

2025-2026

NINOS

Head Start Preschool

Annual Report



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

Neighbors In Need Of Services

22887 State Highway 345
Rio Hondo, Texas 78583

Tel: 956.399.9944
www.ninosinc.org

NINOS, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer

CONTENTS

2. Governance

3. Who We Are

4. How We Learn

5. Letters

- > Board of Directors Chairperson**
- > Policy Council Chairperson**
- > Executive Director**

8. Community Engagement

9. Our Partners

10. Student Spotlight

12. Agency Spotlight

13. Parent Engagement

14. 2025-2026 Statistics

16. School Readiness Goals & Outcomes

19. Financial Reports



GOVERNANCE

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors for a Head Start Preschool 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 Board of Directors

Mary F. Sosa-Villarreal, Chairperson

Juanita Ortiz, Vice-Chairperson

Melissa Tamayo, Secretary/Parliamentarian

Roberto Lopez, Treasurer/Sergeant at Arms

Gilberto Hinojosa, Member

Alma Ruiz, Member

Juanita Hernandez, Member

Carla Mancha, Member

Juan Moreno Jr., 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 Policy Council is comprised of 40 members, one representative and one alternate from each area who are parents of enrolled or previously enrolled children and four 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 Policy Council Elected Positions

Lizeth Ballesteros, Chairperson

Seberiano Lopez, Vice-Chairperson

Yolanda Puente Cordova, 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 (Neighbors In Need Of Services) is a Head Start Preschool program that serves families and young children in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Established in 1990, NINOS 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 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 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 Head Start Preschool services area covers Cameron and Willacy county of Texas in the Rio Grande Valley. For the 2025-2026 program year the program operated in 45 centers to serve which are strategically located to serve 1270 Head Start children and 720 Early Head Start children.



HOW WE LEARN

Curriculum

Students enrolled in the Early Head Start and Head Start Preschool 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) and Methodist Health Care Ministries—Raising Highly Capable Kids (RHCK) 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.
- **Raising Highly Capable Kids (RHCK)** is a 13-week evidence-based parenting program developed to build stronger families by empowering parents with the confidence, tools, and skills they need to raise healthy, caring, and responsible children.

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.

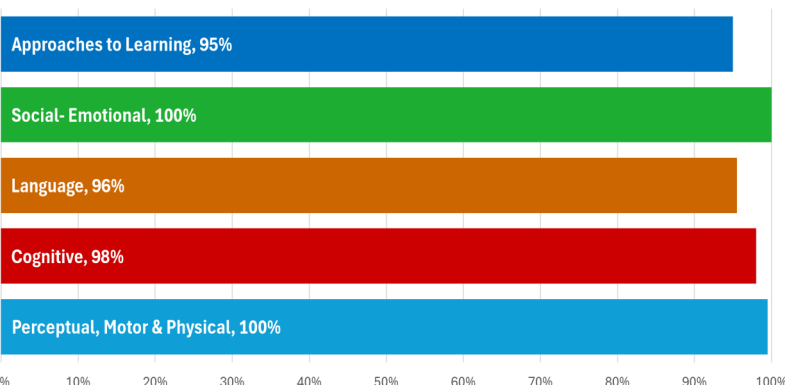
The LAP is administered through direct observation, parent reports, and structured activities, allowing educators to gather comprehensive data on a child's development. The results are used to inform instruction, tailor interventions, and track progress over time.

Highlights for 2025-2026 Program

- Upon transitioning from our program to kindergarten, students consistently meet objective in all Domains and surpassed the 75% threshold goal.
- 164 children transition to Head Start Preschool from Early Head Start.
- 138 children in Head Start Preschool are projected to enter kindergarten.
- 17 parents graduated from participating in the parent curriculum RHCK

100% of students will reach "School Readiness Goals" as they transition from Head Start Preschool to Kindergarten.

End-Year Assessment Results for Four-Year Olds



LETTERS

Message from the Board of Directors Chairperson



Serving as Chairperson of the Board of Directors is both a responsibility and a privilege, and I am proud to reflect on the accomplishments of the 2025–2026 program year. This year has been marked by continued growth, meaningful progress, and stronger partnerships—all guided by our shared commitment to the mission of Head Start and Early Head Start.

