



**HEAD START, INC. dba Explorers Academy**

**Grant No. 08CH010557  
CONTINUATION APPLICATION  
Five-Year Cycle  
Year 5: 2022-2023**

**APPENDIX F: PROGRAM GOALS**

**615 North 19th Street  
Billings, MT 59101**

# 2018-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN

## Our Mission

Explorers Academy provides comprehensive services for young children and their families to achieve school readiness and lifelong success

## Our Vision

Encourage, Empower and Educate All Children

## Core Values

Children First

Respect

Positivity

Empathy

Competence

## Values Statement

**Children First.** In everything we do, we put the needs of children first. Our commitment, above all, is to keep the children in our care safe, give them a stable and supportive learning environment, and create a school family that makes children feel welcome, important, and loved. We never leave children unsupervised and we all take primary responsibility for the safety and security of children in our care. We act always in the best interests of our students, even when the choice is very difficult. We meet our children where they are at, developmentally, including controlling our emotions in challenging situations. We engage in positive behavior guidance, taking the time to teach rather than punish. We expect the very best of ourselves, because our students deserve that. We are privileged to be invited into the lives of our children every day, and so we make them our most important priority.

**Respect.** Through our words and actions, we demonstrate respect to our students, families, and colleagues. We welcome and actively seek out parent input, engagement, and feedback in our program, because we respect parents as their child's first and most important teacher. We are committed to creating an environment that welcomes people from different backgrounds, cultures, and life experiences. We use resources wisely

because we respect the taxpayer investment in our organization, as well as the volunteers and donors who enable us to serve children and families. We comply with federal regulations, donor wishes, and internal policies because we respect the process of developing operational guidance and know that those rules are designed to strengthen our program. We work in teams because we value the individual contributions of all our colleagues in achieving our shared mission and vision. We come to work every day ready to work, because we respect the time and efforts of our colleagues and families. We are honored to have a unique opportunity to support children and families in need in our community, and so we are singularly focused on delivering the very highest quality child development and family support services.

**Positivity.** We believe in our students, our families, our colleagues, and our community. We assume the best of people, knowing that every person has his or her own challenges in life. We speak respectfully and positively about our agency, management, colleagues, and families. We are confident that our children can grow and develop new skills every day. We know that living out a sense of happiness in our program will lead to improved skill development and learning outcomes for our students. We are solution-oriented and enthusiastic about our work, knowing that our positive attitude sets an example for others. We are cheerful and energetic, because our students and parents deserve our very best effort. We are practical in our work, but endlessly optimistic. We are empowered to solve problems, suggest new ideas, and resolve differences of opinion. We are confident that when we do our best work, we can have a real and lasting impact on our students, families, and community. We know we make a difference.

**Empathy.** The students and families we serve come from diverse and often difficult backgrounds. We strive every day to develop a thorough understanding of the challenges our families face, while still supporting family progress toward a stable and healthy learning environment for their children. We are patient, kind, and nonjudgmental in our work. We see ourselves in the families we serve, recognizing the common obstacles and struggles we all face in working and raising a family. We recognize our job is to support families in achieving their own goals, not to “fix” what we believe is broken. We pay attention to our students’ needs, helping them to understand the emotions they feel and give words to those feelings. We actively listen to the needs of our students and families, and seek ways to empower families to fill those needs, because we believe our families are able to succeed.

**Competence.** Early childhood development is a profession. We are well-trained and dedicated to ensuring all our children are prepared to enter elementary school. Children under 5 develop rapidly, and we use the best science, research, and evidence to guide our students through this dynamic phase of their lives. We are professionals who base our work in best practices and continual assessment and improvement. We are accountable for our words and actions and hold ourselves to a high standard of integrity. We work in teams to ensure holistic services are delivered at the highest quality and to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness in our operations. We proactively identify opportunities for improvement in ourselves and the organization. We are committed to creating a positive learning environment where students and adults alike are encouraged to be innovative, creative, and inquisitive.

