About the Program

University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development

Early Head Start Family Foundations (EHS/FF) has been serving families in low-income communities in the city of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County for over 25 years. The program provides intensive home visiting services to 310 expectant families and families with children ages 0-3 years. Services include development and health for infants and toddlers; and the promotion of the parent’s abilities to support their child’s cognitive, social, emotional and physical development in order to prepare the child to enter a Head Start classroom or preschool program. The program continues to enhance its expertise in infant mental health, promoting healthy parent-child relationships, and preparing families and their children for success in school. In June of 2020 the EHS/FF was awarded CARES Act funding to support preventative, preparedness and responsive activities during the coronavirus pandemic. These funds will allow us to provide additional support to children and families during this very difficult time.

The Program continues to use Partners for a Healthy Baby as its researched-based curriculum which provides information to parents to work with their child between home visits. The curriculum also enhances the learning abilities of children to form a secure attachment with their parent, expand their curiosity and imagination, and improve language and communication skills. A healthy lifestyle for children and expectant moms is practiced as well as playing and learning in a safe home environment. The curriculum also strengthens families and their child to enter a new preschool environment in terms of what to expect.

Based on the Head Start Performance Standards, hearing and vision screenings for children must utilize an evidence based tool. The program has implemented two new screening instruments, Go Check Kids and the Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE) for the vision and hearing screenings.

Practice Based Coaching (PBC) continues to be a valuable asset to the program. Staff utilize the PBC opportunity for their continued professional development growth by strengthening their skills as a Home Visitor and working with families. Because the corona pandemic has impacted our ability to have in person coaching meetings, PBC has continued virtually. Sixteen Home Visitors have completed or are in the process of finishing a PBC through fiscal year 2019-2020.

Financial Report

The FY19–20 budget includes $4,319,152 Federal Funds. $3,413,783 is budgeted for four sub awards for six sites. This includes the following:

- **Focus on Renewal** – $506,274
- **Community Human Services Corp** – $991,505
- **The Consortium for Public Education** – $1,386,808
- **Turtle Creek Valley Services** – $529,196

The remainder is budgeted for OCD compensation, supplies, travel and space rental $905,369.

The program received $272,430 in CARES Act funding from the Office of Head Start to support preventative, preparedness and responsive activities during the coronavirus pandemic. These funds are budgeted for the six sites based upon funded enrollment numbers. The plan is to use the CARES Act funds to support mental health/wellbeing, safety supplies and cleaning and sanitizing of space and materials.

Annual Report–School Readiness Data 2020

From December 2013 through March of 2018 the program has collected child outcome data on 596 children with at least two completed assessments using the OUNCE Profile. Out of those 596 children, 358 (60%) maintained a developing as expected rating across all domains. 125 children (21%) improved in at least one domain over time and 141 children (24%) declined in at least one domain over time.

In Spring of 2018, the program implemented the collection of the ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE as the screening tool and ongoing screening assessment for the program. From April 2018–September 2020, the program has collected ongoing ASQ data on over 400 children. The ongoing assessment indicates that over 90% of the children are at low or no risk for social-emotional problems. In addition, the ongoing assessment indicates that over 80% of the children are at low or no risk for developmental delays in communication and language, physical, approaches to learning, and cognitive domains.

*As the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent shelter in place began in March, information collected on the ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE has been done virtually with a reduction in direct observation by the Home Visitor. Parents have continued to complete the on-going screenings with direct observations. Home Visitors continue to monitor the child’s progress and engage parents in conversations around their child’s development.
100% of enrolled children have a medical home and have a health insurance provider with 54% of enrolled children up-to-date on their immunizations. Nationally, there was a decrease in children receiving immunizations due to the Coronavirus.

The Coronavirus pandemic has placed great strains on families and staff. During this time, our program nurses continue to call families regularly to check on the health of expectant mothers, newborns and all children well or with existing medical conditions. During the months of March through June, many of our parents chose not to take their children for well child care visits which meant that these children did not receive their scheduled immunizations due to the possible exposure to COVID-19. Although direct care could not be administered by our nurses, families were encouraged to go to the Emergency department for any emergent concerns. Educational materials were also made available for parents to read from our program’s Facebook page, newsletters and nutrition newsletters. Home visitors and nurses were available to deliver needed items like diapers, formula, and food to a family’s doorstep. Our mental health team continues to provide amazing support and education to our families and our staff with all the many stressful issues families are facing such as lack of employment, online schooling for their children and personal mental health concerns living in a COVID-19 environment.

Our EHS/FF Program continues a dental partnership with UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh and Big Smiles of Pennsylvania. All children (100%) have the opportunity to receive dental care from either of these facilities. During the pandemic, dental offices were closed, except for emergencies, from March through August. During the limited 2019-20 program year, 24 children had a dental exam and of these, 21% were children less than two years old.

EHS/FF continues to partner with Allegheny Link, a referral and information line for county home visiting programs. This resource is for housing, homeless services and disability programs with specialists who can work with parents and expectant families regarding child development, health and lifestyle.

A safe environment is essential for a healthy family life. Home visitors and nurses use an assessment checklist/questionnaire with families to determine their safety needs. The program also partners with the Allegheny County Health Department Safe & Healthy Homes Program for interested families.
School Readiness Goals

**Social and Emotional Goals**

- Children will establish a secure attachment to their parents.
- Children will begin to develop and demonstrate a positive sense of self and express their needs and wants.
- Children will begin to develop and demonstrate control of their feelings and behaviors.
- Children will begin to learn and integrate routines and directions.

**Physical Well-Being and Motor Development**

- Children will develop control of large muscles for movement, balance and coordination.
- Children will develop control of small muscles for manipulation and exploration.

**Health, Nutrition and Safety**

- Children and their family will practice a healthy lifestyle.
- Expectant parents will participate in prenatal care and healthy nutrition to ensure the best possible outcomes for baby.
- Children will play and learn in safe home environments.

**Transition**

- Parents will have a relationship with the pre-school setting in their community or school district.
- Children will understand what to expect in their new environment.

All goals are culturally sensitive and adapted to meet the varying developmental needs of children.

The program will aggregate child assessment data quarterly during the program year, analyze the data, share the information from the data with parents and community members and revise/add to the school readiness goals as the data shows a need.