

Greater East Texas Community Action Program



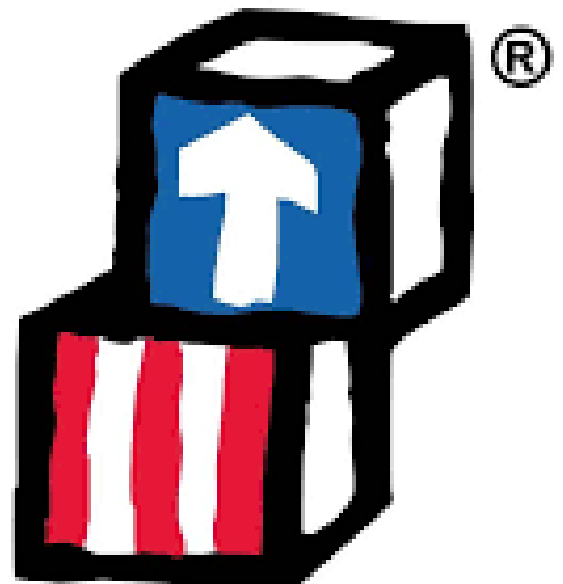
Annual Report

2024-2025

"Helping People: Changing Lives!"



www.get-cap.org



What is GETCAP DECFS ?

Greater East Texas Community Action Program's Department of Childhood and Family Services (DECFS) is a comprehensive program that encompasses a variety of program options for children and families. DECFS holds several community driven programs, all focused on developing the children and families of East Texas. Head Start and Early Head Start are two programs that are operated under the umbrella of GETCAP DECFS. Head Start is a federally funded, comprehensive child development program serving low-income children ages birth to 5 and their families. This program addresses children and their families with the overall goal of improving school readiness, fostering healthy development, and preparing young children for future success in life and school.



GETCAP DECFS provides a range of individualized services in the areas of education and early childhood development; medical, dental, and mental health; nutrition; parent involvement; and family development. The entire range of DECFS's services is responsive and appropriate to each child and family's development, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage and experience.

GETCAP DECFS has a long tradition (since 1968) of delivering comprehensive, high-quality services in areas that include: pre- reading, pre-writing, vocabulary, parent reports of children's literacy skills, access to health care, and higher use of educational activities by parents.



Administration

Executive Director: Karen Swenson

Chief Financial Officer: Rebecca Huss

Chief Human Resource Officer: Gina O'Quinn

Chief Information Technology Officer: Hollis James

Governing Bodies

GETCAP Board of Directors		
Robert Crow, President	Maylene Neal, Vice President	Caroline Garner, Secretary
Happy Willhoite	James Montoya	Whitney Burran
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Sylvia Goff	Winifred Davis	Rev. Terrance Hicks
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Sarah Wood, Vice-Chair	San Jacinto
Shiervan Ursin, Secretary	Smith
Sherrie Garner, Board Liaison	Nacogdoches
Stephanie Bravo	Walker
Charlene Richard	Houston
Klinesha Fransaw	Trinity
Arelly Victorio	Nacogdoches
Savannah Jenkins	Smith

Meet the Director

JUDY HAMILTON



As the director of Greater East Texas Community Action Program's Department of Early Childhood and Family Services, Judy Hamilton's motto & vision for the department is *"Forever Grateful- Seeking Greater."*

With this vision in mind, Mrs. Hamilton has commissioned her team to operate in excellence and strive to be the best they can be to serve the children and families of East Texas. With over 25 years of experience with Head Start, Mrs. Hamilton leads her team of highly qualified professionals with accuracy and clarity so the vision set before them can be accomplished with excellence and grace. The priorities of GETCAP remain true: to educate a generation, support families, and to change communities while providing high-quality childhood services to children and families to give them a "Head Start" in education and life!

Funding

FINANCIAL SUMMARY FOR HEAD START ACTIVITIES PER AUDIT OF FISCAL YEAR ENDED

GETCAP Head Start provides educational opportunities to children and services to their families made possible by a yearly grant provided by the Federal Government and USDA meal reimbursements.

Head Start Families and Community Volunteers generated the non-federal match to the federal grant dollar through volunteer time and donations.