## PROGRAM YEAR 2022-2023: GOALS & PROGRESS TO DATE

*Cross-cutting Priority Attention Areas: regulatory compliance, trauma-informed services, continual quality improvement, and improved health and wellness for children, families, and staff.*

**Goal 1: Explorers Academy will demonstrate 100% compliance with Performance Standards by June 30, 2019 and on an annual basis thereafter.**

Objectives	Year 1 (2018-2019)	Year 2 (2019-2020)	Year 3 (2020-2021)	Year 4 (2021-2022)	Year 5 (2022-2023)
1a. Develop a plan, including staffing patterns and budget resources, to move all 360 Head Start enrollment slots to 1,020 hours by August 1, 2021.	<b>Progress:</b> Second Billings site purchased in 2017. 40% of enrollment slots are full day.	<b>Progress:</b> None to report.	<b>Progress:</b> Bathroom renovation project at second Billings site completed. Performance Standard requirements reduced to 45% of enrollment slots at 1,020 hours by August 1, 2021. Program began operating 48% of enrollment slots at full day.	<b>Progress:</b> Full market analysis and detail inspection completed on second Billings site (Terry Park location). Board has established a Facilities Committee.	<b>Next Steps:</b> Board Facilities Committee continues to prioritize needs of Terry Park facility. Facilities Committee is examining options to ensure services are not disrupted to children and families receiving full day programming.
	<b>Challenges:</b> Facilities issues (restroom capacity) at second Billings site are delaying full occupancy of that facility.	<b>Challenges:</b> Facility issues remain at second Billings site.	<b>Challenges:</b> Facility issues remain at second Billings site.	<b>Challenges:</b> Facility issues remain at second Billings site.	<b>Challenges:</b> Facility issues remain at second Billings site.
1b. Implement a program to ensure fidelity to evidence-based curricula in the classrooms by the end of the program year 2018-19.	<b>Progress:</b> An intensive curriculum workshop was held in August 2018.	<b>Progress:</b> None to report.	<b>Progress:</b> Regular, monthly curriculum content training sessions are provided to classroom staff. Addition of 3 Education	<b>Progress:</b> A lesson planning format has been solidified. Teachers also use a standard set of classroom	<b>Next Steps:</b> Full implementation of Creative Curriculum fidelity tools. Establish an ongoing system of checking

			Coordinators to program as supervisors of Education Staff.	environmental checklists.	curriculum fidelity in classrooms. Self-Assessment goal of developing an ongoing system of training curriculum fidelity.
	<b>Challenges:</b> Turnover in Education staff. Manager time to be in classrooms conducting fidelity training is limited.	<b>Challenges:</b> Turnover in Education Leadership staff. Turnover in Directors.	<b>Challenges:</b> Program is working hard to address staff turnover, improve morale.	<b>Challenges:</b> Time.	<b>Challenges:</b> Education Coordinators and Coaches are often covering in classrooms.
1c. Implement a comprehensive coaching and mentoring program for education and family services staff to ensure adequate training and support for staff.	<b>Progress:</b> Building on program’s recently established career ladders, new teachers were provided with trained, veteran mentor teachers in September 2018. Mentors and protégés meet biweekly to provide support and work towards goals. Mid-career teachers receive intensive coaching by program coach. Classrooms with identified social-emotional needs are provided coaching in Pyramid Model methods. TLC’s for veteran teaching	<b>Progress:</b> None to report.	<b>Progress:</b> Program working to update, refine, and formalize career ladders for all education and family services staff. Two dedicated Education Coaches were hired this program year.	<b>Progress:</b> A new, improved instrument was utilized to conduct the program’s annual Self-Assessment in January 2021. The program completed its Focus Area 2 federal monitoring review in March 2021. Monitoring results show that program meets the requirements of all applicable HSPPS, laws, regulations, and policy requirements. Teacher Career Ladders updated Fall 2021.	<b>Next Steps:</b> Consider peer reviews. Self-Assessment goal of updating policies and procedures by December 2022 – Personnel and Education & Child Development policies and procedures have been prioritized. Self-Assessment goal of revising the program’s Coaching Plan to include implementation. Program continues to receive Training & Technical Assistance Support in area of Coaching.

	assistants implemented.			Family Advocate Career Ladders formalized and implemented Fall 2021. Practice Based Coaching training completed.	Federal monitoring/CLASS review.
	<b>Challenges:</b> Mentor teachers are able to provide adequate time to work with their mentees, but support for the mentor teachers themselves is somewhat limited.	<b>Challenges:</b> Staff turnover presents a significant challenge to moving up the STARS pathways – completing required trainings and providing adequate support to improve ECERs scores is difficult when classroom staff aren't consistent.	<b>Challenges:</b> Due to changes in Education Leadership staff, formal training in Practice Based Coaching needs completed.	<b>Challenges:</b> Program is utilizing Training & Technical Assistance support to re-establish a Practice Based Coaching Plan.	<b>Challenges:</b> Ensuring leadership staff have availability to coach and train the staff they supervise, rather than cover in classrooms.

