



Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority, Inc.

Head Start/Early Head Start

Blount · Cocke · Grainger · Hamblen · Jefferson · Monroe · Sevier · Union
2023-2024

About Our Program



www.dceaheadstart.org

In 1965, Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority Head Start Program began providing comprehensive child development services to economically disadvantaged children and their families with a focus on assisting preschoolers to develop the social, early literacy, and math skills to be successful in school. Early Head Start was added in 2003 and we began serving pregnant women, infants, and toddlers.

We provide services in 8 counties in East Tennessee in 41 locations and 57 classrooms. Children receive comprehensive services including health, dental, nutritional, and mental health screenings and follow up, plus classroom education services.

As parents are their child's primary teachers, our program partners with parents to ensure they have the tools necessary to help prepare their children for public school and beyond. The Head Start approach involves supporting the child, parent, and family. Parents have opportunities to volunteer in the classroom and are part of their center parent committee, and several serve on Policy Council.

About Our Agency



Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority, Inc. is a Community Action Agency serving 30 counties in Tennessee and 2 counties in Kentucky.

The purpose of the Agency is to help families living in poverty improve their lives by providing them with assistance and services that they are not able to provide for themselves. The focus of the Agency is to help people help themselves.

DCEA Head Start/Early Head Start is a federal program primarily funded by the Dept. of Health & Human Services. Our program does not discriminate due to race, creed, color, national origin, religion, sex, family status, handicap, veteran status, political affiliation, or beliefs.

127 Cedar Street
Morristown, TN 37814

Program Director
Curt Amos

County Break Down

Blount: 7 rooms, 119 slots

Cocke: 6 rooms, 102 slots

Grainger: 3 rooms, 51 slots

Hamblen: 12 rooms, 204 slots

Jefferson: 4 rooms, 68 slots

Monroe: 4 rooms, 68 slots

Sevier: 9 rooms, 153 slots

Union: 3 rooms, 51 slots

EHS: 9 rooms, 72 slots

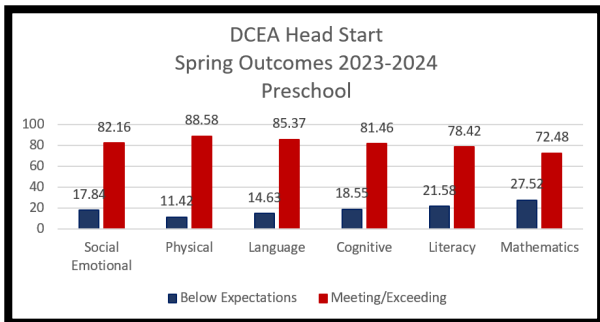
Our program serves 816 preschoolers across eight counties and 72 pregnant mommies, infants, and toddlers in one county.



534 East 1st North Street
Morristown, TN 37814
Megan Barnard
Executive Director
www.douglascherokee.org

School Readiness

Our school readiness goals address the five central domains from the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and are aligned with the Tennessee State Early Learning Developmental Standards and local standards. Goals are also aligned with the programs curriculum assessment tool (and CLASS domains for preschool children).



This graph shows Spring 2024 outcomes for our Preschool children.

Goals are measured using the Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment (TSG). Data on children’s progress is collected throughout the school year and assessment checkpoints are completed three times per year to identify current developmental level. TSG reports are generated and analyzed to determine individual, classroom, and program level progress toward school readiness goals. This information is utilized in the Community Assessment and to develop program goals and training plans.

Services for Children and Families

Head Start

- ◆ 921 three and four-year-old children were served.
- ◆ 98% of children ended the year with a medical home.
- ◆ 100% either received all immunizations or had exemptions.
- ◆ 678 children ended the year with a dental home.



HS/EHS receives funding from the Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to help provide nutritious foods for our children.

Early Head Start

- ◆ 99 Early Head Start participants were served.
- ◆ 96 were infants or toddlers.
- ◆ 3 were pregnant women.
- ◆ 99% of children ended the year with a medical home.
- ◆ 100% of the 96 children served received all immunizations or had exemptions.

Services to Children with Special Needs

Head Start

- ◆ 98 children had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP).
- ◆ Therapy services were provided by local school systems and supplemented in the classroom.

Early Head Start

- ◆ 44 infants and toddlers had an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- ◆ Tennessee Early Intervention Services (TEIS) provided the therapy needed on site.
- ◆ 4 children with IFSPs turned 3 and transitioned to Head Start and through assessment, qualified for IEPs.



Over 15% of enrolled children received special services at the end of our 23-24 program year, exceeding the mandated 10% of enrollment.

Transition within the Program and into Kindergarten

There are many transitions that take place at Head Start. From pregnant mommy, to the transition of the infant entering the classroom for the first time, all the way to our children and families transitioning to kindergarten. Every Head Start child has a transition plan that follows them throughout their Head Start experience no matter what age/level they begin. Each year parent trainings are held in partnership with local public school systems to ensure parents get the information they need to have a successful transition into kindergarten. In the classrooms, staff prepare children by practicing the use of trays at mealtime and listening to stories and books about going to kindergarten. Each child received a pencil box filled with pencils, a pencil sharpener, crayons, glue sticks, scissors, and pamphlet on kindergarten.



339 children from our program transition to kindergarten in the fall of 2024.

