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 extensive home visiting services to 310 expectant families and families with children ages zero to three 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.

During the 2020-2021 program year Family Foundations Early Head Start program provided home visits to enrolled children and families both via Zoom/virtually and in-person. The program home visitors and staff did an amazing job of adapting to ever changing conditions and environments while holding health and safety as their top priority. Home visitors and families used their creativity to planning home visits and group socializations throughout the year. The pandemic resulted in staffing and enrollment challenges in 2020-2021. Despite these challenges the program home visitors, child development specialist, parent engagement specialists, mental health therapists, program coordinators and other staff continued to provide the highest quality service to children, families, and communities.

Partnering with Peers

Family Foundations EHS has a new professional development initiative. Partnering with Peers (PWP) is a professional learning community created to support Family Foundations Early Head Start staff in developing their knowledge base of Infant Mental Health through guided lectures, community sharing and real-world applications.

Recently, five Home Visiting staff engaged with one another to learn about Infant Mental Health (IMH) from program experts and how it improves Home Visiting practices. The staff were provided opportunities to share and reflect on the content that included Family Engagement, Child Development in Relationships and Trauma Informed Care to name a few of the twelve-week sessions.

The feedback about the experience was positive as it helped staff to better understand IMH in their work and to build relationships with other Home Visitors from other sites. This experience will be offered to Home Visitors on a continual basis. We are anxious to begin the next group in the Spring 2022.

Financial Report

The FY20–21 budget includes $4,319,152 Federal Funds. $3,231,839 is budgeted for four sub awards for six sites. This includes the following:

- **Focus on Renewal** – $475,825
- **Community Human Services Corp** – $895,772
  406,149 Hill District and $489,623 North Side
- **The Consortium for Public Education** – $1,341,911
  $782,541, Clairton, $462,341 East End Training & Technical Assistance $97,056
- **Turtle Creek Valley Services** – $518,331 Triboro/Braddock

The remainder is budgeted for OCD compensation, supplies, travel and space rental $1,087,313.

In April 2021 we received American Rescue Plan funds totaling $464,215. None of the funds were spent during FY20-21. The end date for the funds is 3/31/2023. These funds were budgeted for the six sites based upon funded enrollment numbers.

Annual Report—School Readiness Data 2021

During the 2020-2021 grant year, the program collected screening ASQ-3 screening data on 139 children and ongoing assessment data for 191 children. The ongoing assessment indicates that nearly 90% of these children are at low or no risk for social-emotional problems. In addition, the ongoing assessment indicates that over 60% of these children are at low or no risk for developmental delays in communication and language, physical, approaches to learning, and cognitive domains.

In Fall 2020, the program implemented the collection of the Ounce as an additional ongoing assessment tool for the program. Nearly 200 children received an ongoing Ounce assessment during the 2020-2021 grant year. The ongoing assessment indicates that over 80% of these children are developing as expected across all Ounce domains.
Highlights
Health 2021

- In 2020-21, 95% of enrolled children had a medical home and 77% had health insurance. A review of immunization records indicated that 64% of enrolled children were current, complete or not due for scheduled immunizations. The remaining children were either not current or past due for scheduled immunizations. The Coronavirus continues to impact these numbers.

- The Coronavirus pandemic has placed great strains on families and staff. During this time, our program nurses maintained contact with our families via zoom, a phone call, or a porch visit. The nurses would use this time to educate and check on the health of the expectant mothers and families. With limited appointments for in person office visits, the introduction of telemedicine and the uncertainty of the novel Corona virus, many parents chose not to take their child to the doctor for their Well Child exams. As a result, many children fell behind schedule with their immunizations. Although direct care could not be administered by our nurses, families were encouraged to go to the emergency department for any emergency 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. 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.

- Our EHS/FF Program continues to provide dental exams and care for all our enrolled young children with our UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh dental partnership. During 2020 and 2021 Covid-19 continued to offer health challenges to our children and families but through encouraging efforts of home visitors and nurses many children were seen both at Children’s Hospital and private dental offices. Of the 42 children receiving dental exams during the 2020-21 program year 45% were less than 2 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. To restore connectivity due to the pandemic for families in need of services, plans are underway to participate in the next year with Hello Baby, a service being reintroduced by DHS.
The year has been unlike any other. We have had highs and lows but yet we keep on going. We want to take a moment to mark this point in time for us as an EHS community. Please share a home visiting moment during the COVID pandemic that stands out for you.

EHS work during the pandemic was still happening. Whether it was a virtual home visit, social over zoom or a call, families and children were receiving services.

Dedication
The word that comes to mind is dedication. It has taken a lot of work on both sides to make this process work and families have made it as easy as possible.

Outdoor Visits
I had a mom say to me - You have been the most consistent person in my life since the pandemic began. We had weekly phone or video visits every week. Mom mentioned she looked forward to it and so did I.

Outdoor visits for months in seasons of snow, rain, and sun

MEETING A NEWBORN FOR THE 1ST TIME AFTER VISITING FOR 8 MOS VIRTUALLY

Facetime
Witnessing a hospital birth of a baby during a pandemic

FALL LEAVES

Adaptability
The whole two years would have gone a lot differently without the support of staff and families. I am forever grateful for that.
The one thing that has stuck with me through this whole experience is how understanding, committed, and flexible my families have been. This has been a very hard situation for everyone.

Increased community engagement by being outdoors more

We learned how to better use technology

Increased mental health support

BABIES FORMED RELATIONSHIP WITH HV THROUGH VIDEO CHAT - THEY KNEW THEM IN PERSON - SMILED AND PLAYED

IT WAS AMAZING THAT FAMILIES PARTICIPATED VIRTUALLY MORE OFTEN THAN IN PERSON

Texting
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.

Language and Literacy
► Children will use receptive and expressive language and communication strategies in their home language.
► Children will understand and use oral language to engage in conversations
► Children will use words to describe what they are thinking and doing

Approaches Toward Learning
► Children will demonstrate interest, curiosity and imagination in exploring their world.
► Children will demonstrate persistence in learning and discovery

Cognition and General Knowledge
► Children will engage in stories and books.
► Children will use their senses to discover how to make things work, what objects and people do and how they can make things happen.

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.