GETCAP DECFS FY2024 ANNUAL EXPENSES			
CATEGORY	HEAD START	EARLY HEAD START	TOTAL
Personnel	3,262,497	1,299,915.34	4,562,412
Fringe	1,061,469	447,328.05	1,508,797
Travel	2,204	463.32	2,667
Equipment	406,199	183,774.94	589,974
Supplies	360,207	316,092.62	676,300
Contractual	458,269	-	458,269
Other	1,716,606	559,702.38	2,276,308
FEDERAL DOLLARS	7,267,450	2,807,276.65	10,074,727
In-Kind Received	2,046,788		2,046,788
NON-FEDERAL DOLLARS	2,046,788	0	2,046,788
TOTAL DOLLARS	9,314,238	2,807,276.65	12,121,514

AUDIT RESULTS

GETCAP is defined as a low-risk auditee and has incurred over 10 years of no audit findings.

DECFS Locations



GETCAP Head Start/Early Head Start at Tyler
4000 Southpark
Tyler, TX 75703



Tyler Day Nursery
2901 W. Gentry Pkwy.
Tyler, TX 75702

DECFS

collaborations

Developing cooperative relations with partners at a local and state level is how GETCAP Head Start/Early Head Start meets its high standards and generates important results for children. Over the years, GETCAP Head Start/Early Head Start increased collaborative efforts in the following areas:

- Partnerships with Local Education Agencies
- Early Intervention Programs

Established relationships with local colleges and universities as training ground for interns:

Stephen F. Austin State University

- Social Work
- Child & Family Development
- Stanley Speech & Hearing Clinic
- Health Science
- Dietetic

Sam Houston State University

- Dietetic

Angelina College

- Child & Family Development
- Business

Lone Star

Panola College

- Nursing



EDUCATION

Content Area Vision:

We are here to LEAD, RESPECT, EMPOWER, NURTURE, and BRIDGE the GAP so our children will learn, grow and be Kindergarten ready. To PROVIDE and BUILD social, emotional & academic skills around School Readiness goals that will lay a foundation for FUTURE SUCCESS!



Legacy DECFS Head Start Annual School Readiness Plan



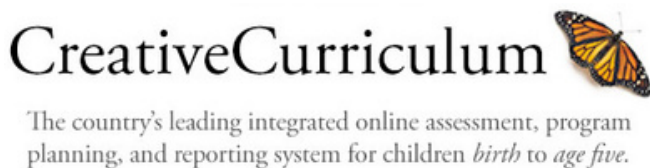
CURRICULUM APPROACH

DECFS Head Start/Early Head Start utilizes *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* & *The Creative Curriculum for Infant, Toddlers, & Two's*. It is made up of goals and objectives designed to meet the needs of the different age groups that will help staff plan and implement individual, small, and large group activities for children. This curriculum provides the knowledge of how children learn and grow socially, emotionally, cognitively, & physically. When this information is gathered, classroom staff utilize it to plan for the upcoming days and weeks. This information is also used to make sure that all students are school ready.

It is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that features exploration and discovery as a way of learning, enabling children to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical-thinking skills. *Creative Curriculum* also provides teaching practices to support children's development and it is consistent with how children develop and learn. The curriculum is based on well-known theories of child development and it meets all the criteria for a developmentally appropriate early childhood curriculum.

We believe that young children learn best with hands-on activities and through active play in their environments. Children should engage in developmentally appropriate activities and have choices to determine their decision making. We encourage and strongly believe that all DECFS staff, families, and providers should and will work closely together to form a strong team to make sure we are all giving each other the tools and resources we need to be supportive in the child's development and learning.

GETCAP Head Start/Early Head Start implements the *Conscious Discipline* system as a comprehensive self-regulation program that integrates social-emotional development and positive guidance strategies. This program has been proven to provide support to better address the needs and concerns of parents, teachers, and community regarding children's behavior and the development of self-regulation skills. Teachers strive to establish a positive environment where children can grow, thrive, and learn using the *Conscious Discipline* activities and strategies.



SCHOOL READINESS & ONGOING ASSESSMENT

Teachers develop lesson plans that meet the developmental levels and needs of the children through small and large group activities and a variety of opportunities to explore materials and concepts. The assessment tool is scientifically and researched based. It addresses the criteria set out in Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, Head Start Performance Standards, and the curriculum. Each child's data is used to track individual development towards curriculum goals. Child observation data is used to plan and individualize instruction for children. Child data is used to inform the need for referrals as determined by child's progress and developmental norms for the chronological age of the child.

