



Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority, Inc.

Head Start/Early Head Start

Blount • Cocke • Grainger • Hamblen • Jefferson • Monroe • Sevier • Union
2025-2026

This Annual Report to the Public is available on our website www.dceaheadstart.org.



About Our Program

In 1965, Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority, Inc. 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 31 locations and 49 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.



www.dceaheadstart.org

127 Cedar Street
Morristown, TN 37814

Program Director
Curt Amos

County Break Down

Blount: 6 rooms, 102 slots
Cocke: 6 rooms, 102 slots
Grainger: 3 rooms, 51 slots
Hamblen: 9 rooms, 153 slots
Jefferson: 4 rooms, 68 slots
Monroe: 4 rooms, 68 slots
Sevier: 4 rooms, 68 slots
Union: 3 rooms, 51 slots
EHS: 10 rooms, 80 slots

Our program serves 663 preschoolers across eight counties and 80 pregnant mommies, infants, and toddlers in Hamblen county.



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.



www.douglascherokee.com

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.



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

School Readiness

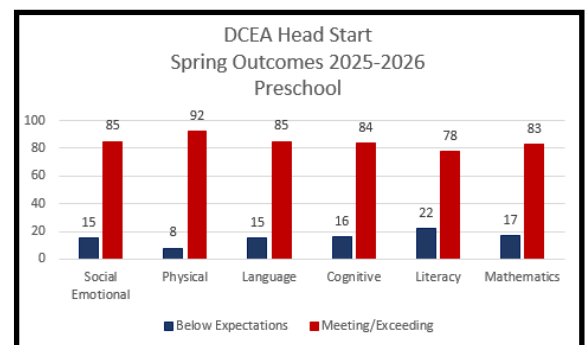
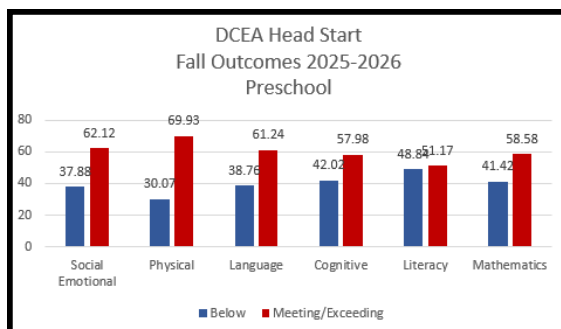


Healthy meals and brushing teeth are just a few ways we promote healthy lifestyles each day.

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.

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.

Caregivers are required to participate in parent-teacher conferences twice a program year. These meetings are important, because caregivers get a clear picture of what their child is progressing in and receive tips on how to foster learning at home.



The graph to the left are the Fall Outcomes at the first checkpoint. The graph to the right are the Spring Outcomes at the final checkpoint.

Transition within the Program and into Kindergarten

Children develop and move through the early stages of life while in the Head Start program. There are many transitions that take place as they grow. These transitions do not have to be a difficult. Every Head Start child has a transition plan that follows them throughout their Head Start experience no matter what age/level they begin. We serve pregnant mommies, infants, toddlers, and preschool age children.

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, special activities are planned to help children develop a better understanding of what to expect in kindergarten. This year each child entering kindergarten received a backpack, pencil box filled with pencils, a pencil sharpener, crayons, glue sticks, scissors, and a pamphlet on kindergarten.



Literacy is promoted throughout the program. We participate in Read Across America Week!

Services to Children with Special Needs

The Head Start Program Performance Standards requires programs to serve children with special needs. Special services can include: speech/language, behavioral therapy, and occupational therapy.

- ◆ 92 Head Start preschool 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.
- ◆ 28 infants and toddlers had an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- ◆ Tennessee Early Intervention Services (TEIS) provide therapy needed on site.
- ◆ Over 15% of enrolled children received special services while attending our program exceeding the mandated 10% of enrollment this year.



