard: Enrollment <https://education.vermont.gov/data-and-reporting/vermont-education-dashboard/enrollment>

<sup>9</sup> Horwitz, J., Salina, K. (January 2022). Stalled at the Start Vermont's Child Care Challenge. Burlington, VT: Let's Grow Kids.

<sup>10</sup> Center for the Study of Social Policy; Protective Factors Framework