DECFS utilizes *Smart Teach by Teaching Strategies* because they offer different methods for collecting information that will work better with our Head Start system. *Smart Teach* is an authentic ongoing observational system for assessing children from birth through kindergarten. It helps teachers to observe children in the context of everyday experiences, which is an effective way to learn what they know and can do. The *Child Assessment Portfolio/Objectives for Development and Learning (ODL) Rating Scale* is how we assess the development progress of each child. *Smart Teach* is a researched based system that includes predictors of school success and are aligned with the Common Core State Standards, state early learning guidelines, and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. *Smart Teach* truly helps teachers focus on what matters.



WIDELY HELD EXPECTATIONS

Analysis of data for the Spring checkpoint focuses on data collection, entry, and *Teaching Strategies “Widely Held Expectations”* to determine a baseline for children’s development to measure progress toward GETCAP’s School Readiness Goals. This information is not available for the school year 2024-2025 due to unexpected turnover at our locations and shifting of staff into different classrooms.



ACTION PLANS:

- Continue to train, coach, and ensure teachers are following the systems that are in place to gather data, score data, and input data in a timely manner.
- Review our resources to ensure they provide adequate information for our staff.
- Training provided during HS/EHS Boot Camps.
- Monitor assessments closely and have a plan for staff on how to individualize for students who are below target, to meet individual goals, and meet the requirements for the next checkpoint.
- Data will be monitored closely to make sure it is used to assess students’ achievements and measure progress towards goals.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

Efforts to prepare children for kindergarten begin as soon as a child is enrolled in one of our Head Start programs. The center staff, along with the parents, review the child's health and nutrition history, as well as completing the required developmental screenings within the first 45 days of enrollment. Our programs encourage parent participation in the screening process by using the *Ages and Stage Questionnaires* as our developmental screener and the *Age and Stages Social/Emotional Questionnaires* as our behavioral screener.

Transitioning to kindergarten involves preparing children and families for the move from Head Start to elementary school. As the end of year approaches, GETCAP staff will inform parents/guardians of kindergarten programs in their local community. Staff from local school districts are invited to meet and discuss kindergarten requirements, procedures, policies, transportation, and schedule campus tours. During campus tours, the families can visit classrooms, the cafeteria, and playgrounds. Parents are given a checklist of documents needed prior to enrollment. This allows parents/guardians the opportunity to meet school district personnel and gain information as to what is expected of children in kindergarten. Staff will also distribute public school information to parents/guardians to assist them with the registration process, if needed. GETCP staff will encourage and support parents/guardians in the transition process.

Ongoing communication and cooperation between Head Start staff and the receiving schools should be maintained throughout the year. Each child should receive a transition packet of developmentally appropriate activities upon leaving Head Start. Head Start staff will assist in gathering and submitting of pertinent information required for enrollment into kindergarten. The parents/guardians must give signed consent to release information prior to transfer of any child or family information to any other agency including school districts. The parents/guardians will be encouraged to play an active role in the enrollment of their child in the school district.

Children with special needs will receive all the previously mentioned services. The Head Start Staff should ensure the transition plan is part of an ongoing transition process rather than an isolated activity. Additionally, the teacher should discuss and identify a child's strengths and concerns. At the end of the year, parent-teacher conferences are held to discuss the child's progress, any concerns, and to promote and support parents as they advocate for their child. GETCAP staff should review the progress on IEP goals, obtain consent to release IEP packets to the LEA, explain the screening process in the public school, and what happens if the child continues to need special services upon entering kindergarten.

PROVIDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO PROMOTE SCHOOL READINESS

Professional development is generated on the school year calendar during scheduled pre-service and in-service days. All staff receive annual training prior to the school year starting and continue ongoing training throughout the school year. The Education team gathers data from observations, *CLASS*, child outcomes data, data from the fidelity tool, informal observations and teachers' own career goals to plan professional development for caregivers and teachers. Professional development can be targeted where teacher performance or knowledge is lacking. For example, during past years, GETCAP realized teachers needed additional assistance with developing a plan to capture and input data so they can see growth in all areas. Teachers also needed support in addressing severely disruptive behaviors, help with strategies to stay engaged with students, build their teacher-child interaction, and use open ended questions. The data collected from the various platforms is used to guide management with technical assistance, individualized-ongoing professional development, specialized training needs, as well as mentoring and coaching opportunities. The Center Managers conduct ongoing observations and provide feedback and technical assistance as needed which is documented on their monthly reports. During the monitoring process, the School Readiness team gathers and collects data to support, train, demonstrate, mentor and/or coach teachers as needed.



