

2023-2024

**HEAD START
EARLY HEAD START
ANNUAL REPORT**



"Creating a brighter future for the children and La Familia"

Neighbors In Need Of Services, Inc.

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Rio Hondo, Texas 78583**

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www.ninosinc.org**

NINOS, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer



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GOVERNANCE

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors for a Head Start program plays a crucial role in overseeing and guiding the program's strategic direction, ensuring it meets the needs of the children and families it serves. The board is responsible for governance, financial oversight, policy development, monitoring performance outcomes, ensuring resources are allocated effectively and ensuring compliance with federal and state regulations.

NINOS, Inc. Board of Directors

Roberto Lopez, Chairperson

Mary Sosa-Villarreal, Vice-Chairperson

Juanita Ortiz, Secretary/Parliamentarian

Esperanza Vera, Treasurer/Sergeant at Arms

Denjuami Barker, Member

Maria F. De Ford, Member

Juan Moreno, Jr. Member

Alma Ruiz, Member

Gilberto Hinojosa, Member



Policy Council

The Policy Council serves as a key decision-making body that represents the voices of parents and community members. Its primary role is to collaborate with the program's management in shaping policies and ensuring the program meets the needs of children and families. The council participates in critical decisions, including the approval of budgets, grant applications, personnel functions, and program policies, while also helping to set program goals.

NINOS, Inc. Policy Council is comprised of 42 members, one representative and one alternate from each area who are parents of enrolled or previously enrolled children and two representatives from within the community. The Policy Council plays a vital role in promoting parent involvement, enhancing program quality, and fostering strong community partnerships.

NINOS, Inc. Policy Council Elected Positions

Melissa N. Tamayo, Chairperson

Lizeth Ballesteros, Vice-Chairperson

Gwendolyn Portocarrero, Secretary/Treasurer



WHO WE ARE

Our Mission

Creating a brighter future for the children and la familia.

Our Vision

To enhance the development of young children with love and tender care and promote positive outcomes for families by recognizing and responding to each child's and family's unique strengths and needs to optimize growth, development, and learning opportunities.

Our Values

Teamwork, Respect, Integrity, Transparency, Communication, Love, and Tender Care.

Our History

NINOS, Inc. (Neighbors In Need Of Services, Inc.) is a Head Start and Early Head Start program that serves families and young children in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Established in 1990, NINOS, Inc. was founded to address the needs of low-income families by providing comprehensive early childhood education services, including health, nutrition, and family support. The program is designed to prepare children from birth to age four for school success and lifelong learning.

NINOS, Inc. grew over the years to become one of the largest early childhood education providers in the region, expanding its reach to both Head Start (ages 3-4) and Early Head Start (ages 0-3) programs and serving two counties in the Rio Grande Valley Cameron and Willacy. Its mission is rooted in providing high-quality education, fostering social-emotional development, and empowering parents to take an active role in their children's education. By integrating various support services, including health screenings, nutrition, and developmental assessments, NINOS, Inc. plays a critical role in improving outcomes for children and families facing economic challenges.

The organization continues to work in close partnership with the community, local school districts, and other agencies, ensuring that children are well-prepared for kindergarten and that families receive the necessary support to thrive.

NINOS, Inc. Head Start and Early Head Start services area covers Cameron and Willacy county of Texas in the Rio Grande Valley. For the 2023-2024 program year the program operated in 52 centers to serve which are strategically located to serve 1270 Head Start children and 720 Early Head Start children.



LETTERS

Message from the Executive Director

It is with great pride and appreciation that I extend my sincere gratitude to everyone involved in the ongoing success of NINOS, Inc. Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Over the years, NINOS, Inc. has become a cornerstone of early childhood education in our community, helping to empower families and build brighter futures for our children.

The dedication of our staff, the guidance of our Board of Directors and Policy Council, and the unwavering support from our community have all contributed to the program's ability to consistently deliver high-quality services that focus on the holistic development of children. The comprehensive services we provide—from education to health and nutrition—are a testament to our commitment to nurturing the potential of every child we serve.

I am proud to report that, through our collective efforts, NINOS, Inc. continues to exceed expectations in preparing children for academic success, fostering parent engagement, and ensuring that our programs align with both federal standards and local needs. These accomplishments would not be possible without the passion and hard work of everyone involved.

As we look toward the future, we remain steadfast in our mission to continue advocating for the children and families we serve. Together, we will continue to expand our reach, strengthen our services, and ensure that every child in our program has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Thank you for your commitment to making a difference in the lives of the families in our community. Your work continues to shape a brighter future for generations to come.

Sincerely,



David Kowalski

Executive Director, NINOS, Inc.



Message from the Policy Council Chairperson

As the Chairperson of the Head Start Policy Council, it is my privilege to present the annual report for the 2023-2024 program year. This past year has been one of growth, innovation, and progress as we continued to prioritize the well-being and education of our children, families, and communities. Head Start's mission—to give every child the opportunity to thrive—remains at the heart of all we do.

Over the past year, the Policy Council has worked closely with staff, families, and community partners to ensure that our programs meet the evolving needs of our children. We have been successful in providing comprehensive services that support not only academic readiness but also health, nutrition, and family development.



Our collective efforts have strengthened our program and ensured that children continue to receive the comprehensive support they need to succeed in school and in life. This success would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of our teachers, staff, families, and volunteers.

As we move forward into the 2024-2025 year, the Policy Council remains committed to advocating for the needs of children and families in our community. We will continue to foster strong partnerships with parents, caregivers, and local organizations to ensure that every child enrolled in Head Start has the tools and opportunities to flourish.

Our focus will remain on improving the quality of our services, enhancing program outcomes, and expanding outreach efforts to reach even more families who can benefit from Head Start's unique and holistic approach to early childhood education.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all Policy Council members, staff, and community partners for their tireless commitment to the children and families we serve. Your collaboration, input, and passion have been instrumental in making this year a success, and I am confident that, together, we will continue to build a brighter future for our children.

On behalf of the Policy Council, I invite you to reflect on this year's accomplishments with pride and to join us in the ongoing journey of empowering the next generation.

Sincerely,

Melissa N. Tamayo

Policy Council Chairperson, NINOS, Inc.

HOW WE LEARN

Curriculum

Students enrolled in the Early Head Start and Head Start programs benefit from learning opportunities enhanced by the Frog Street infant, toddler and pre-k curriculums.

- **Frog Street Infant** (Birth to 18 months) Focuses on building a strong foundation in sensory and emotional development. It includes activities for cognitive, social-emotional, physical, and language development. The curriculum is designed to foster strong caregiver-child interactions, which are essential in nurturing early brain development.
- **Frog Street Toddler** (18 months to 36 months) Emphasizes active exploration and discovery, with a strong focus on social-emotional development and self-regulation. It integrates language-rich experiences, early math concepts, and introduces problem-solving skills through play-based activities.
- **Frog Street Pre-K** (3 to 5 years) A comprehensive, research-based curriculum that prepares children for school success. It covers key areas such as language development, math, science, social studies, and creative arts. It also focuses on social-emotional learning and includes strategies for differentiated instruction.