**Goal 2: Explorers Academy will establish service delivery models that fit the needs of families throughout our service area.**

Objectives	Year 1 (2018-2019)	Year 2 (2019-2020)	Year 3 (2020-2021)	Year 4 (2021-2022)	Year 5 (2022-2023)
<p>2a. On an ongoing basis, investigate parent and community needs, as well as program resources, to ensure sites are located where families have the greatest need.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> May 2018 data showed parent satisfaction with current site locations, a moderate need for childcare outside of Head Start hours, and a strong need for summer programming.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> Full day locations in Lockwood, Laurel, and at Terry Park are offering Head Start services Monday thru Friday, instead of Monday thru Thursday only.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> Due to facility challenges, Laurel classrooms moved to west-end Billings, in partnership with AWARE Early Head Start. Full day programming is being offered at Terry Park, Lockwood and AWARE. Half day programming remains at North Park.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> Focus has shifted to addressing challenges in finding a new Laurel location and building and playground challenges with the Terry Park facility.</p>	<p><b>Next Steps:</b> Continually evaluate options and locales in the Billings Heights and West-end areas. Work towards returning 2 classrooms to Laurel community. Work on partnerships with local school districts. Five year, full community assessment to be conducted.</p>
	<p><b>Challenges:</b> None to report.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Parent surveys not administered due to the lack of a permanent Executive Director.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Community Assessment data shows a need for programming in Billings Heights, Billings West-end, and Huntley Project Area. The program actively seeks options in returning classrooms to Laurel community.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Community Assessment data shows a need for programming in Billings Heights, Billings West-end, and Huntley Project Area. The program actively seeks options in returning classrooms to Laurel community.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Terry Park facility issues. Concerns with spreading staff and children to multiple locations.</p>
<p>2b. Evaluate demand for wrap-around childcare at Laurel, Lockwood, and North Park sites by May 2019.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> Wrap-around childcare continues to be offered at only the Terry Park location.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> Wrap-around childcare continues to be offered at only the Terry Park location.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> May 2020 parent surveys indicate less need for childcare outside of Head Start hours, but a preference for continued Head Start</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> May 2021 parent surveys indicate preference for 5 days of programming per week, plus support in implementation of “early out”</p>	<p><b>Next Steps:</b> 5 day a week programming at full day sites + “early out” Wednesdays will remain.</p>

			programming that is offered 5 days per week.	Wednesdays, mimicking school district scheduling. Implementation of “early out” Wednesdays creates uninterrupted time for Teachers to complete admin and planning, as well as attend meetings and trainings.	
	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Laurel site has significant staffing and facility constraints that could make extended hours difficult. North Park site could be hard to license until building issues that conflict with childcare regulations are addressed.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Revenue, facility, and staffing challenges remain in meeting demand for wrap-around childcare.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> 5 day a week programming at full day centers makes it difficult for teaching staff to participate in component meetings and trainings.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Wrap-around childcare not being considered as an option at this time.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Wrap-around childcare not being considered as an option at this time.</p>
2c. Demonstrate cost-effectiveness of existing wrap-around care model at Terry Park site by showing that the model can generate NFS for the Head Start grant.	<p><b>Progress:</b> Wrap-around childcare continues to be offered at the Terry Park location. The program continues to refine the cost-allocation model to create an accurate representation of operations.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> No progress was made in demonstrating cost-effectiveness of the wrap-around childcare model at the Terry Park site. The program continues to operate at a loss in revenue.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> No progress to report.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> No progress to report.</p>	<p><b>Next Steps:</b> No progress to report.</p>

