

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022



HEAD START inc.
BILLINGSHEADSTART.ORG | (406) 245-7233



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A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Great joy can be found reverberating in the classrooms and hallways at Head Start. The gentle voice of a parent, preparing their child for the start of the school day. The singing of a preschool teacher, forever burning cutesy song lyrics into your brain. The banter of staff members, talking about exciting life happenings or the weekend. The clunky snow boots and endless chatter of children making their way to and from the playground. Head Start's foundation has long been built upon the concept that children and their families are our greatest resource. If there's anything the endless pandemic has taught us, it's that staff have become just as precious of a resource. The early childhood workforce is more important now, than ever.

For months, the Office of Head Start has quite generously afforded programs like ours flexibility in program operations. Flexibilities include, but are not limited to; making programmatic decisions based on the health (COVID-19) of the community, serving less children based on workforce constraints, and dedicating funds towards staff retention and wellness. Over time, I have come to accept that while these flexibilities have certainly helped our program, it's the unequivocal dedication our staff bring to the table every day that makes our program a success.

Early childhood isn't just a job, it's a profession. Our staff are talented, creative, ingenious, and transformational. Additionally, most are college educated, highly trained and skilled workers. Many are raising young families at home, and are able to come to work every day to support 16 or more children in their classrooms. Our staff place the utmost trust in program leadership and governing bodies. They have persevered through the most turbulent of times. Staff strive to raise each other up and help each other out. They are the warmest sunshine on the coldest of Montana winter days.

I don't get a chance to say it often enough. Thank you to every single staff person that makes work life grand. Thank you for choosing Head Start.

With gratitude,





On the heels of our 50th anniversary we're excited to announce our organization's name change, back to, Head Start, Inc. While we loved our 5 years as Explorers Academy to the community, we've always been Head Start. Our mission and core values remain the same. We are as dedicated as ever to encouraging, empowering, and educating all children. As we look to the future, we're pulling from our past and proud to continue offering our services to Yellowstone and Carbon Counties as Head Start, Inc.

Over our agency's 50 years, we've served thousands and thousands of children and their families, giving them a head start when they needed one. Our time as Explorers Academy was marked by a lot of change and we're thankful for that direction and those opportunities. Moving forward, we're looking to ground our agency and focus on what we're good at. Therefore, we've had to say goodbye to some things, one of those being the name Explorers Academy. Head Start, Inc. and the Board of Directors looks forward to continuing the long tradition of high quality preschool and comprehensive services in the Billings Community.

– Genia Castro Waller, Board of Directors Chair

Head Start has played a transformative role in the lives of children and their families, spanning across decades, in Billings and the surrounding area. Calling ourselves Head Start allows us to maintain our presence in the community and creates opportunities for new connections. Our staff take great pride in the mission-driven work of ensuring children and families are on the path to success in school, work, and life. Our families believe in the Head Start program and the quality of services available."

– Janice King, Executive Director

Thank you for your continued support as we help young children their families to achieve school readiness and lifelong success. We are still actively enrolling for the upcoming 2022-2023 school year as well as hiring for open positions.





OUR PURPOSE

The purpose of the Head Start program is to increase the capacity of eligible children to succeed in school by promoting an inclusive community that...

- Enhances their overall development
- Equalizes opportunities
- Strengthens parent-child relationships
- Supports and empowers parents to achieve their identified goals

MISSION

Head Start provides comprehensive services for young children and their families to achieve school readiness and lifelong success.

WE ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION BY...

- Embracing diversity
- Honoring individual differences
- Using best practices
- Seeking to learn and innovate
- Promoting healthy life habits

WE BELIEVE...

- Parents are primary teachers.
- Respect for the individual is fundamental.
- The strengths of children and families should be recognized and honored.
- Optimal child development occurs when children have access to good nutrition and quality health and dental care.

VISION

Encourage,
Empower, and
Educate All Children.