Parent Curriculum

Parents are encouraged to participate in learning opportunities enhanced by the Abriendo Puertas (Opening Doors) curriculum.

- **Abriendo Puertas (Opening Doors)** designed for Latino families with children aged 0-5. It aims to empower parents as their child's first and most influential teachers, helping them promote their children's learning and development across multiple domains. The curriculum is culturally relevant and presented in Spanish and English.

Assessment & Outcomes

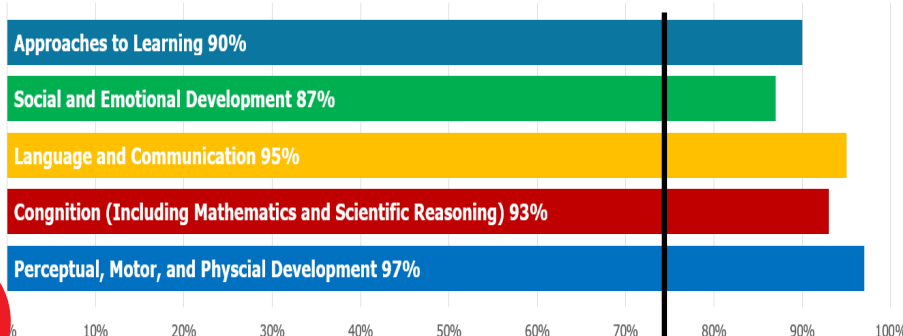
Students enrolled in the Early Head Start and Head Start program are assessed three times out of the year for beginning-of-year (BOY), middle-of-year (MOY) and end-of-year (EOY) assessments using the Learning Accomplishment Profile (LAP) that is a comprehensive developmental assessment tool used to measure the progress and skills of children from birth to 5 years old.

The LAP is administered through direct observation, parent reports, and structured activities, allowing educators to gather comprehensive data on a child's development. The results are used to inform instruction, tailor interventions, and track progress over time.

Highlights for 2023-2024 Program

- Upon transitioning from our program to kindergarten, students consistently meet objective in all Domains and surpassed the 75% threshold goal.
- 128 children transition to Head Start from Early Head Start.
- 102 children in Head Start are projected to enter kindergarten.
- 122 parents graduated from participating in the parent curriculum Abriendo Puertas

End-Year Assessment Results for Four-Year Olds



100%

of students will reach "School Readiness Goals" as they transition from Head Start to Kindergarten.

STUDENTS SPOTLIGHT

I Am Moving, I Am Learning (IMIL)

Physical Activity and Nutrition initiative designed to promote physical activity and healthy nutrition among students enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start programs. It was developed as a proactive response to the rising rates of childhood obesity and aims to improve health outcomes by integrating more movement and active learning into daily routines.



Garden to Head Start/Early Head Start

For the 2023-2024 program a nature based learning initiative was implemented by establishing gardens at all NINOS, Inc. centers. Gardening and nutrition education was introduced to head start and early head start children and staff that provided hands-on experiences in growing, harvesting, and preparing fresh fruits and vegetables, which helps them develop a deeper understanding of where their food comes from, encourages healthy eating habits, and fosters environmental stewardship.



Field Trips in Head Start

NINOS, Inc. conducted 20 field trips for the 2023-2024 program year as a chance for provide Head Start students with real-world experiences. Head Start children got to visit the following locations:

- ◆ **Brownsville's Children Museum**
- ◆ **Sea Turtle Inc.**
- ◆ **Gladys Porter Zoo**
- ◆ **Cinemark Movies**
- ◆ **Neighboring Schools**
- ◆ **Alpaquita Ranch**



Graduations

NINOS, Inc. celebrated our graduation class of 2023-2024 with graduation ceremonies to recognize the 1,012 children that graduated from the Head Start program this year who are all school ready.

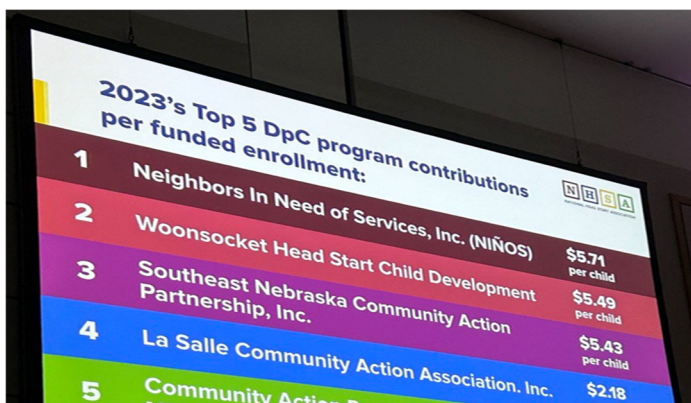


AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

Dollar Per Child

NINOS Inc. was recognized on the national level as the 2023’s Top Dollar Per Child program contributions per funded enrollment at the annual National Head Start Conference that was held at Portland, Oregon from April 15 to 18, 2024.

The Dollar Per Child is a fundraising initiative run by the National Head Start Association (NHSA) to raise funds to support advocacy efforts that ensures children enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start programs continue to receive necessary resources, services, and support they need to thrive.



CLASS Review

For the 2023-2024 program NINOS, Inc. went through a CLASS Review in which observations were conducted in 42 preschool center-based classrooms from January 24 to March 11, 2024. The CLASS review focuses on three primary domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support to evaluate the a program’s teaching effectiveness, classroom quality, compliance & accountability, and continues improvement.

NINOS, Inc. CLASS Review scores for 2024 surpassed the National Head Start Quality Threshold in all three domains, a first time for the agency since it establishment in 1990.