	Participating in the state QRIS has resulted in increased reimbursements from CCDF funds. The State of Montana eliminated hourly rates, which should improve revenue.				
	<b>Challenges:</b> Working with parents on keeping childcare accounts current remains a challenge. Attendance and participation in childcare also varies widely, but the issue is partly overcome by the elimination of hourly rates.	<b>Challenges:</b> In February 2020, the decision to cease operation of wrap-around child care at the Terry Park site was made. This decision was due to a continuous loss of revenue and staffing constraints.	<b>Challenges:</b> Wrap-around childcare is not being offered at any location.	<b>Challenges:</b> Wrap-around childcare is not being offered at any location.	<b>Challenges:</b> Wrap-around childcare is not being offered at any location.
2d. Pilot two summer camps and/or summer childcare at sites with adequate facilities and need.	<b>Progress:</b> Summer childcare was offered at Terry Park facility.	<b>Progress:</b> Summer programming not offered.	<b>Progress:</b> Using COVID funds, a 6-week summer program was offered to children transitioning to Kindergarten.	<b>Progress:</b> None to report.	<b>Next Steps:</b> None to report.
	<b>Challenges:</b> Program operated at a financial loss and was unable to generate revenue.	<b>Challenges:</b> Summer programming not offered.	<b>Challenges:</b> COVID funding is one-time funding, not sustainable.	<b>Challenges:</b> None to report.	<b>Challenges:</b> None to report.

2e. Determine the need for and interest in classroom in Huntley Project area, no later than January 2020.	<b>Progress:</b> No progress to report.	<b>Progress:</b> No progress to report.	<b>Progress:</b> Due to facility challenges, Laurel classrooms moved to west-end Billings, in partnership with AWARE Early Head Start. Full day programming is being offered at Terry Park, Lockwood and AWARE. Half day programming remains at North Park.	<b>Progress:</b> Focus has shifted from determining need for and interest in Huntley Project area to Focus has shifted to addressing challenges in finding a new Laurel location and building and playground challenges with the Terry Park facility.	<b>Next Steps:</b> Continually evaluate options and locales in the Billings Heights and West-end areas. Work towards returning 2 classrooms to Laurel community. Work on partnerships with local school districts. Five year, full community assessment to be conducted.
	<b>Challenges:</b> Community Assessment data shows a need for programming in Billings Heights, Billings West-end, and Huntley Project Area.	<b>Challenges:</b> Community Assessment data shows a need for programming in Billings Heights, Billings West-end, and Huntley Project Area.	<b>Challenges:</b> Community Assessment data shows a need for programming in Billings Heights, Billings West-end, and Huntley Project Area. The program actively seeks options in returning classrooms to Laurel community.	<b>Challenges:</b> Community Assessment data shows a need for programming in Billings Heights, Billings West-end, and Huntley Project Area. The program actively seeks options in returning classrooms to Laurel community. The Terry Park facility has many issues that need addressed.	<b>Challenges:</b> Terry Park facility issues. Concerns with spreading staff and children to multiple locations.

**Goal 3: Explorers Academy will consistently implement a trauma informed approach to service delivery to better meet the needs of children and families dealing with complex trauma.**

Objectives	Year 1 (2018-2019)	Year 2 (2019-2020)	Year 3 (2020-2021)	Year 4 (2021-2022)	Year 5 (2022-2023)
<p>3a. Implement a trauma-informed approach to classroom management, building on existing partnerships to implement ARC frameworks in the classroom by August 2020.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> None to report.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> 2 days intensive training on ARC framework and implementation provided to a majority of staff in January 2020. ARC Implementation team established at agency level and includes management, teachers, family advocates, parents, and board members. ARC agency goals established. ARC consultation to begin. A training plan for continued ARC training (for new staff and refresher trainings is in the works).</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> Basic ACE’s training is provided to all new hires during the employee onboarding process.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> Basic ACE’s training is provided to all new hires during the employee onboarding process. Focus groups of Teachers and Family Advocates have worked to identify curriculum that best meets the developmental and social/emotional needs of children in our program. These focus groups are recommending Conscious Discipline be utilized in classrooms, as well as for our parent education classes.</p>	<p><b>Next Steps:</b> Self-Assessment goal dedicated to training and materials for staff in Conscious Discipline classroom strategies and parenting curriculum. Incorporate goal into Training &amp; Technical Assistance plan.</p>
	<p><b>Challenges:</b> None to report.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Securing funding for ARC consultation. Developing a system of sustainability.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Impacts of COVID, availability of funding to develop sustainability in training of staff in ARC.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Funding and time for training and materials, plus development of a system of sustainability.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Development of a system of sustainability.</p>