At the center of our work are the children and families we serve. Throughout the year, the Board has worked closely with the Policy Council, staff, and community partners to strengthen opportunities that support each child's growth and development. From enhancing classroom experiences to supporting health, family, and educational services, our focus has remained on providing a strong foundation where children can succeed academically, socially, and emotionally.

This progress would not be possible without the dedication of so many individuals. Our teachers, staff, families, volunteers, and community partners have continued to give their time, energy, and commitment to ensure that every child receives high-quality care and education. Their dedication remains at the heart of the progress we have made.

As we look ahead to the 2026–2027 program year, the Board remains committed to building on our accomplishments and continuing to strengthen services for children and families. We will focus on maintaining high-quality programs, developing meaningful partnerships, and ensuring that the mission of Head Start remains strong and responsive to the needs of our communities.

To our staff, families, Policy Council members, volunteers, and community supporters—thank you. Your collaboration, dedication, and continued belief in this program make a lasting difference. Together, we are building a stronger foundation and a brighter future for the children and families we are honored to serve.

With gratitude,

Mary F. Sosa-Villarreal

Board of Directors Chairperson, NINOS



LETTERS

Message from the Policy Council Chairperson



It is an honor to serve as Chairperson of the Head Start Preschool Policy Council and to present our annual report for the 2025–2026 program year. This year has been marked by continued growth, meaningful collaboration, and positive progress as we remained focused on placing children and families at the heart of our work. The vision of Head Start Preschool—to empower every child to succeed—has continued to guide our decisions, priorities, and efforts throughout the year.

Over the past year, the Policy Council has worked closely with our dedicated staff, engaged families, and valued community partners to strengthen the programs and services that support our children’s learning, development, and overall well-being. Together, we have continued to provide comprehensive services that support the whole child, including school readiness, physical health, nutrition, and family well-being.

This progress reflects the dedication and commitment of those who contribute their time, knowledge, and energy each day—our educators, staff, parents, and volunteers. Their continued support ensures that every child we serve receives the strong foundation needed to thrive not only in school, but throughout life.

As we look ahead to the 2026–2027 program year, the Policy Council remains committed to being a strong voice for the children and families in our community. We will continue strengthening partnerships with parents, caregivers, and community organizations while ensuring that every child enrolled in Head Start has access to the resources, encouragement, and opportunities needed to reach their fullest potential.

In the year ahead, we will remain focused on enhancing program quality, strengthening outcomes for children and families, and expanding opportunities so that even more families can benefit from the comprehensive support and services Head Start Preschool provides.

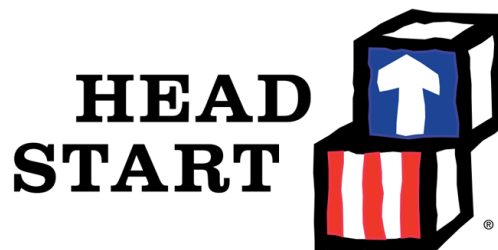
To our Policy Council members, staff, families, volunteers, and community partners—thank you. Your collaboration, insight, dedication, and continued support have contributed greatly to the success of this program year. Through our shared efforts, we are helping create a stronger and brighter future for the children and families we serve.

On behalf of the Policy Council, I invite you to celebrate our shared accomplishments and join us as we continue this important work of supporting children, strengthening families, and empowering the next generation.

With gratitude,

Lizeth Ballesteros

Policy Council Chairperson, NINOS



LETTERS

Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends and Community Partners,

As we reflect on the 2025–2026 program year, I am proud of the progress that Neighbors in Need of Services, Inc. (NINOS) has made in advancing our mission to serve children and families throughout Cameron and Willacy Counties. Our commitment to providing quality early childhood education and comprehensive services remains the foundation of everything we do.

This past year has been one of continued progress, collaboration, and preparation for the future. As the needs of our communities evolve, so must our approach to delivering services. We remain focused on strengthening program quality, improving operational efficiency, and identifying opportunities to make the greatest possible impact on the children and families we serve.