DOMAIN	NINOS CLASS SCORE	HS QUALITY THRESHOLD
Emotional Support	6.2887	6
Classroom Organization	6.0119	6
Instructional Support	3.2937	3

NINOS, Inc. Federal Review

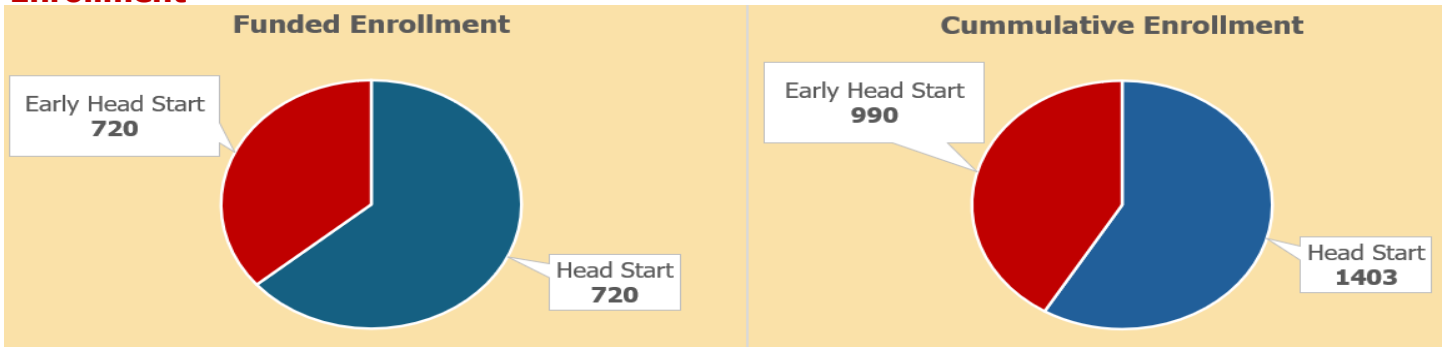
NINOS, Inc. was visited by federal reviews to conduct the agency’s FA2 review from May 6 to 10, 2024 to monitor the agency’s system, services, and structure to ensure compliance with all Head Start Performance Standards.

Results were provide to the agency after the review on May 22, 2024. NINOS, Inc. was found in compliance in All Areas and informed of having strong practices in the following:

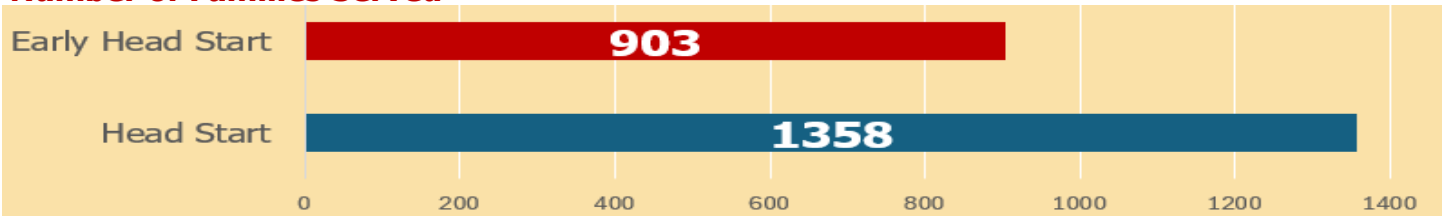
- 1. Program Governance**
- 2. Qualification, Professional Development and Coaching,**
- 3. Transitions**
- 4. Family Well-Being and Family Engagement**
- 5. Family Partnerships**