Making connections with children builds trust and bonds that last a lifetime.

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement



Parent trainings are held in every county each year to bring the community together to provide valuable resources to our families.

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.

Parents are encouraged to attend the Active Parenting: First Five Years sessions. These sessions help parents develop skills to better equip them for the more difficult parts of parenting.

Involvement and Volunteering

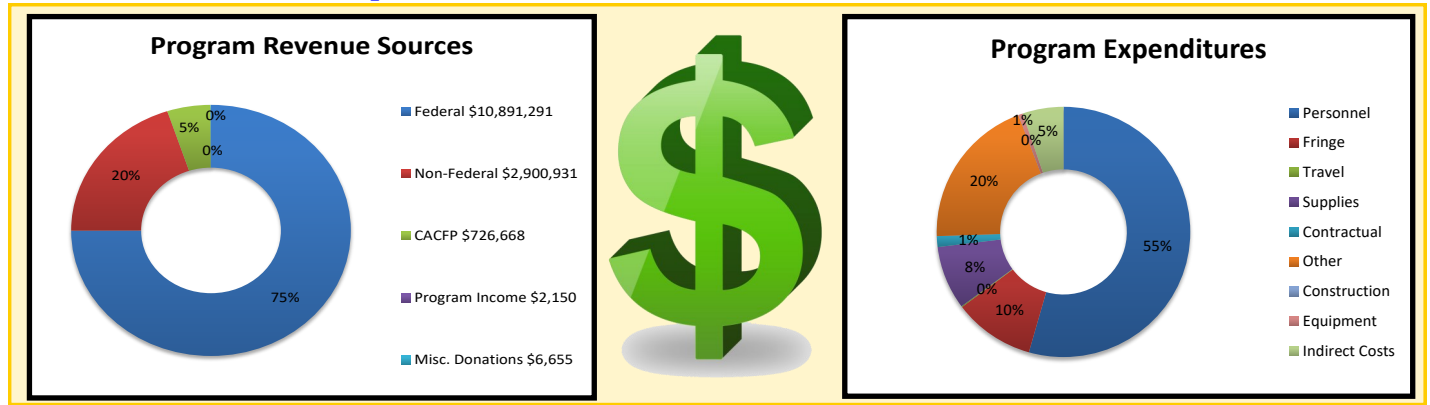
Our program recognizes that family and community engagement is essential to building relationships that can positively impact children and their families for a lifetime. We believe that partnerships with parents are essential to providing quality early childhood services. Our staff also work to engage 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. This year classrooms planned “Fun Fridays” to promote creative activities to engage families in the classroom.



Families are the child's first and most important teacher.

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 impact the community in a big way. Currently, around 34% of our staff are current or former Head Start/Early Head Start parents. The program employs over 255 staff in the eight county service area. **We logged 89,815.25 volunteer hours this program year which exceeded the 20% total dollar match!**

Lets Talk Money



Our Program At a Glance

- ⇒ 794 Head Start children served
- ⇒ 128 Early Head Start children served
- ⇒ 3 Pregnant mommies served
- ⇒ Average monthly enrollment 99%
- ⇒ 99% of enrolled children received medical exams
- ⇒ 97% of enrolled children received dental exams
- ⇒ 4 different home languages were spoken
- ⇒ 265 children transitioned to kindergarten
- ⇒ 95% of families served were income eligible, foster, homeless, or received public assistance. Most families who were not income or categorically eligible had a child with a perceived or diagnosed disability upon enrollment.



Outdoor play is an essential part of each day!

Federal Monitoring Review Information

Our program's last Focus Area 2 and CLASS review was in the 2023-2024 program year. The program just completed year one of the five year grant cycle. We anticipate required federal reviews at any point in 2026-2027.

Audit Information

The 2025 audit was completed and the results were an unqualified opinion-no deficiencies or concerns. The 2026 audit will be scheduled for this fall.



These children are experiencing music in a special music center.

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.