Our community partnerships continue to play a vital role in strengthening the services we provide. Organizations such as Harlingen CISD, San Benito CISD, Brownsville ISD, Point Isabel ISD, New Horizons, Methodist Healthcare Ministries, the American Red Cross, and others have made a meaningful impact on our ability to meet the diverse needs of children and families. These partnerships allow us to expand opportunities, connect families with valuable resources, and provide services that extend beyond the classroom. We are especially encouraged by our growing collaborations with local school districts, which are creating new opportunities to strengthen early childhood education and maximize community resources.

None of our accomplishments would be possible without the dedication of our employees. Every day, our NINOS staff demonstrate their commitment to the children and families entrusted to our care, honoring our pledge to teach our children with love and tender care. We recognize that providing quality services begins with supporting the people who deliver them. We remain committed to investing in our employees through professional development, supportive work environments, and opportunities for growth, ensuring they have the resources and support needed to succeed. Their professionalism, compassion, and willingness to embrace change continue to move our organization forward.

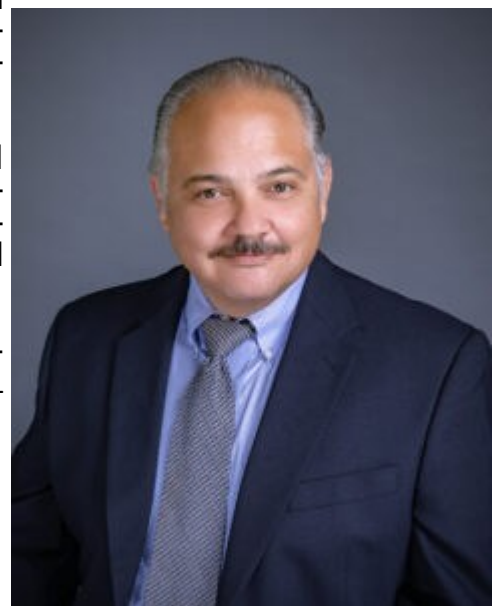
As we look ahead, our vision is to establish NINOS as a model Head Start and Early Head Start program in Cameron and Willacy Counties. Through strategic planning, innovative partnerships, improvements to our facilities, and continued investment in our employees, we are building a stronger and more sustainable organization. Our expanding collaborations with local school districts, including the development of the Jefferson Head Start Academy in partnership with Harlingen CISD, reflect our commitment to exploring innovative approaches that strengthen services and create greater opportunities for children and families.

I extend my sincere appreciation to our Board of Directors, Head Start Policy Council, employees, parents, and community partners for their continued trust, dedication, and support. Our accomplishments reflect a shared commitment to the children and families we serve.

Together, we will continue building a brighter future for the children, families, and communities of Cameron and Willacy Counties.

Sincerely,

David Kavalier



Community Engagement

Head Start Awareness—Fall Festival

NINOS celebrated Head Start Awareness Month by hosting its third annual Fall Festival at the Los Fresnos Rodeo Grounds. Families and community members came together for a day filled with fun, laughter, and celebration of Head Start's mission.

The event featured performances by our talented children, delicious food, exciting games, and activities for the whole family to enjoy. It was a wonderful opportunity for families to connect, children to shine, and the community to celebrate the impact of Head Start. We thank everyone who joined us in making this special day a success and look forward to continuing the tradition in the years to come!



2026 Star of Excellence Celebration with Community Supporters and Partners

NINOS proudly gathered with community supporters and partners to celebrate the achievements made possible through their continued dedication. Their advocacy and commitment help us share the message that Head Start works and strengthen our mission each year. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our partners for their unwavering support in helping NINOS make a lasting impact in our community and in the lives of the children we serve.



Our Partners



BRYSS Academy



American
Red Cross



Driscoll
Health Plan



STUDENTS SPOTLIGHT

The Class of 2026

This year, 946 children graduated from Head Start Preschool and were celebrated for their achievements. NINOS, Inc. honors our graduating class each year with special ceremonies to:

- Recognize the accomplishments of each child
- Encourage and motivate children and their families
- Involve families, staff, and the community
- Foster a positive transition from Head Start Preschool to kindergarten
- Build confidence in every child as they begin their educational journey

Congratulations to our graduates and their families!