2023-2024 Statistics

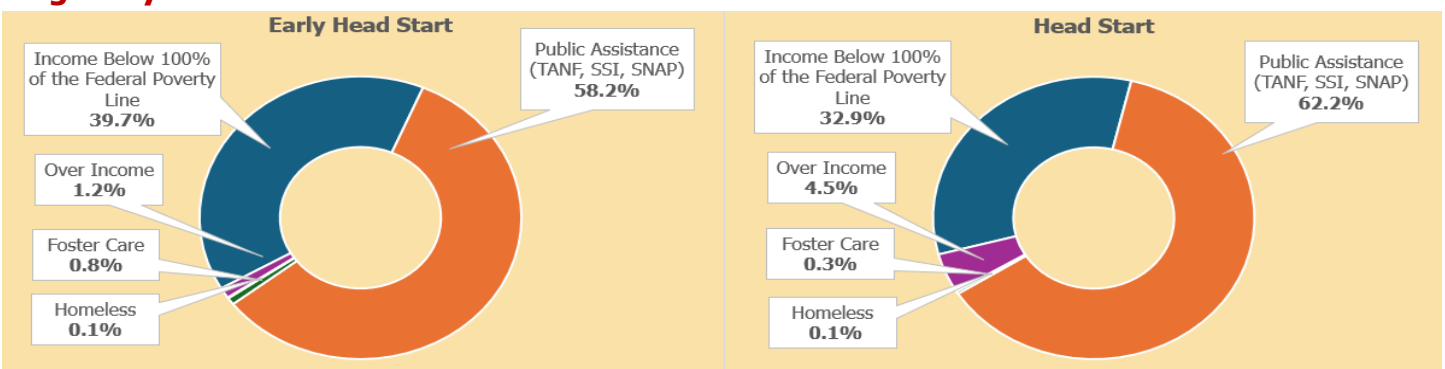
Enrollment



Number of Families Served



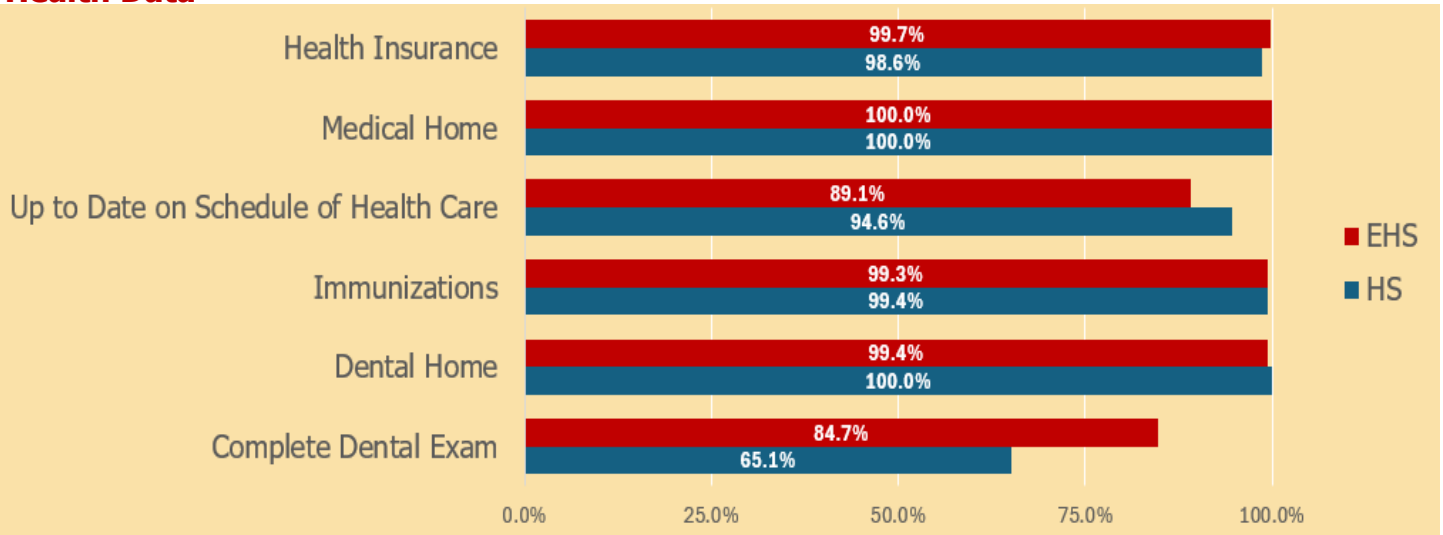
Eligibility



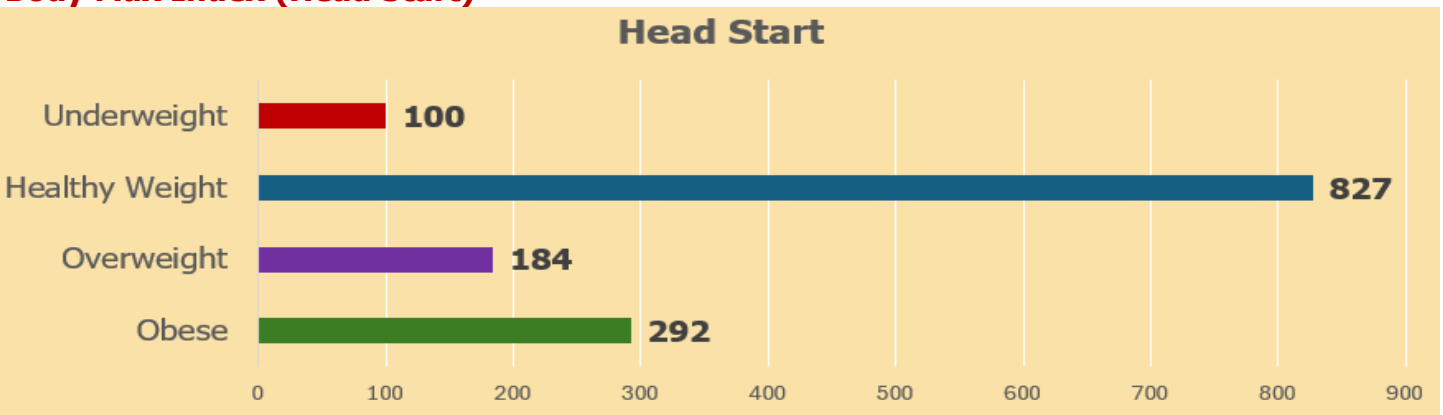
Monthly Enrollment

Month	Head Start		Early Head Start	
	Enrolled	% of Funded Enrollment	Enrolled	% of Funded Enrollment
Aug. 2023	1,030	81.10%	688	92.78%
Sept. 2023	1,138	89.61%	719	99.86%
Oct. 2023	1,224	96.38%	719	99.86%
Nov. 2023	1,262	99.37%	718	99.72%
Dec. 2023	1,262	99.37%	718	99.72%
Jan. 2024	1,233	97.09%	712	98.89%
Feb. 2024	1,257	98.98%	723	99.58%
Mar. 2024	1,253	98.66%	714	99.17%
Apr. 2024	1,251	98.50%	712	98.89%
May 2024	1,124	97.80%	712	98.89%
Jun. 2024*	139	97.20%	40	100%

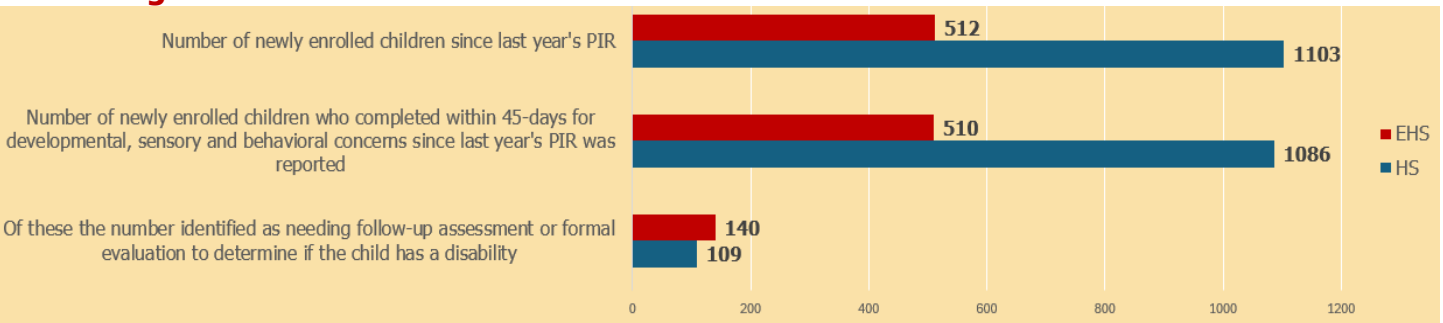
Health Data



Body Mass Index (Head Start)

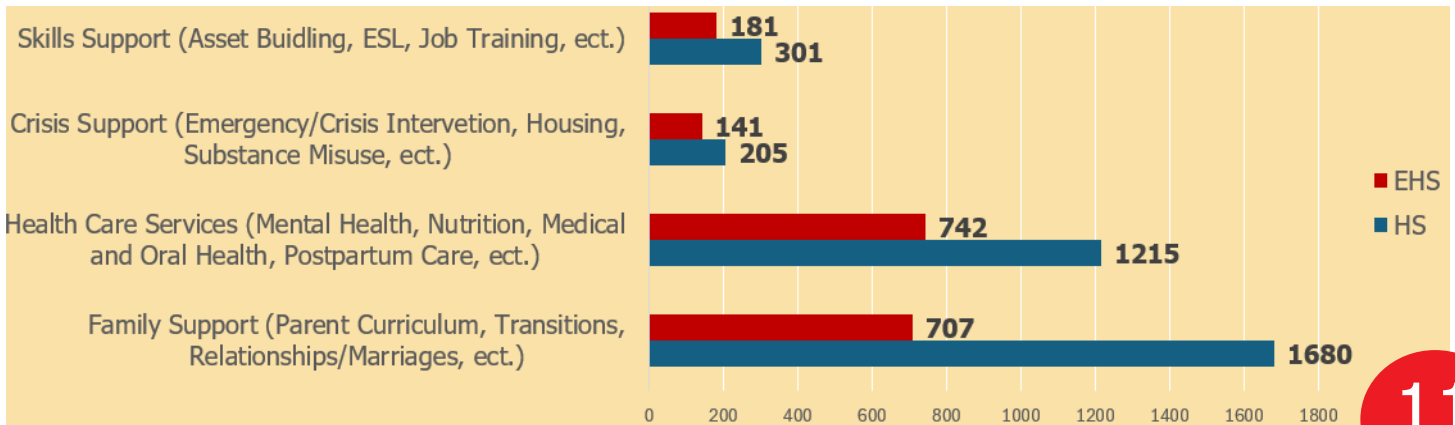


Screenings



Family Support and Services

The number of families that received the following program service to promote family outcomes.