3b. On an ongoing basis, provide structured training and coaching in the CLASS domains to all teaching/caregiving staff, focusing on adult-child interactions.	<b>Progress:</b> None to report.	<b>Progress:</b> CLASS training, as well as system of ongoing training, implemented in January 2019.	<b>Progress:</b> Virtual CLASS training by CLASS trainers offered to all education and family services staff in October 2020. Training & Technical Assistance Goal with Regional OHS focused on CLASS implementation and Coaching Plan.	<b>Progress:</b> CLASS training incorporated into employee onboarding process. Training & Technical Assistance Goal with Regional OHS focused on CLASS implementation and Coaching Plan.	<b>Next Steps:</b> Federal monitoring/CLASS review.
	<b>Challenges:</b> None to report.	<b>Challenges:</b> Staff turnover, particularly in education.	<b>Challenges:</b> Ensuring CLASS observations in classrooms are occurring on a regular basis, including goal setting and follow-up.	<b>Challenges:</b> Ensuring CLASS observations in classrooms are occurring on a regular basis, including goal setting and follow-up.	<b>Challenges:</b> Ensuring leadership staff have availability to conduct CLASS observations, rather than cover in classrooms
3c. Strengthen program capacity in providing trauma-informed services by refreshing previous TIC training for direct care staff during program year 2018-2019.	<b>Progress:</b> Coaching and implementation of Montana Pyramid Model.	<b>Progress:</b> Coaching and implementation of Montana Pyramid Model.	<b>Progress:</b> Basic ACE's training is provided to all new hires during the employee onboarding process.	<b>Progress:</b> Focus groups of Teachers and Family Advocates have worked to identify curriculum that best meets the developmental and social/emotional needs of children in our program. These focus groups are recommending Conscious Discipline be utilized in classrooms, as well as for our parent education	<b>Next Steps:</b> Self-Assessment goal dedicated to training and materials for staff in Conscious Discipline classroom strategies and parenting curriculum. Incorporate goal into Training & Technical Assistance plan.

				classes. Conscious Discipline is a trauma-informed curriculum.	
	<b>Challenges:</b> Staff and Education Leadership turnover.	<b>Challenges:</b> Staff and Education Leadership turnover.	<b>Challenges:</b>	<b>Challenges:</b> Funding and time for training and materials, plus development of a system of sustainability.	<b>Challenges:</b> Development of a system of sustainability.
3d. Offer on-site therapeutic services for enrolled children and their families by the 2020-2021 program year.	<b>Progress:</b> Supplemental grant funding and consultation received from the Montana Healthcare Foundation to create a system of providing Medicaid billable, mental health services for children.	<b>Progress:</b> Identified agency staff person has completed clinical supervision hours and has obtained necessary credentials to begin on-site therapeutic services for enrolled children. Staff working with Mental Health Consultant to formalize policies, procedures, and related forms for therapeutic services.	<b>Progress:</b> On-site therapeutic services for children and their families began in November 2020 at our Terry Park location. The program employs a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor to deliver these services. Medicaid billing for these services is contracted out.	<b>Progress:</b> Therapist wage being split between Medicaid revenues and Head Start grant.	<b>Next Steps:</b> Partnership with Masters level education programs to recruit qualified staff. Continue to recruit for therapist. Recruit and hire behavior support staff for classrooms.
	<b>Challenges:</b> Time. Policies, procedures, forms.	<b>Challenges:</b> Medicaid billing.	<b>Challenges:</b> Balancing work load for Therapist between meeting Head Start requirements and providing billable services. Paying for therapist position with Medicaid revenues.	<b>Challenges:</b> Therapist vacated position in November 2021. Difficult to recruit, and subsequently hire someone who is qualified for position.	<b>Challenges:</b> Hiring qualified therapist. Identifying funding streams for behavior support staff.