Parent, Family, and Community

Creating a quality Head Start/Early Head Start Program requires staff and parents working together, sharing their talents, knowledge, and energy so children can receive the greatest benefit.

Our goal is to work with families to help build connections that will support children and families with the skills and tools necessary for learning.



Community members and parents are an important part of the program. Together they make a lasting impact!

Involvement and Volunteering

Our program recognizes that family and community engagement is needed to build relationships that can positively impact children and their families for a lifetime. We believe that partnership with parents is essential to providing quality early childhood services. Our staff also work to engage fathers as advocates, lifelong educators, and first teachers of their children. Family members and father figures serve key roles in the healthy development of their children and families. They also have much to add to their Head Start communities. Our program provides a variety of ways for parents to support their children in their journey toward School Readiness.

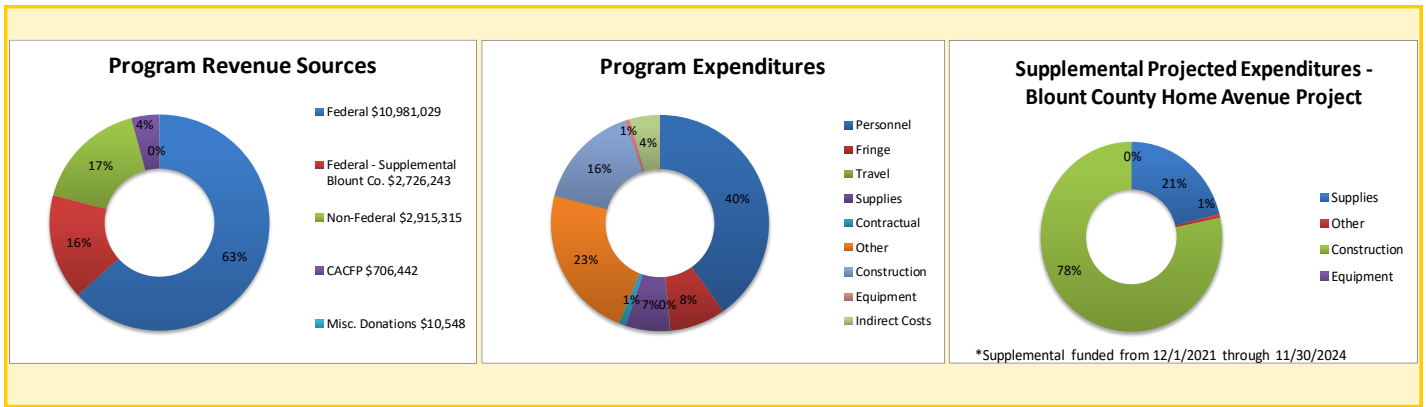


Male Involvement and parent volunteers are encouraged throughout our program.

Our program enhances the local communities we serve. In order to continue receiving federal funding, we must receive donations from the community. Donations called 'In-Kind' must equal at least 20% of the total dollar amount received from the grant. These donations may include time, space, and materials. Also, employment with benefits for current and former parents impacts the community in a big way. Historically, around 36% of our staff are current or former Head Start/Early Head Start parents. The program employs around 280 staff in the eight-county service area.

Also, local businesses provide food, classroom materials, maintenance and janitorial supplies, and program vehicles. Locally contracted services include: pest control, mowing, maintenance/repairs, HVAC, etc. It has been estimated that for every dollar spent through the Head Start program, the community benefits at a rate of five dollars. We logged **16,742.10 volunteer hours** this program year.

Lets Talk Money



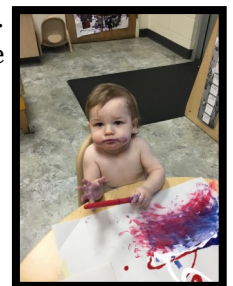
Our Program at a Glance

- ⇒ 1,020 children and families served
- ⇒ 95% of families served were below federal poverty guidelines or categorically eligible (homeless, foster care, other public assistance).
- ⇒ 97.8% average monthly enrollment
- ⇒ 100% received medical exams
- ⇒ 61% of our children received dental exams

Maryville Head Start



On July 26, 2024, our program proudly held a ribbon cutting ceremony to mark the opening of our brand-new childcare facility in Blount County. This building has been over 3 years in the making. Our new building has 5 classrooms, meeting and office space, a commercial kitchen, and a partially enclosed playground. On August 8th, we began operating 4 classrooms with 68 children. We closed 4 classrooms that were located in county school system buildings. Being independent from the school system means we can operate on a separate schedule that better fits our program's needs.



Early Head Start staff create sensory fun experiences through the arts.

Federal Monitoring Review Information

We had Focus Area 2 and a CLASS review this program year. There was an area of noncompliance as dental exams were not completed for all children within the 90-day requirement. This was not a surprise as obtaining dental exams is difficult for many programs. We are finalizing our plan of corrective action and will submit the plan to the Office of Head Start in September.

Audit Information

The 2023 audit was completed, and the results were an unqualified opinion—no deficiencies or concerns.

Mission Statement

To be a quality-focused organization in order to bring about a greater degree of social competency in children and self-sufficiency of families.

Philosophy

To be respectful of all, empower children and their families, and to be a positive influence in the community we serve.