Parent Engagement

Parent and Family Engagement

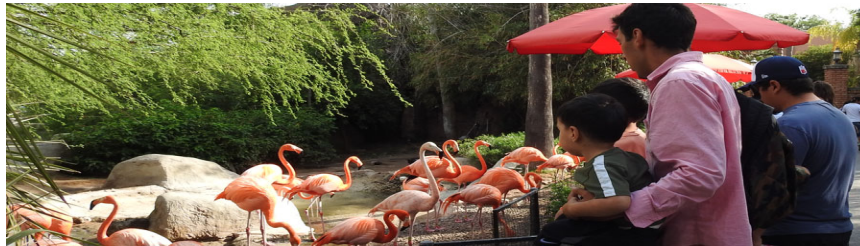
Families play a critical role in both Head Start and Early Head Start programs. At NINOS, Inc., the Policy Council is primarily composed of parents, empowering them to actively participate in making important decisions about their Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

The Policy Council assists in developing policies, making key decisions regarding the hiring and termination of staff, crafting the program’s budget, and determining program priorities. This involvement ensures that the voices of families are heard and incorporated into the growth and development of the program.

In addition to the Policy Council, a Parent Committee is established within each area caseload. These committees are comprised of parents of currently enrolled children, and parents are regularly surveyed to determine the types of activities or workshops they are most interested in during Parent Committee meetings. This process allows parents to develop leadership skills and gain valuable experience by taking an active role in planning and developing these activities and services.

Area Managers, Family Service Workers, and teaching staff actively encourage and invite parents to volunteer in the classroom, kitchen, and office, fostering deeper engagement and building a stronger community within the program.

To promote father or father-figure involvement in their children’s education and development NINOS, Inc. organizes a special event during the year the Father-Child Day at the Zoo. Fathers, grandfathers, uncles, or other male role models are encourage to participate in the event with their children for a day of bonding and fun activities at Gladys Porter Zoo in Brownsville, TX. NINOS, Inc. had 1700 participants this year for the event.



Father Engagement and Volunteerism

Number of fathers/father figures who were engaged in the following activates this program year:	Head Start	Early Head Start
Family assessment	609	324
Family goal setting	611	326
Involvement in child’s developmental experiences	591	320
Program governance - Policy Council or parent committees	227	106
Parenting education workshop	277	158
Volunteerism	Head Start	Early Head Start
Number of persons providing any volunteer service to the program since last year	1,414	1,003
Of these, the number who are current or former Head Start or Early Head Start parents	1,407	990

EDUCATION & PARTNERSHIPS

Education and School Readiness

NINOS, Inc. actively partners with families to review and assess the curriculum, ensuring parents play a key role in evaluating its effectiveness in supporting each child's development. Recognizing parents as their children's primary educators, we encourage their involvement in both the program and the community.

The curriculum prepares children for kindergarten through individualized lesson plans based on initial LAP (Learning Accomplishment Profile) screenings. It focuses on physical health, social-emotional growth, learning approaches, cognitive development in math and science, language, and literacy. English language development is prioritized for dual-language learners.

Throughout the year, children's goals are regularly updated with parental input. Ongoing LAP assessments provide data to guide continuous improvement. Infants and toddlers are prepared for school success through activities that develop essential skills, fostering confidence, curiosity, self-control, and communication.

2023-2024 Transitions

Transition is a priority at Head Start. Children can't begin to learn if they are frightened or uncomfortable with their surroundings. The transition services focus on assisting and preparing parents and staff as a child leaves the comforts of home to enter the Early Head Start, Head Start or the Public School.

- A total of 102 children were projected to transitioned into kindergarten
- A total of 128 toddlers transitioned to Head Start by the end of the of the program year.

Collaboration

NINOS, Inc. has working relationship with (8) school district, (8) public libraries, and (2) state-chartered schools within the service area. There are written local agreements with each entity that is updated annual to collaborate in transitions, special service, Dual Enrollment, facilities, and food service.

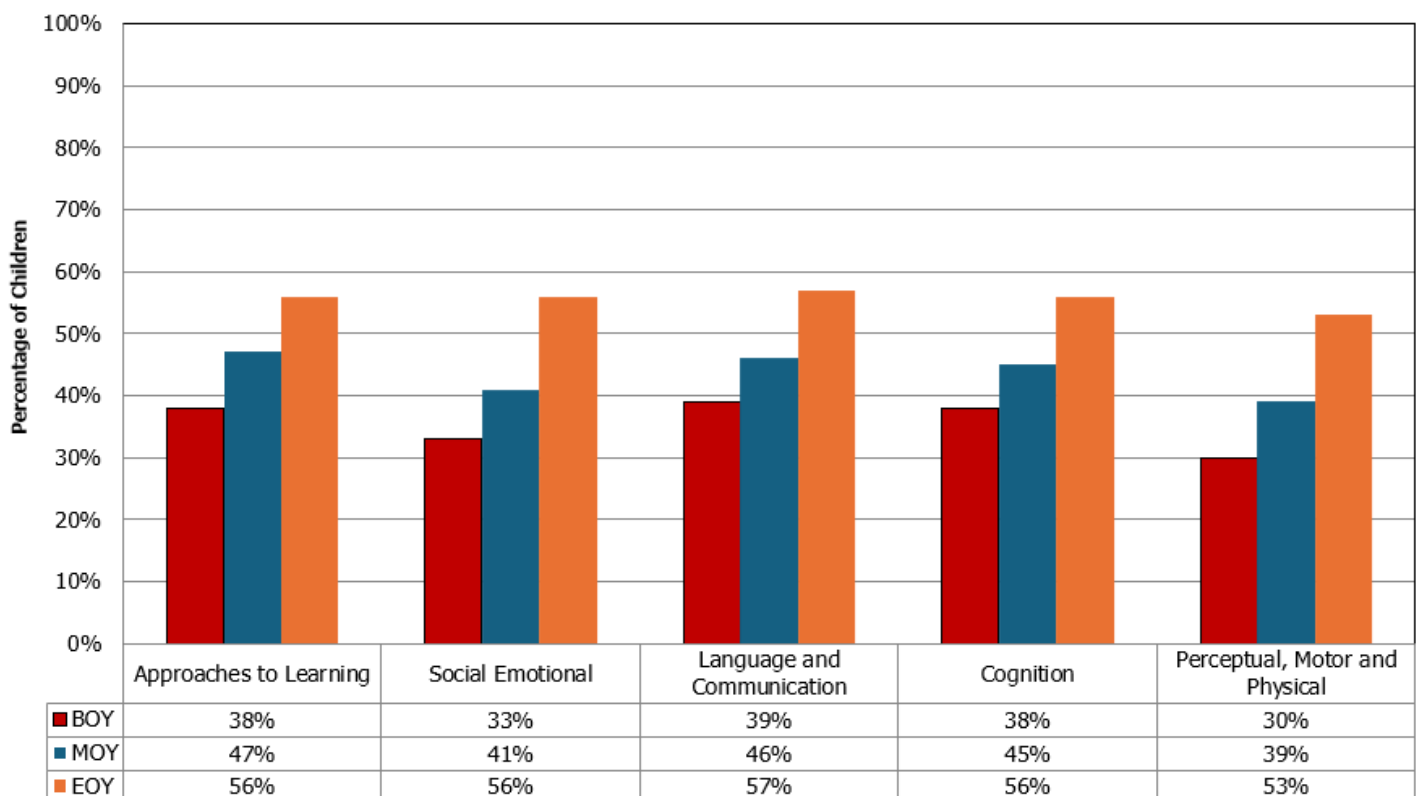
School Partnership Activates	Transition Activities	Special Services	Dual Enrollment	Facilities	Food Service	MOU
Brownsville	X	X	X	X	X	X
Harlingen	X	X	X	X	X	X
La Feria	X	X	X	X	X	X
Port Isabel	X	X	X	X	X	X
Rio Hondo	X	X		X		X
Raymondville	X	X	X	X	X	X
San Benito	X	X	X	X	X	X
Santa Rosa	X	X	X	X	X	X
Jubilee Academy (Charter School)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Raul Yzaguirre (Charter School)	X	X	X	X		X

