Early Childhood Mental Health Services

Boulder County Head Start (BCHS)’s Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation program (ECMHC) entered its 5th school year. We ground our consultation practices in proactive and relationship-based approaches, which proved vital in the transition back to in-person services. For the second year in a row, an intern from Metro State University’s master’s in social work program joined the ECMHC team.

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### BCHS Revenue and Expenditures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOCC Subsidy</td>
<td>$467,204</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CCAP &amp; CPP</td>
<td>$599,497</td>
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<tr>
<td>APRA</td>
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Our Children

- 88% identify as Latinx
- 65% speak a language other than English at home
- 61% speak Spanish as the primary language at home
- 100% of eligible children who sought enrollment were served
- 50% of enrollment capacity was maintained on average during the year

Our Services

- 76 cumulative enrollment
- 34 returned for their second year
- 38 graduated to kindergarten at the end of the school year

Serving Children with Disabilities

BCHS partners with Boulder Valley School District to diagnose children’s learning disabilities and delays during the school year. Identified children received all therapeutic services in their BCHS classroom.

6 children qualified for and received speech and language disability services
3 children’s disabilities were identified during the school year

Professional Education Standards

At Boulder County Head Start (BCHS), we are committed to educational excellence in service of our youngest residents. We monitor and track child development with ongoing assessments, family feedback, and classroom observations. To strengthen each child’s school readiness, we invest in staff professional development and partner with parents engaging research-based engagement practices and strategies.

Child Assessments

BCHS uses the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment system to assess student growth in all areas of development.

Between the first child assessment period in October and the final in May, students demonstrated the most improvement in mathematics, literacy, and language domains.

Preparing Children and Families for Kindergarten

BCHS’s bilingual and bicultural approach to child and family services sets the foundation for lifelong parent-educator partnership during the early schooling years. We believe these are the keys to ensuring our school is ready for each child individually so that the child can meet their fullest potential for growth.

BCHS provides annual school readiness activities and actively partners with local school providers in support of Head Start families preparing for kindergarten transition. Kindergarten readiness and transition activities included but were not limited to:

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- Summer backpacks with school supplies, including art and writing materials along with developmentally and linguistically appropriate books generously provided by Boulder Housing Partners Bringing School Home Program

Fall Assessments

Spring Assessments

In the 2021-2022 school year, the program saw the largest increase in children’s school readiness in BCHS’s program history.

Prepared children and families for kindergarten transition

Children and Family Supports & Services

Boulder County Head Start staff work in partnership with families to access resources in Boulder County that address identified needs and enhance resiliency.

For Our Kids

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all non-essential adults were restricted from our buildings. This presented significant barriers in implementing our pre-pandemic approaches to completing health assessments in partnership with community resources. Considering this, BCHS staff increased hands-on and individualized support for families to access health services.

- 57% of children had at least one well child medical exam

For Our Parents

Family and Community Professionals (FCP) build relationships with families prior to the start of the school year through a personalized intake and application process. Pre-pandemic, all family partnership meetings were conducted in-person. During the pandemic, meetings with families were held virtually, indoors while masked and socially distanced, or in outdoor settings.

From the initial contact enrollment process, FCP staff begin to work with families to help identify strengths and goals. These goals are revisited throughout the school year. We make referrals to community resource partners for specialized services to help reach goals or attend to emerging needs.

The following two charts demonstrate the referrals to in-house and community resources provided to families by BCHS family services staff. The table on the left illustrates the percent of families accessing both internal and external resources, while the table on the right shows which resource categories were most referred out for services.

- 50% of children were up to date on their immunization schedule by the end of the school year
- 2 children were exempted from immunization

In-house and community resources received by season

Community Resources by category

- 56
- 32
- 22
- 19
- 15
- 8
- 5
- 4

Fall
Winter
Spring

External
Direct
Neither

Most requests for services occur at the beginning of the school year. This is a key transition period as families enter or return to Head Start when they have increased access to resources and referrals.

The highest external referrals are for sibling, nutrition, summer reads, and to supplement the school day for kindergarten-bound children. These families are specifically in need of programs that offer free or very low-cost fall day childcare.
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### Our Services

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- 34 returned for their second year
- 35 3-4 year-olds served, cumulatively
- 38 graduated to kindergarten at the end of the school year
- 41 4-5 year-olds served, cumulatively

### Serving Children with Disabilities

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- 57% of children had at least one well child medical exam
- 50% of children were up to date on their immunization schedule by the end of the school year
- 58% increase in the number of children who were up to date on their immunization schedule from enrollment to the end of the school year
- 2 enrolled children were exempted from immunization

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### Growth of kindergarten-bound children in the cognitive domain

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<th>Spring Assessment</th>
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<tr>
<td>61%</td>
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About Boulder County Head Start

The Head Start program began in 1965 during the Johnson administration as a federal summer program for children in poverty entering kindergarten. Services began in Boulder County in that inaugural year.

Over the years, the program has evolved to meet the needs of three- to five-year-old children and their families living in poverty. The program has seen many changes over time, including shifting services from half-day (2.75 hours per day) to full working day (9.5 hours per day); adapting to changing population demographics from serving the Hmong community in the 1990s, to the Latinx community we largely serve today; serving increased rates of children with disabilities; and adopting new programming locations in order to best serve the community with the highest quality environments and facilities.

Boulder County Head Start opened The Dagny School in Lafayette in August 2019 in partnership with the YMCA of Northern Colorado. This expansion project was generously funded in collaboration by the residents of Boulder County through the Worthy Cause fund, Boulder County Commissioners, and the Office of Head Start.

Boulder County Head Start Policy Council

Boulder County Head Start’s Policy Council is a parent oversight board comprised of both current and former parents and community members. Consistent with all other aspects of the program, BCHS’ Policy Council was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; Policy Council saw a 78% attrition rate during the 2021-2022 school year and throughout the pandemic.

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Mari Camacho
Jennifer Barbera
Jessica Aguirre

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### Families

- 13 families received mental health supports through embedded services
- 100% of teaching staff and classrooms received weekly observations, support, and consultation
- 76% of classrooms were staffed with at least one teacher trained in the Conscious Discipline model
- 20 families were referred to an outside mental health service
- 76% of children received support through individualized teacher consultations

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Commissioner Matt Jones reads to children at BCHS’s Lafayette Community School location.