VALUES

CHILDREN FIRST:

In everything we do, we put the needs of children first. Our commitment, above all, is to keep children safe and give them a stable and supportive learning environment where they feel welcome, important, and loved.

RESPECT:

Through our words and actions, we demonstrate respect to our students, families, and colleagues. We welcome and actively seek out parent input in our program because we respect parents as their child's first and most important teacher..

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 are confident that when we do our best work, we can have a real and lasting impact.

EMPATHY:

We strive every day to understand the challenges our families face, while still supporting family progress. We see ourselves in the families we serve, recognizing the common obstacles and struggles we all face in working and raising a family.

COMPETENCE:

We are well-trained and dedicated to ensuring all our children are prepared to enter elementary school. We are committed to creating a positive learning environment where students and adults alike are encouraged to be innovative, creative, and inquisitive.



EDUCATION

EDUCATION

At Head Start Inc., it is our mission to ensure that all of our children leave us ready for kindergarten and life long success. Our classrooms are led by highly qualified educators, who value the uniqueness of each child in their care. Each classroom follows the Montana State Early Learning Objectives and Head Start Early Learning Outcomes. Our teachers use a variety of research based curriculum including Creative Curriculum, Handwriting without Tears, Heggerty Phonics, and Second Step to ensure our students are receiving a high quality early childhood education.

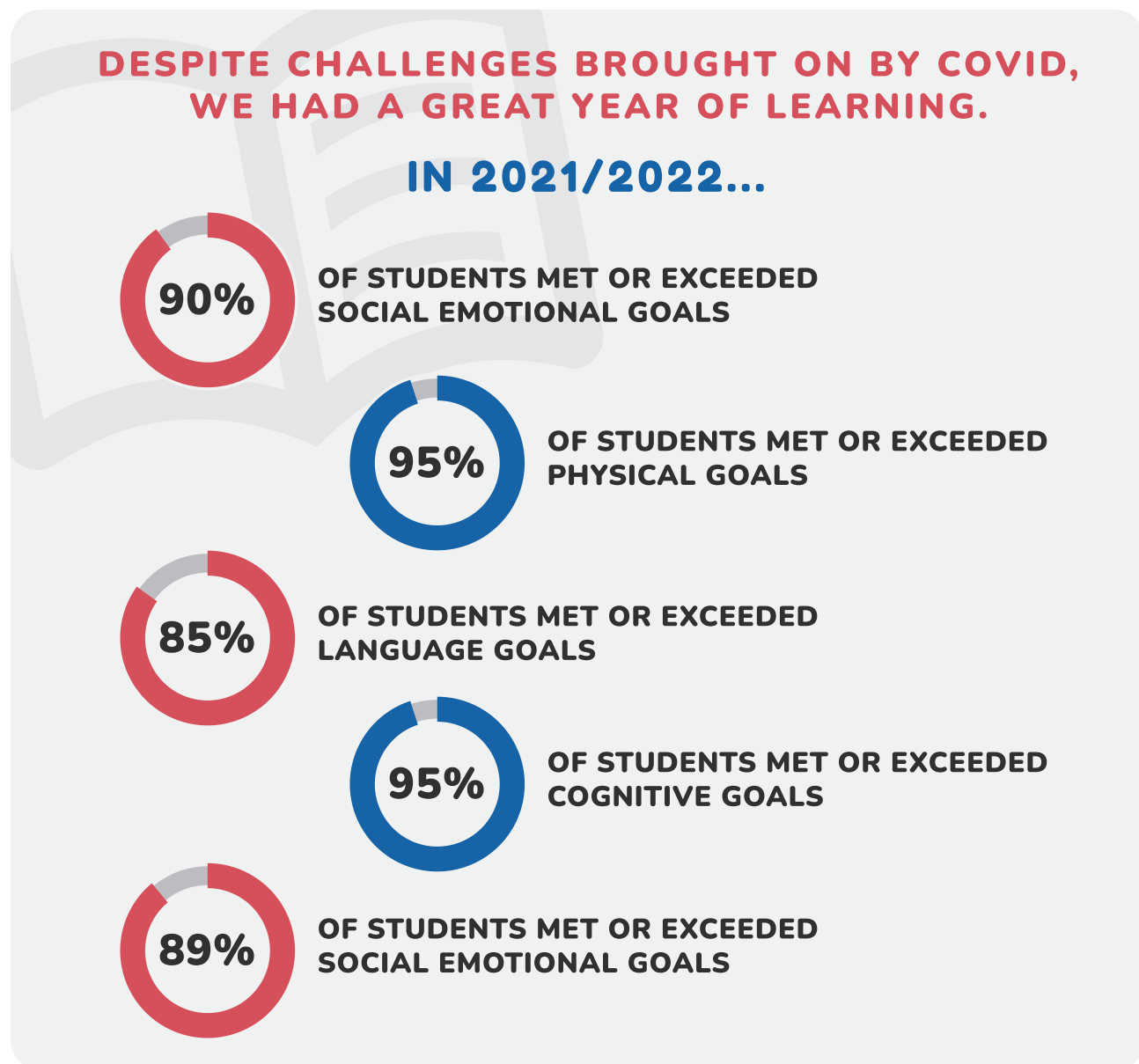
Creative Curriculum, our main curriculum, is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that features inquiry, exploration, and discovery as the foundation of all learning. As a content-rich, developmentally appropriate curriculum, it delivers academic rigor alongside social-emotional learning and cognitive development. Creative Curriculum brings meaningful interactions and learning to life in classrooms. Each month, our teachers change out their classroom environment, providing opportunities for students to explore a variety of concepts and themes, as they take on new roles from baker, to florist, to veterinarian. Our teachers know, when students are curious about what they are learning, they are more likely to be active participants in their education.