School Readiness Goals & Outcomes

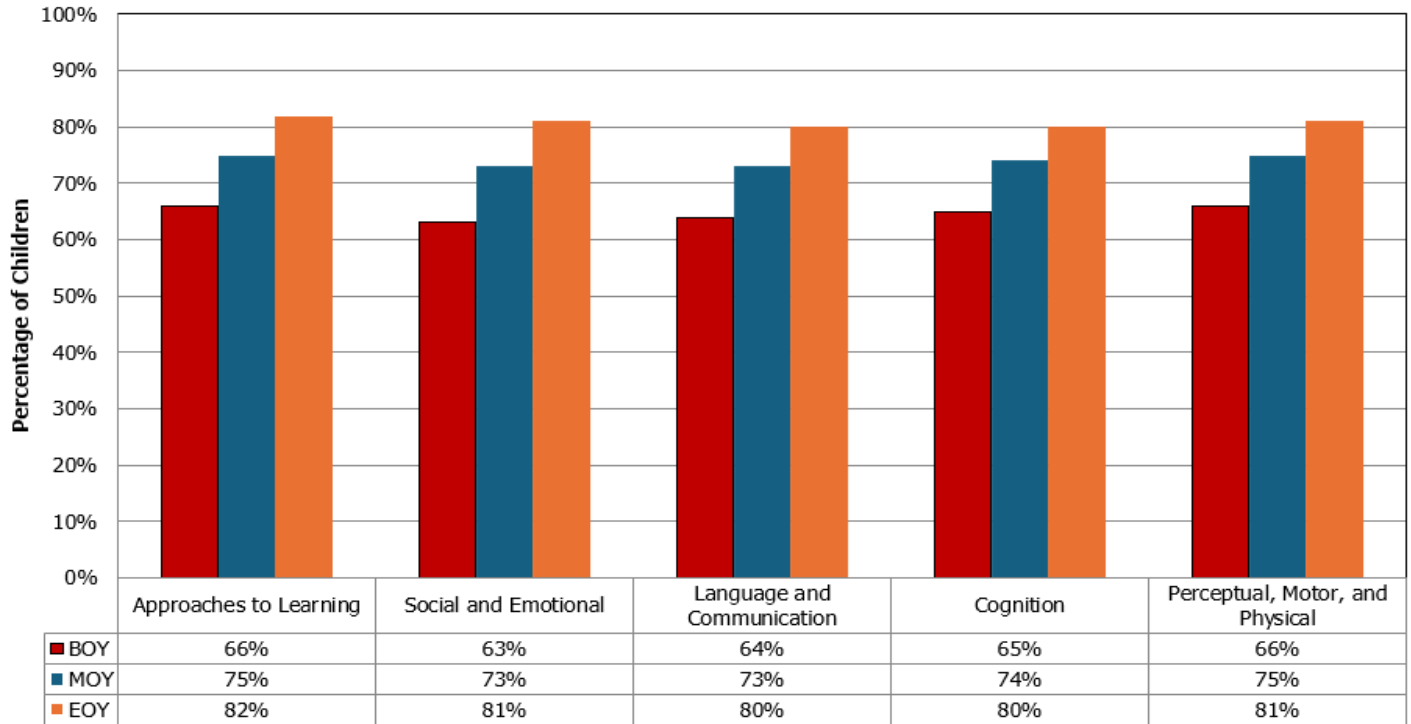
2023-2024 School Readiness Goals

DOMAINS FROM HEAD START EARLY LEARNING OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK	OUTCOMES
Approaches to Learning	♦ Children will demonstrate interest, curiosity, persistence, and eagerness to learn.
Social and Emotional Development	♦ Children will engage in relationships and interactions with others as they develop a healthy concept of their personal identity.
Language and Literacy	♦ Children will increase their oral language abilities and pre-literacy skills.
Cognition	♦ Children will develop and demonstrate the ability to retain and connect new and familiar experiences to numerical knowledge.
Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development	♦ Children will understand and demonstrate healthy and safe habits.