**Goal 4: Explorers Academy will strengthen community partnerships related to substance abuse prevention and treatment to improve resources for young children and families in the program’s service area.**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Year 1 (2018-2019)</b>	<b>Year 2 (2019-2020)</b>	<b>Year 3 (2020-2021)</b>	<b>Year 4 (2021-2022)</b>	<b>Year 5 (2022-2023)</b>
<p>4a. Train staff on signs and symptoms of substance abuse; including employment related, financial, legal, physical &amp; emotional, and interpersonal relationships impacts. Train staff on the effects of parental drug use on children, as well as the prolonged exposure to, so staff are more adept in addressing individual parental needs and circumstances in the recovery process. Train staff in motivational interviewing.</p> <p>Train staff on how to have healthy, positive and productive conversations with parents in the recovery process.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> All Family Services staff are trained in motivational interviewing techniques. This is a key concept in having healthy, positive, and productive conversations with parents in the recovery process.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> None to report.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> Updates were made to the <i>Drug Free Workplace</i> policy in November 2020. Family services staff completed training in Fall 2020 on signs and symptoms of substance misuse. Training in motivational interviewing now incorporated into employee onboarding process. Program has a licensed therapist, as well as access to a Mental Health Consultant to assist in this process.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> Human Resources Director, Training &amp; Development Manager, and Executive Director completed <i>Reasonable Suspicion</i> Training.</p>	<p><b>Next Steps:</b> Formalized staff training calendar, with timelines, including training on substance misuse for staff as a professional development requirement every other year. <i>Reasonable Suspicion</i> training for all supervisory staff.</p>
	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Training requirements for staff working in Head Start and at licensed childcares can be overwhelming.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Continued challenges with training requirements.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> None to report.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Formal staff training calendar is a need.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> None to report.</p>
<p>4b. Improve methods for families self-reporting substance abuse in their child’s</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> Program eligibility criteria has been updated to reflect family</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> None to report.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> None to report.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> None to report.</p>	<p><b>Next Steps:</b> Develop procedure for staff in confronting active</p>

<p>life to obtain better data. Ensure the Family Outcomes Assessment is helping to identify substance abuse needs and the Family Partnerships process is helping to address those needs.</p>	<p>substance use disorder. Family Outcomes Assessment and Goal Planning instruments updated.</p>				<p>parental substance misuse.</p>
	<p><b>Challenges:</b> None to report.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> None to report.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> COVID has exasperated these issues in Montana and our community.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> COVID has exasperated these issues in Montana and our community.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Access to resources is limited.</p>
<p>4c. Strengthen partnerships with agencies providing substance abuse support services in the community in the following areas over the next 5 years: Child Protective Teams; Mental Health; Treatment Centers; Public Health; and Law Enforcement. Engage a mental health partner that can help consult and advise staff and be a referral source for families needing support with substance abuse issues.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> Supplemental grant funding and consultation received from the Montana Healthcare Foundation to create a system of providing Medicaid billable, mental health services for children.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> Key managers participate in a community-wide, 250+ member interdisciplinary team, and collaborative effort called <i>Substance Use Connect</i>. Executive Director participates in a smaller working group focused on prevention. Program hired a licensure candidate to support classroom interventions, eventually moving into Medicaid billable, therapeutic services.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> An updated community resource list assists Family Advocates in working collaboratively with families to access necessary resources. LCPC on staff now focused on providing on-site therapeutic service for children and their families. Program has formalized a mental health consultation agreement with an outside mental health provider.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> Continued collaboration with <i>Substance Use Connect</i> and related workgroups.</p>	<p><b>Next Steps:</b> Continue to recruit for therapist. Recruit and hire behavior support staff for classrooms. Continued collaboration with <i>Substance Use Connect</i> and related workgroups.</p>
	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Many partner agencies engaged in SUD prevention and treatment are overwhelmed. Finding</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> None to report.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> None to report.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Therapist vacated position in November 2021. Difficult to recruit, and subsequently hire</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Hiring qualified therapist. Identifying funding streams for behavior support staff.</p>

	time to develop meaningful partnerships and MOUs is difficult.			someone who is qualified for position.	
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**Goal 5: Explorers Academy will implement proactive measures to decrease staff turnover to 15% by June 30, 2023.**