Heggerty Phonics lessons are taught alongside Creative Curriculum each day with explicit teacher modeling and scaffolded support. Through Heggerty Phonics, students learn to play with language and hear the sounds in spoken words—a preliteracy skill needed in kindergarten.



EDUCATION

In addition to our curriculum, all our students participate in developmental screenings to identify individual areas of strength and growth. Teachers, in collaboration with families, use these screeners to develop individualized learning goals for each child. Understanding that parents are a child's first and most important teacher, our teachers strive to create relationships with parents, and guardians to ensure that all our students are able to thrive both at home and at school.



Thanks to our dedicated, highly qualified teaching staff, and curriculum, our program truly provides high quality early childhood services that prepare our students for kindergarten and beyond.



FAMILY

FAMILY SERVICES

At Head Start, Inc., we believe parents are their child's first and most important teachers. Parents play an important role in shaping their child's education and lifelong success.

Our outstanding Family Services team partners with parents to ensure every child's basic needs are met, every child is healthy, and every child is ready to learn. Family Advocates, Health, and Disabilities personnel provide referrals and assist with access to community resources. These Family Services staff also provide short-term counseling, employment training, budgeting support, parenting classes, and other educational opportunities.



FAMILY ADVOCATES PROVIDED

2,390

**COMMUNITY REFERRALS
TO FAMILIES**



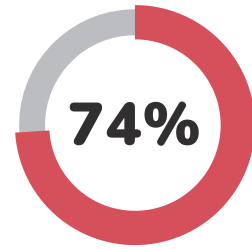
Family Advocates meet formally with families in their home, in the community, or at one of our Head Start locations to complete the Family Outcomes process. This process aligns with the Office of Head Start's Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework. The Outcomes process helps families identify and build upon strengths and interests. Goals are set that impact the child's development, the individual parents, and the entire family. Family Advocates meet regularly with parents to provide assistance and ongoing support towards reaching their goals.