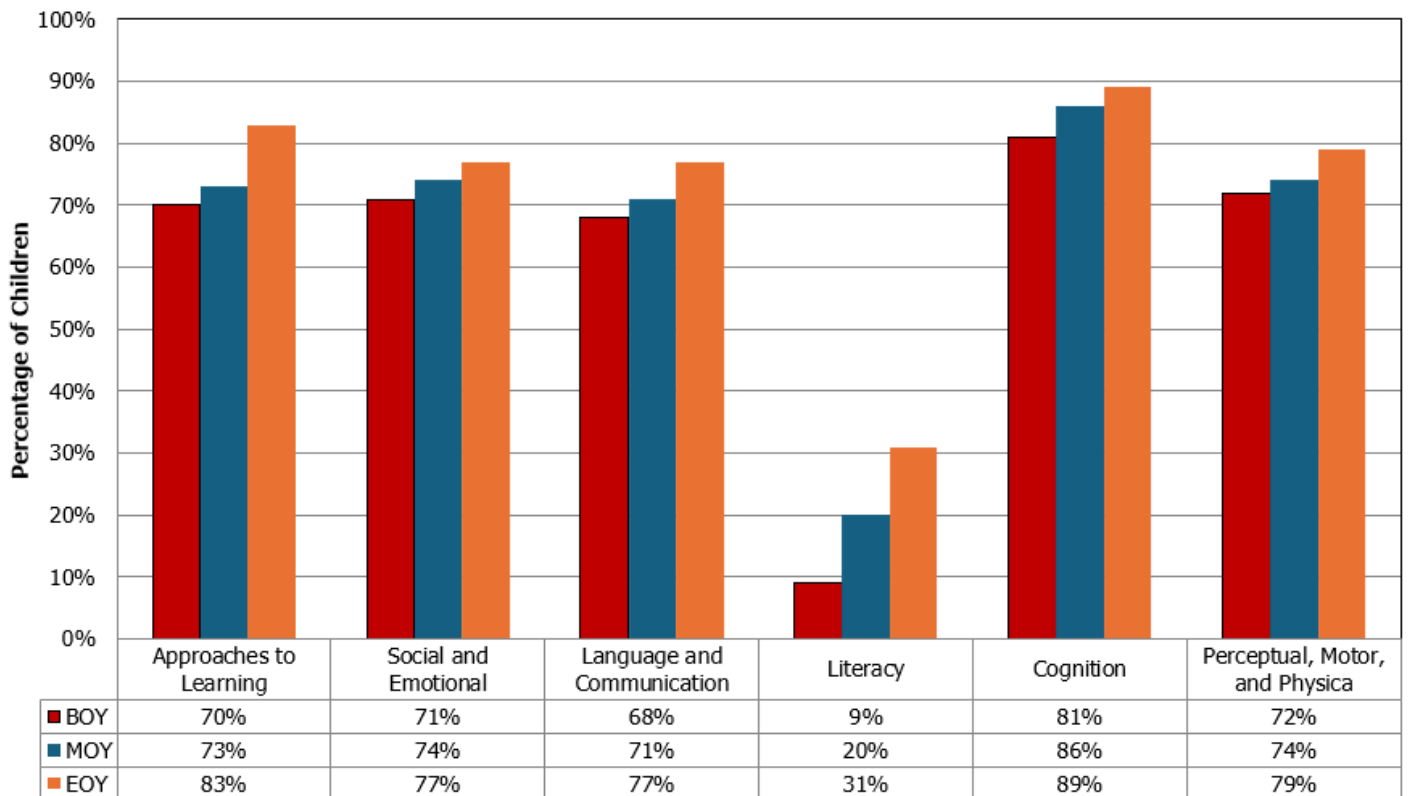
EOY Results by Head Start Outcomes
0-11 months
2023-2024



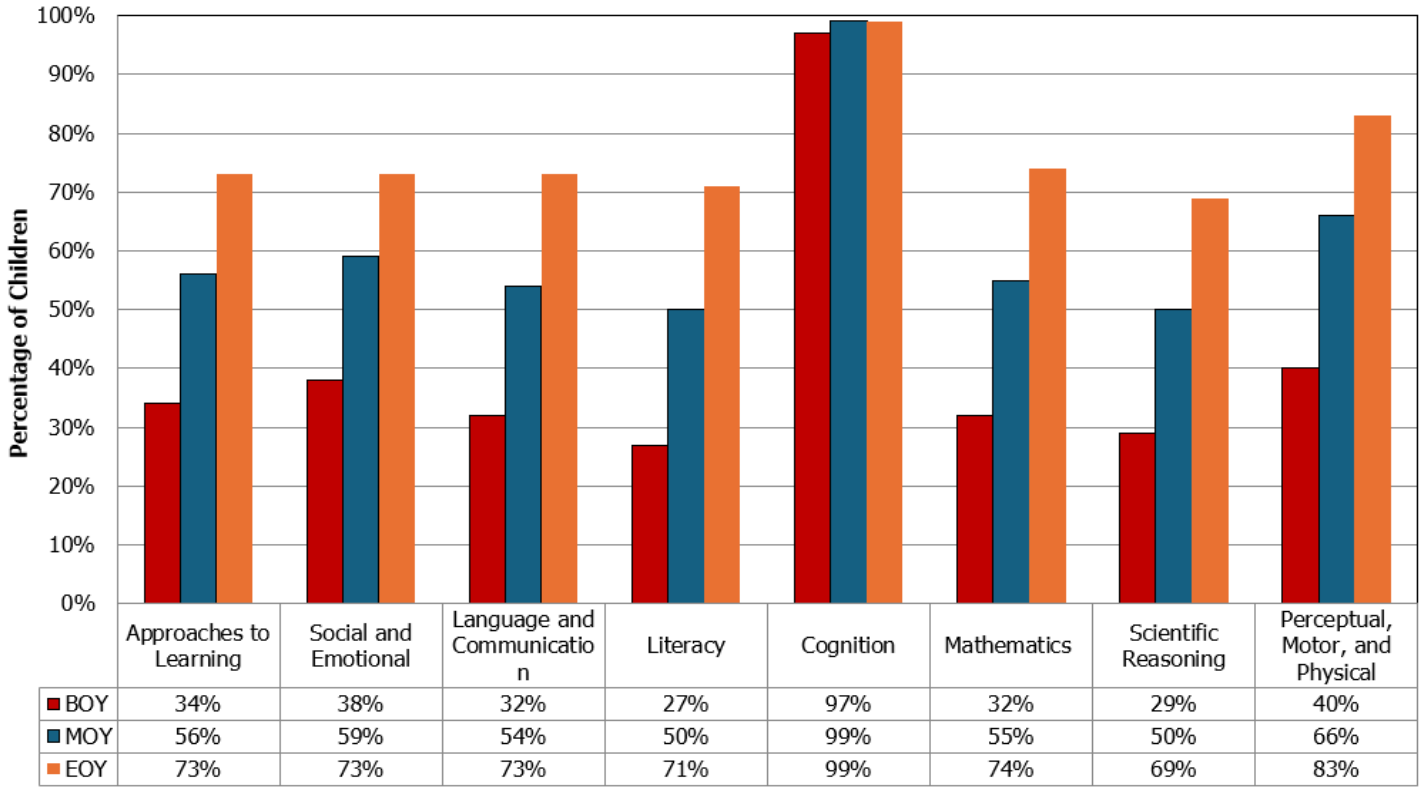
**EOY Results by Head Start Outcomes
12-23 months
2023-2024**