CLASSROOM STAFF OBSERVATION & MENTOR/COACHING

To support and develop teachers toward proficiency in the following areas, GETCAP Head Start/Early Head Start has implemented systems of formal and informal classroom observations and mentor/coaching:

- Teacher-child interactions
- Curriculum fidelity
- Lesson planning
- Teaching strategies to support optimal development in young learners

The School Readiness team & Center Managers are trained in appropriate observation strategies and tools. Each Head Start and Early Head Start classroom are observed regularly to ensure age and developmentally appropriate lessons and activities are implemented in the classroom. The lessons are reviewed for curriculum fidelity as well as appropriate teaching strategies. A formal observation for teacher-child interactions is conducted in each classroom at a minimum of twice per year. Information from observations is used to guide technical assistance, individual professional development, training needs, as well as mentoring and coaching opportunities. Coaches are trained in Practiced-Based Coaching strategies. Mentors are staff who have shown proficiency or expertise as teachers or in specific areas of instruction. Center Managers monitor classrooms using the *CLASS* observation tool to further promote high quality teaching strategies and best practices in the Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms.



WELLNESS & SPECIAL SERVICES

Content Area Vision:

To promote and maintain the optimum health and well-being of children, families, and staff members by providing an environment necessary to initiate efforts through ongoing outreach and education.

HEALTH SERVICES

GETCAP's commitment to wellness embraces a comprehensive vision of health for children and their families. GETCAP, through collaboration among families, staff, and health professionals, assures all child health and developmental concerns are identified. Children and their families are linked to continuous, accessible health care so that a relationship may develop between the provider and the family that will continue after the child leaves the Head Start program. Each child visits a health care provider on a schedule of preventive and primary health care to ensure that problems are quickly identified and addressed. Early identification and treatment of health problems reduces complications and improves health outcomes. With increased awareness of the long-term effects of childhood obesity, emphasis is placed on healthy meals, snacks, and cooking experiences throughout school activities and in communication with families. A Staff Wellness Program is offered as an educational and recreational opportunity for staff. This program is also available to Head Start parents. The Staff Wellness Program is designed to motivate healthy choices among parents and staff to change lives, enhance health awareness, and to create a working environment that supports good health practices.

Children with the Following	Early Head Start	Head Start	% of Enrolled Children
Continuous Accessible Health Care	42	28	10%
Continuous Accessible Dental Care	39	28	9%
Well Child Check-ups	37	11	7%
Up-to-Date Immunizations	35	23	9%

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS DISABILITIES SERVICES

GETCAP Head Start has been a pioneer meeting the needs of preschool children with special needs in a mainstream setting. Children with physical, emotional, and learning disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers learn from one another and from teachers, therapists, and parents. The program works collaboratively with the Local Education Agencies and the Early Childhood Intervention Agency to develop and implement individual education plans for children diagnosed with a disability.

Head Start also has an impressive history of providing services to children with disabilities by supporting their inclusion in all classroom and program experiences. Since 1972, Head Start has operated under a mandate to make available, at a minimum, ten percent of its enrollment opportunities to children with disabilities. Through the partnerships with the community programs, education plans are designed for children with disabilities and services are provided to promote each child's development. During the 2024-2025 program year, GETCAP Head Start served 27 children with disabilities. Children with disabilities are supported with transition goals as they move from one program into the next to ensure appropriate educational support.