FAMILY SERVICES

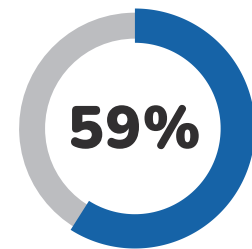


FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES, EVENTS & EDUCATION:

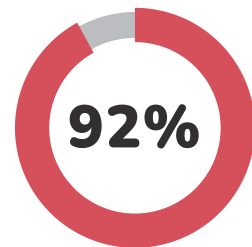
- 2 OPEN HOUSE EVENTS
- 3 RTMD EVENTS
- 3 PARENT COMMITTEE EVENTS/SITE
- 4 PARENT APPRECIATION EVENTS
- 8-WEEK INCREDIBLE YEARS PARENTING SERIES CLASS
- HOLIDAY GIVE EVENT
- POLICY COUNCIL MEETINGS
- END OF THE YEAR CELEBRATION



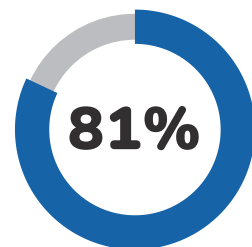
Of children received yearly well-child **Physical** Exams.
(Lower numbers are still due to some effects of COVID)



Received yearly well-child **Dental** Exams.
(Lower numbers are still due to some effects of COVID)



Of families participated in yearly **Goal Setting** with their Family Advocate.



Participated in **Family Engagement** activities.

FAMILY SERVICES

ERSEA provides the backbone of all Head Start services. ERSEA stands for Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance.

Community Assessment data provides a foundation for ERSEA practices within our program, ensuring we are serving the children who will benefit from Head Start's comprehensive services the most.

During the 2021-2022 program year, less children were served (320) than what Head Start, Inc. is funded for (360). Flexibilities offered by the Office of Head Start have given programs like ours the ability to adjust to local health conditions. The impact of COVID-19 in our community has impacted child enrollment for services, as well as workforce to meet programmatic needs.

ERSEA:

Total number
of **Children:**

320

Total number
of **Families:**

306

Percent of **average monthly enrollment:** **89%**

ELIGIBLE CHILDREN SERVED:

0-100% = 40%

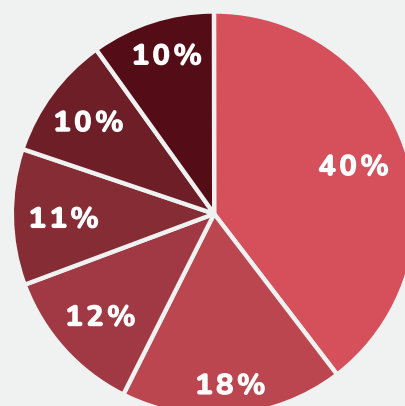
101-130% = 18%

Over income = 12%

Foster care = 11%

Homeless = 10%

Public Assistance = 10%





FAMILY SPOTLIGHT

By: Kayla Brown, Family Advocate

Nate Little Owl will never forget going through one of the most painful experiences he has ever endured. Grief is not something often talked about and is often hard to deal with when not addressed. This would eventually lead Nate into a drug addiction that overtook his life for many years, which lead him into a destructive lifestyle he never thought possible. To cope, Nate turned to drugs. He thought it was better to be high than experience the pain he was going through. During that year of hard times, Nate and his wife Angelica had their children removed by CPS and placed with a family member. Nate states, **“In that moment I felt defeated. I thought to myself, what is the point of going on when our kids were already taken from us.”**

January 30th, 2016 is a day Nate and Angelica will never forget. After exhausting all help from family and friends, they finally hit rock bottom. They were living in their car, freezing from below zero weather, strung out on meth, realizing no one was going help them. In that moment they both knew changes needed to be made. The next morning was the beginning of their journey towards sobriety. This was “day one” of leaving the past behind and planning a better life for themselves and their children. This would not be an easy process, but they knew that it was worth the battle.