Objectives	Year 1 (2018-2019)	Year 2 (2019-2020)	Year 3 (2020-2021)	Year 4 (2021-2022)	Year 5 (2022-2023)
<p>5a. Conduct analysis on reasons for turnover, and identify types of turnover that are concerning (e.g. quitting vs. retiring, quitting within first 60 days, no call/no show, terminations).</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> Preliminary analysis suggests wages are the predominant issue, with stress/trauma as a secondary issues. Personal crises (health needs, family needs) is also a common them.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> New HR Director is actively reviewing HRIS Systems to help with overall reporting and onboarding. Implementation of a staff Wellness Committee, revival of a staff Events Committee.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> Staff turnover has decreased by 19% in the last calendar year. Implementation of an HRIS system including time tracking, electronic personnel policy review, agency updates, professional development, and employee recruitment. Employee wellness and pulse surveys administered routinely. Implementation of 1:1, in-person exit interviews. Implementation of 45 day check-ins with newly hired staff.</p>	<p><b>Progress:</b> Complete implementation of formalized orientation and onboarding for new hires in education, including checklists and timelines. Monthly staff retention rates have remained steady at 97%. Virtual training options added through HRIS system. Supervisors have been trained in 1:1's and STAY interviews.</p>	<p><b>Next Steps:</b> Continue supervisor development. Continue to monitor staff morale and work environment. Finalize onboarding process for newly hired Family Advocates, then other agency positions. Additional development for supervisors in 1:1's, STAY interviews, developing trusting relationships, and active listening.</p>
	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Staff aren't always candid in exit interview, nor are they always willing to participate. Lack of HRIS system to help with effective reporting. Turnover in Education staff is a concern.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Turnover in Education Leadership staff. Turnover in program Directors.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Program has a need for better onboarding processes, especially in education.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> The COVID pandemic, the need for staff support from supervisors has become more prevalent than ever.</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Because of the COVID pandemic, the needs of children and their families has increased, which can contribute to staff burnout.</p>

5b. Finalize and implement career ladders for all professional staff including Teachers, Family Advocates, and Managers.	<b>Progress:</b> Program is working closely with Department of Labor and Industry to participate in the statewide childcare apprenticeship program, which offers coaching and financial incentives to professionals working towards an ECE degree.	<b>Progress:</b> None to report.	<b>Progress:</b> Succession planning completed for all Directors and Managers. Professional development plans re-introduced to organization.	<b>Progress:</b> Teacher Career Ladders updated Fall 2021. Family Advocate Career Ladders formalized and implemented Fall 2021. Supervisors are discussing and supporting staff with professional and personal goals during 1:1's and in formal professional development meetings.	<b>Next Steps:</b> Update of job descriptions program-wide, taking into consideration inclusivity and diversity. Update of policies and procedures – Personnel and Education & Child Development policies and procedures are a priority.
	<b>Challenges:</b> Turnover in education staff.	<b>Challenges:</b> Turnover in education and leadership staff. Lack of professional development planning.	<b>Challenges:</b> None to report.	<b>Challenges:</b> Agency policies and procedures, as well as job descriptions need to be updated.	<b>Challenges:</b> Time.
5c. Identify additional resources to ensure all wages are competitive in the market and appropriate to ensure the quality of services.	<b>Progress:</b> Participation in the state QRIS provides some additional financial resources for personnel in a direct care capacity.	<b>Progress:</b> Full local, state, regional, and national wage analysis conducted by HR Director.	<b>Progress:</b> An improved medical, dental and vision benefits plan is being offered to program employees. Program is offering agency-sponsored Short Term Disability, Long Term Disability, and 2 sources of Employees Assistance	<b>Progress:</b> All employees received 1.22% COLA. Work with consultant to formally analyze workforce compensation strategy and organizational structure.	<b>Next Steps:</b> Consider consultant recommendations for changes to org structure and positions. Implement changes recommended by consultant to pay grades and wage structure in order to

			Programming to all employees. Director and accounting personnel wages addressed. All employees received 2% COLA.		eliminate and avoid salary compression.
	<b>Challenges:</b> Staff turnover makes it difficult to participate at a higher level in QRIS to maximize financial benefits.	<b>Challenges:</b> Entry level staff (Teaching Assistants, Dietary Aides) are paid too low. Professional staff are paid at or above state comparisons. Key Director and accounting personnel positions are paid low and not comparable in market.	<b>Challenges:</b> Entry level staff pay. Salary compression across all departments.	<b>Challenges:</b> Entry level staff pay not comparable with local market.	<b>Challenges:</b> Employees are sensitive to change, could affect morale.