Diagnosed Primary Disability	# of Early Head Start Children receiving special services	# of Head Start Children receiving special services
Health Impairment	0	0
Emotional Disturbance	0	0
Speech/Language Impairment	0	3
Intellectual Disability	0	0
Hearing Impairment (including deafness)	0	0
Orthopedic Impairment	0	0
Visual Impairment (including blindness)	0	0
Specific Learning Disability	0	0
Autism	0	0
Traumatic Brain Injury	0	0
Non-categorical/ Developmental Delay	6	1
Multiple Disabilities	0	0
Deaf-Blind	0	0
Total	6	4

NUTRITION

A child's nutrition is important to their physical and mental development. GETCAP Head Start's/Early Head Start's child nutrition services assist families in meeting each child's nutrition needs and establishing good eating habits that nurture health development and promote life-long wellbeing. Through participation in the *Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)*, children attending a Head Start/Early Head Start center receive a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and snack which provides at least 2/3 of the daily nutritional requirement. GETCAP Head Start/Early Head Start collaborates with a nutrition consultant who works with our program about 40 hours per month. Nutrition assessments are reviewed and completed for each child. Nutrition workshops, training, and cooking activities are available throughout the year.

Meal Type	Number of Meals Served
Breakfast	
AM Snack (EHS only)	
Lunch	
PM Snack	
Total Meals Provided	

Data unavailable due to CACFP
application approval
-Received late February 2025-



MENTAL HEALTH

A child's mental health is just as important as his or her physical health. GETCAP Head Start/Early Head Start makes mental health a priority by providing screenings and treatment services. Given the sensitivity of mental health issues, GETCAP strives to build trusting relationships between children, parents, staff, mental health professionals, and the larger community. Mental health professionals provide the following services:

- On-site visits to assess children's needs
- Conduct parent workshops
- Train staff in making referrals to needed services
- Act as a liaison between the families and community mental health resources

GETCAP Head Start/Early Head Start mental health professionals spent an average of 50 hours per month at the GETCAP sites. GETCAP staff consulted with mental health professionals regarding children throughout the year. Individual mental health assessments were conducted on children.



FAMILY EMPOWERMENT

Content Area Vision:

To equip, empower, and embolden families to be the best they can be for themselves and the community by providing time, resources, and support.

ERSEA

Eligibility-Recruitment-Selection-Enrollment-Attendance

Greater East Texas Community Action Program (GETCAP) Department of Early Childhood and Family Service (DECFS) will ensure all children receiving services from the GETCAP Early Head Start/Head Start program have been determined eligible according to the guidelines described in the Head Start Program Performance Standard (HSPPS). DECFS will ensure it maintains its funded enrollment level and fills any vacancies within 30 days with qualified applicants. DECFS will encourage families to maintain consistent attendance in the Head Start/Early Head Start program. Consistent attendance is defined as present or participating for 85% of expected hours or more. Head Start/Early Head Start staff help families identify barriers to consistent attendance. Staff initiate support as appropriate. If participation or attendance ceases, staff should make efforts to re-engage families to resume attendance. A slot is vacant when attendance does not resume and may be considered an enrollment opportunity.

DECFS Program	Total # of Families Served	Total # of Children Served	Total Funded Enrollment
Head Start			
Early Head Start			
Expectant Families	N/A	N/A	N/A

Percentage of Eligible Children Served

PROGRAM	Applications Received	Eligible Children Served	Percentage
Head Start			
Early Head Start			
Total			

Services/Number of Families Provided Services

Services	Number of Families Provided Services
Emergency/Crisis Intervention	
Transportation	
Mental Health	
English as a Second Language	
Job Training	
Substance Abuse Prevention/ Treatment	
Child Abuse & Neglect	
Domestic Violence	
Health Education	
Parenting Education	

Family Engagement



From the very first meeting with the family, parents/guardians are offered the opportunity to be involved with the program. Parents/Guardians attend site parent meetings, serve on the Policy Council, and Health/Social Services Advisory Council. Families are always welcome in the classroom and are encouraged to help with or lead activities & projects, plan classroom activities with the teaching staff, and share with the class regarding home-life. There are a number of ways that parents can help teaching staff:

- Share opinions, ideas, and thoughts
- Work on projects at home
- Communicate with the staff
- Help other parents feel welcome
- Reinforce learning at home.

As their child's first and most important teacher, parents/guardians have an important role in the program. They are encouraged to participate in lesson planning. We reach out to the parents for whom English is their second language to help them participate in activities and meetings by providing interpreters. Along with regular site and committee meetings, there are Family Fun Nights and other events for all families in the program.