While working to get clean and get their kids back, they faced numerous obstacles. When asked about the process Nate said **“The first step was to make sure we had a safe place to go and then we reached out to our CPS case worker. We wanted to do it right.”** This led them to the Yellowstone Family Drug Court. **“There are 5 phases of drug court that must be completed. Every Thursday we had to do a UA to make sure we hadn’t been using. We were also completing the drug court requirements, as well as attending classes. Additionally, we completed an outpatient program through the Mental Health Center, and we were required to complete individual programs.”**

FAMILY SPOTLIGHT

They began having supervised visitation with their kids. Nate said the visits started out with seeing them for an hour or two, then it progressed to full days, and eventually they were allowed to spend the night. Nate and Angelica also had goals to obtain such as finding employment and adequate housing.

Fast forward to March of 2018, Nate and Angelica received news that the CPS case was officially closed. Nate stated, **“It felt great knowing that CPS was no longer involved and that we got to be a family again.”** Their oldest daughter had previously attended the Head Start program.

“Head Start did such wonderful things for our oldest, and we couldn’t wait to enroll our other kids. The staff were wonderful, and the teachers were amazing.”

~ NATE LITTLE OWL



Nate had been working in the hotel industry. In December of 2021 he saw a maintenance position posted on the Head Start website. Knowing he was looking for a change in employment, he decided to apply. He has loved working for Head Start ever since. Fall of 2021 was an exciting time because his youngest daughter started her first year at Head Start. Nate has expressed his appreciation for his Family Advocate, stating that she has helped them in several ways, such as bringing them a Thanksgiving meal and cold medication while they were all sick and by just being there when needed. **“Our Family Advocate has helped us so much, especially during Covid. It was a great comfort knowing we had her support during that time.”**

Through it all Nate and Angelica have achieved so much since making the decision to live a stable and sober lifestyle. With the support of friends and family, Nate and Angelica have just celebrated their 7th sobriety anniversary. **“It has been such an amazing feeling knowing our goals are being achieved. Head Start has helped our children in a variety of ways and continue to support us to help us reach our goals.”**



COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

By: Megan Martin, Training & Development Manager

Head Start, Inc. is dedicated to promoting Oral Health through high-quality dental education, screenings, and daily hygiene habits. From daily tooth brushing in classrooms to high-quality nutrition services, Head Start children build healthy oral hygiene habits at a young age. For the last five years, Head Start, Inc. has partnered with Bright Smiles Dental Hygiene Services to provide on-site preventative services including dental screenings, fluoride treatments, and oral hygiene instruction and education.

Meet Melissa: Melissa Utley is a Registered Dental Hygienist and the founder of Bright Smiles Hygiene Services. Melissa has been providing preventative oral care services to under privileged populations, such as older adults and young children, in Yellowstone County for over 12 years.



Why did you start Bright Smiles? **“I have always loved helping our community and working with children- so putting those together was perfect match. I saw a need for mobile dental hygiene services in our community, especially for older adults and young children who are not able to get to a dentist office on their own.”**



Why did you chose to partner with Head Start, Inc. to provide dental hygiene services? **"I love working with kids and I love Head Start. I believe in the Head Start mission and program. The way Head Start prioritizes overall child well-being, including dental health, makes it easy to provide services for children in the program. What Head Start does for children and families is truly amazing. I wish all children in our community could be in Head Start!"**

Why is dental health important during the early childhood years? **"The mouth is the gateway to the body; if your mouth isn't healthy the rest of your body isn't healthy either. For kids, dental health can affect their development both physically and emotionally. Children with oral health concerns often show decreased speech, eating habits, physical growth, and social emotional regulation. Children experiencing pain may have difficulty focusing and participating in the classroom, making it hard for them to learn new skills."**



Receiving regular dental screenings and treatment during early childhood helps prevent oral health concerns and decreases the likelihood of cavities. The Bright Smiles and Head Start partnership allows dental professionals, like Melissa, to come to the school to work with high risk children. Exposure to dental care when children are young helps set them on the path for better oral health as adults. They will be less likely to experience anxiety or fear about receiving dental care and more likely to seek out dental care as they age. **"Children who have not received dental care may be fearful or anxious about doing a dental screening. I like to make screenings as welcoming and fun as possible to help them feel**

comfortable. Sometimes a child is not comfortable having me complete their screening. When this happens, they will often at least sit in the chair and talk with me or watch a peer complete a screening. The next time they see me they will likely be more comfortable and willing to participate. The earlier children start learning about and being exposed to dental hygiene the better their chance to continue healthy habits throughout their life time. I love Head Start because children get oral health exposures and education at school with their teachers and peers giving them a have a higher chance of retaining it."