**CLASS OF
2026**



Candyland Walk-a-Thon

During the 2025–2026 program year, NINOS, Inc. successfully hosted Candyland Walk-a-Thon events in Brownsville in October and Harlingen in November. The events brought together children, families, staff, and community members for an engaging experience centered on health, wellness, and family participation. By expanding the event across two communities, NINOS, Inc. increased opportunities for families to participate in meaningful activities that promoted active lifestyles, strengthened family connections, and encouraged positive engagement with the program and community.



Field Trips in Head Start Preschool

NINOS conducted 54 field trips for the 2025-2026 program year as a chance for provide Head Start students with real-word experiences. Head Start children got to visit the following locations:

- ♦ **Brownsville's Children Museum**
- ♦ **Cinemark Movies**
- ♦ **Sea Turtle Inc.**
- ♦ **Local Public Library**
- ♦ **Gladys Porter Zoo**
- ♦ **Alpaquita Ranch**
- ♦ **Manuel Rendon Butterfly Garden**
- ♦ **Fragil Planet Wildlife Park**



AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

2026 Scholarship Recipients

NINOS proudly awarded 12 scholarships this year — one to a former Head Start Preschool parent and eleven to former Head Start Preschool students who are currently attending a college, university, or technical school.

In addition, twelve laptops were also awarded to each scholarship recipient made possible by generous donations and funds raised throughout the year.



CLASS Assessment

During the 2025–2026 program year, NINOS conducted CLASS assessments to evaluate teaching quality and support continuous improvement. From January to March 2026, preschool classrooms were observed in Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support, while Early Head Start classrooms were assessed in Responsive Caregiving (infants) and Emotional & Behavioral Support and Engaged Support for Learning (toddlers).

NINOS exceeded expectations in all areas except Engaged Support for Learning (toddlers) and Classroom Organization (preschool), which will be focus areas for 2025–2026.

Domain	Quality Thresholds	BOY	EOY
Infant			
Responsive Caregiving	5	6.05	6.14
Toddler			
Emotional & Behavioral Support	6	6.15	6.18
Engaged Support for Learning	5	5.08	5.22
Preschool			
Emotional Support	6	6.25	5.89
Classroom Organization	6	5.88	5.89
Instructional Support	3	4.98	5.07

Parent Engagement

Parent and Family Engagement

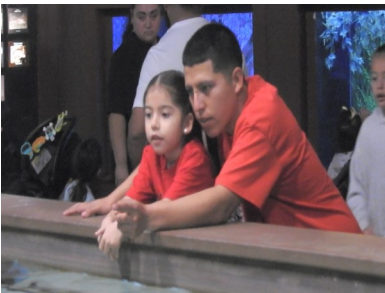
Families play a critical role in Head Start Preschool. At NINOS the Policy Council is primarily composed of parents, empowering them to actively participate in making important decisions about their Head Start Preschool program.

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 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.

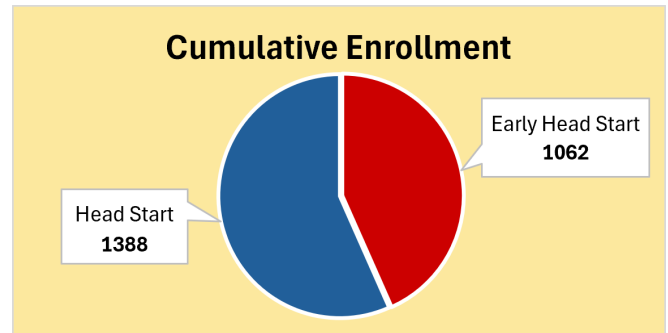
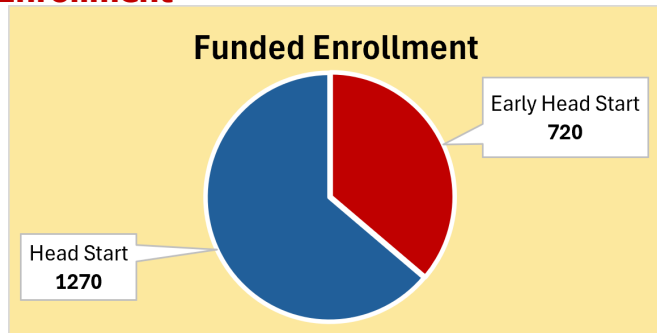