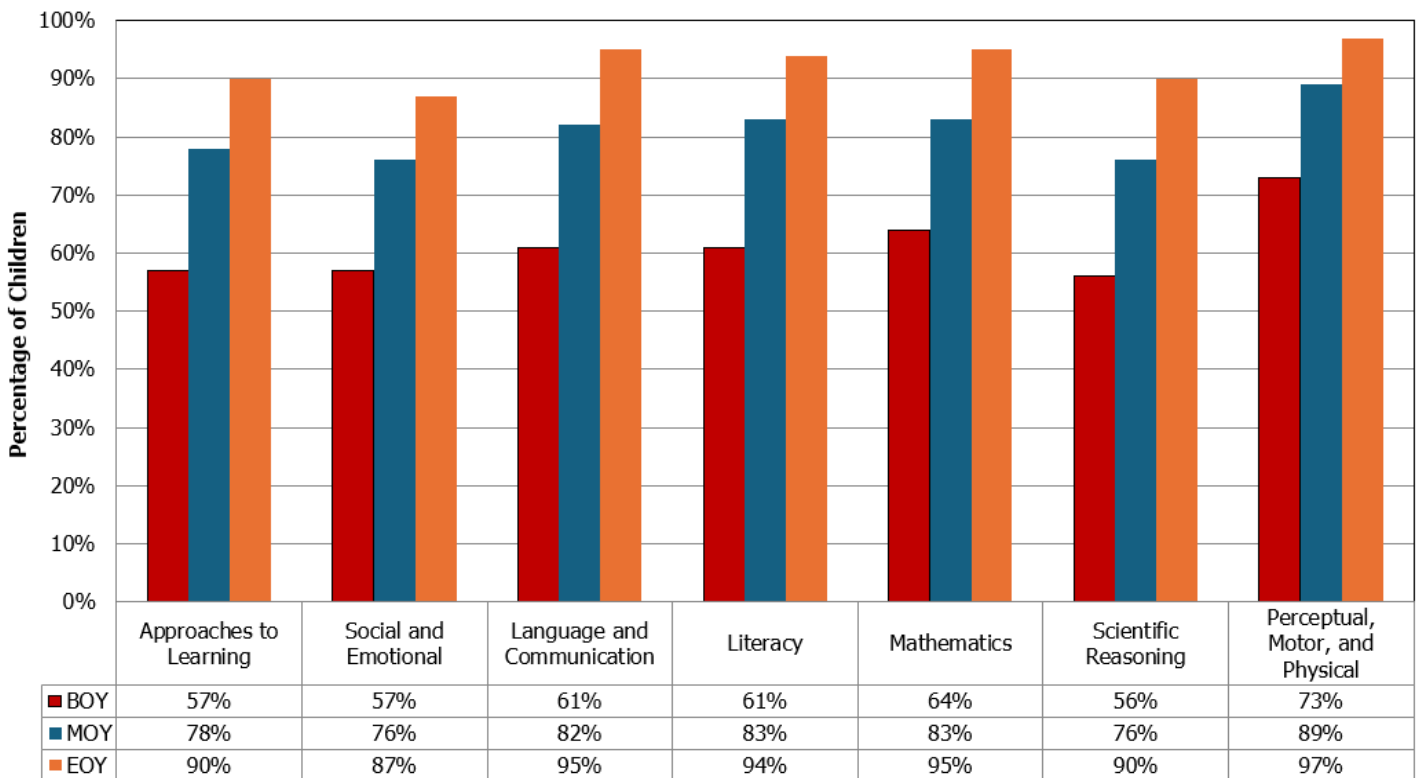
**EOY Results by Head Start Outcomes
24-35 months
2023-2024**



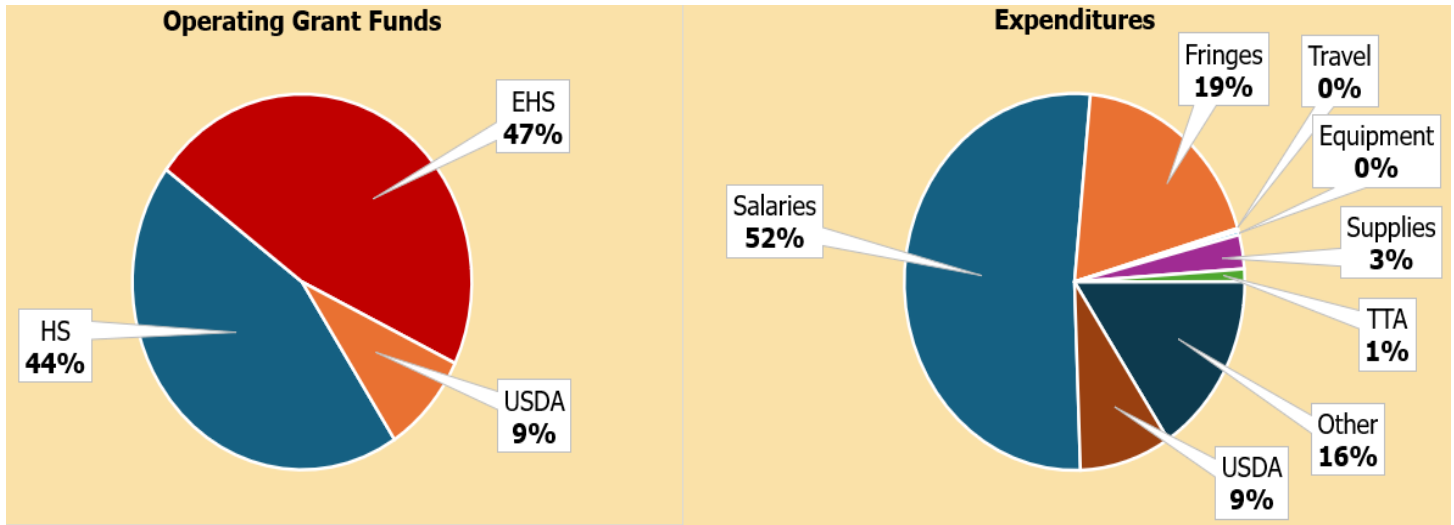
**EOY Results by Head Start Outcomes
3 year olds
2023-2024**



**EOY Results by Head Start Outcomes
4 year olds
2023-2024**



FINANCIAL REPORTS



Operating Grant Funds	
	2023-2024
Head Start Federal Funding	\$13,244,543
Early Head Start Federal Funding	\$14,001,906
Texas Department of Agriculture Funding (USDA)	\$2,597,162
Total	\$29,843,611

Non-Federal Share	
	2023-2024
Head Start and Early Head Start Non-Federal Share	NA*
<i>*Waiver of non-federal share</i>	

Budgetary Expenditures	
	2023-2024
Salaries	\$15,533,220
Fringes	\$5,645,709
Travel	\$70,793
Equipment	\$95,622
Supplies	\$872,412
Training and Technical Assistance (TTA)	\$325,403
Other	\$4,703,290
Texas Department of Agriculture	\$2,597,162
Total	\$29,843,611



Neighbors In Need of Services Inc.
Head Start and Early Head Start



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For more information on NINOS Head Start and Early Head Start
Or any of NINOS, Inc.'s programs visit:

www.ninosinc.org