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

As a non-profit agency, Head Start, Inc. relies on support from our community to provide the highest quality services and make lasting impacts on the lives of our children and families. The support we receive by the generous individuals and business in our community is what makes our program successful. The list of community provided opportunities for our children is continually growing!

Support from our incredible community partners makes it possible for us to provide diversified and holistic education and family services to our children and families. Our partners provide monetary, material and volunteer donations to ensure our children have what they need to succeed. They support us buy purchasing needed supplies, sending volunteers to complete projects and funding program initiatives.

Corporate Partners

- First Interstate Bank
- Valley Credit Union
- Stockman Bank
- Midland Chapter of Federal Credit Unions

Health, Nutrition & Wellness Partners

- Rimrock Pediatric Dentistry
- Bright Smiles Dental Hygiene Services
- RiverStone Health
- Billings Clinic Pediatrics

Foundation Support

- Louvin Foundation
- Roberts Foundation
- Fairview Foundation
- Siedman Family Foundation

Education & Family Services Partners

- The Optimist Club
- The Foster Grandparent Program
- Yellowstone Art Museum
- United Way of Yellowstone County
- MT Community Foundation
- Golden K Kiwanis Club
- Zoo Montana
- Billings Public Schools
- AWARE, Inc.
- Lockwood Public Schools
- Family Tree
- Photo Creations

Discounted Services & Support (\$1000 or more)

- Benedict's Imaging Products and Printers
- Entre Technology Services
- Stonerock Business Solutions
- William Henry & Be Better World
- Child Plus



2021-2022 BOARD MEMBERS

Position	Name	Occupation/Employer
Chair	Lynette Schwalbe *then Genia	Early Childhood Professor, MSUBillings
Vice Chair	Genia Castro-Waller *then Daniel	Owner, Graphic Finesse
Treasurer	Eric George *then Dylan	Executive Director, Stockman Wealth Mgmt
New Member	Dylan Meccage	Appraisal Analyst, NAI Business Properties
Past Chair	Erin Allen	Pediatrician, Billings Clinic
Member	Heidi Christison	Planning Manager, Interstate Engineering Inc.
Member	Sue DeVries	Retired, Head Start Grandparent
Member	Chase Brown	Attorney, Netzer Law Office
Member	Daniel Brooks	Business Advocay Director, Billings Chamber of Commerce
New Member	Jeremy Welch	VP of Human Resources, KOA
New Member	Paul Law	Former Head Start Parent
PC Vice Chair	Jesse Peterson	Policy Council Vice Chair

2021-2022 POLICY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Center	Parent Representative	Role
NP 1	Brittany Holmes	Chair
NP 2	Kacey Carson	
NP 3	Katrina Keehn	
NP 4	Clacy Pedersen	
NP 5	Sarah Moyer	Treasurer
NP 6	Walter Switzer	
NP 7	Jessica Robinson	
NP 8	Patience Melton	
NP 9	Jesse Peterson	Vice Chair
NP 10	Nina Birdinground	
NP 11	Kevin Hale	
NP 12	Brenda Barr	
TP 1	Heidi Burns	
TP 2	Candida Paiaina	
TP 4	Cheyenne Schill	
TP 5	Karis Bresach	
AW 1	Beta Lowther	
LW 1	Jessica Buck	
LW 2	Brianna Fandek	
Comm Rep	Doug Anderson/Riverstone	
Comm Rep	Jennie Busenbark/ ECI	



THANK YOU!



FINANCIAL AUDIT FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2020

As of the date of the current annual report, the financial audit for July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022 is still in process. The financial statement audit report for July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, the latest audit completed, had an unqualified opinion and one finding. Head Start, Inc. has developed and implemented a corrective action plan to resolve this issue. The Federal Awards audit opinion was unqualified with no internal control weaknesses or significant deficiencies reported.



HEAD START inc.

Head Start Inc. dba Explorer's Academy

Statements of Financial Position

<i>As of June 30,</i>	2021	2020
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash	\$ 428,614	\$ 422,190
Restricted cash	53,566	47,208
Travel advances	1,443	1,540
Insurance receivable	-	263,025
Grant receivables	-	216,653
Prepaid expenses	2,569	-
Total current assets	486,192	950,616
Property and equipment, net of accumulated depreciation	2,250,616	1,871,544
Total assets	\$ 2,736,808	\$ 2,822,160
Liabilities and net assets		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$ 17,319	\$ 149,255
Accrued payroll and benefits	107,331	143,015
Accrued interest	1,329	2,400
Current portion of notes payable	26,566	25,402
Total current liabilities	152,545	320,072
Long-term liabilities		
Notes payable, net of current portion	497,634	522,803
Total liabilities	650,179	842,875
Net assets		
Without donor restrictions		
Undesignated	2,033,063	1,932,077
With donor restrictions		
Purpose restrictions	53,566	47,208
Total net assets	2,086,629	1,979,285
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 2,736,808	\$ 2,822,160

See Accompanying Notes to the Financial Statements.

Serving Yellowstone & Carbon Counties
615 N. 19th St. Billings, MT 59101
billingsheadstart.org



HEAD START inc.

Head Start Inc. dba Explorer's Academy

Statement of Activities

<i>Year Ended June 30, 2021</i>	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Revenues and support			
Grants	\$ 4,234,158	\$ -	\$ 4,234,158
Donated goods and services	377,417	-	377,417
Contributions	14,345	19,550	33,895
Net investment income	288	-	288
Loss on disposal of assets	(4,258)	-	(4,258)
Other revenue	5,808	-	5,808
Net assets released from restrictions:			
Satisfaction of donor-imposed restrictions	13,192	(13,192)	-
Total revenues and support	4,640,950	6,358	4,647,308
Expenses			
Program services	3,889,209	-	3,889,209
Management and general	650,755	-	650,755
Total expenses	4,539,964	-	4,539,964
Change in net assets	100,986	6,358	107,344
Net assets, beginning of year	1,932,077	47,208	1,979,285
Net assets, end of year	\$ 2,033,063	\$ 53,566	\$ 2,086,629

See Accompanying Notes to the Financial Statements.



HEAD START inc.

Head Start Inc. dba Explorer's Academy

Statement of Activities

<i>Year Ended June 30, 2020</i>	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Revenues and support			
Grants	\$ 3,846,026	\$ -	\$ 3,846,026
Student tuition and fees	22,056	-	22,056
Donated goods and services	325,836	-	325,836
Contributions	26,623	22,091	48,714
Net investment income	4,159	-	4,159
Insurance proceeds	366,663	-	366,663
Other revenue	46,906	-	46,906
Net assets released from restrictions:	-	-	-
Satisfaction of donor-imposed restrictions	25,455	(25,455)	-
Total revenues and support	4,663,724	(3,364)	4,660,360
Expenses			
Program services	3,851,993	-	3,851,993
Management and general	806,633	-	806,633
Fundraising	235	-	235
Total expenses	4,658,861	-	4,658,861
Change in net assets	4,863	(3,364)	1,499
Net assets, beginning of year	1,927,214	50,572	1,977,786
Net assets, end of year	\$ 1,932,077	\$ 47,208	\$ 1,979,285

See Accompanying Notes to the Financial Statements.

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