Father Engagement and Volunteerism

Number of fathers/father figures who were en-	Head Start	Early Head Start
Family assessment	587	437
Family goal setting	596	442
Involvement in child's developmental experiences	528	405
Program governance - Policy Council or parent commit-	75	99
Parenting education workshop	271	198
Volunteerism	Head Start	Early Head Start
Number of persons providing any volunteer service to the	1,741	1,530
Of these, the number who are current or former Head	1,646	1,358

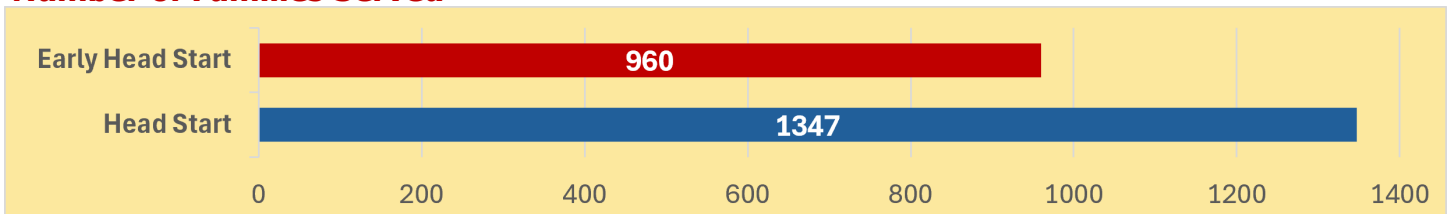
2025-2026 Statistics

Enrollment

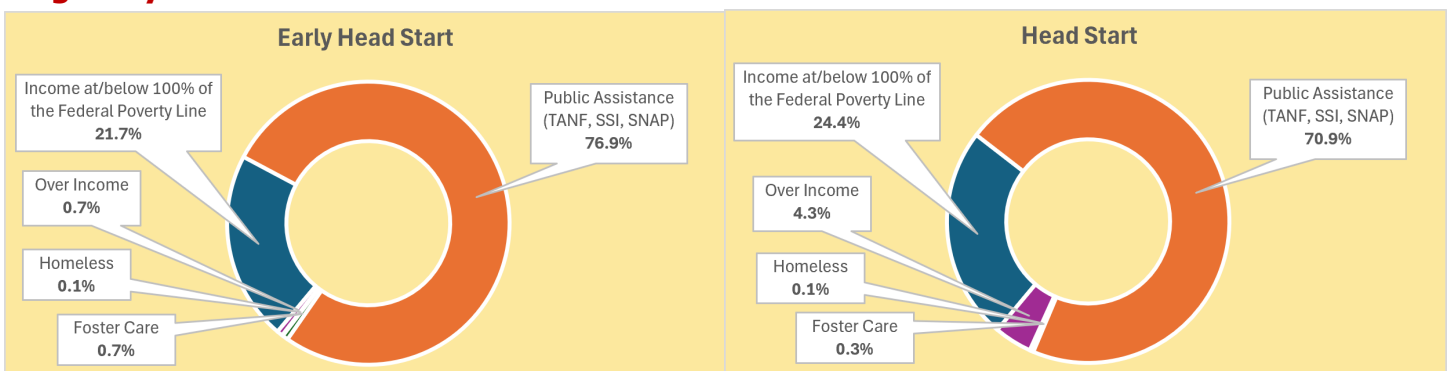


*NINOS Early Head Start served 1058 children and 4 pregnant women. NINOS Head Start Preschool served 1388 children.

Number of Families Served



Eligibility

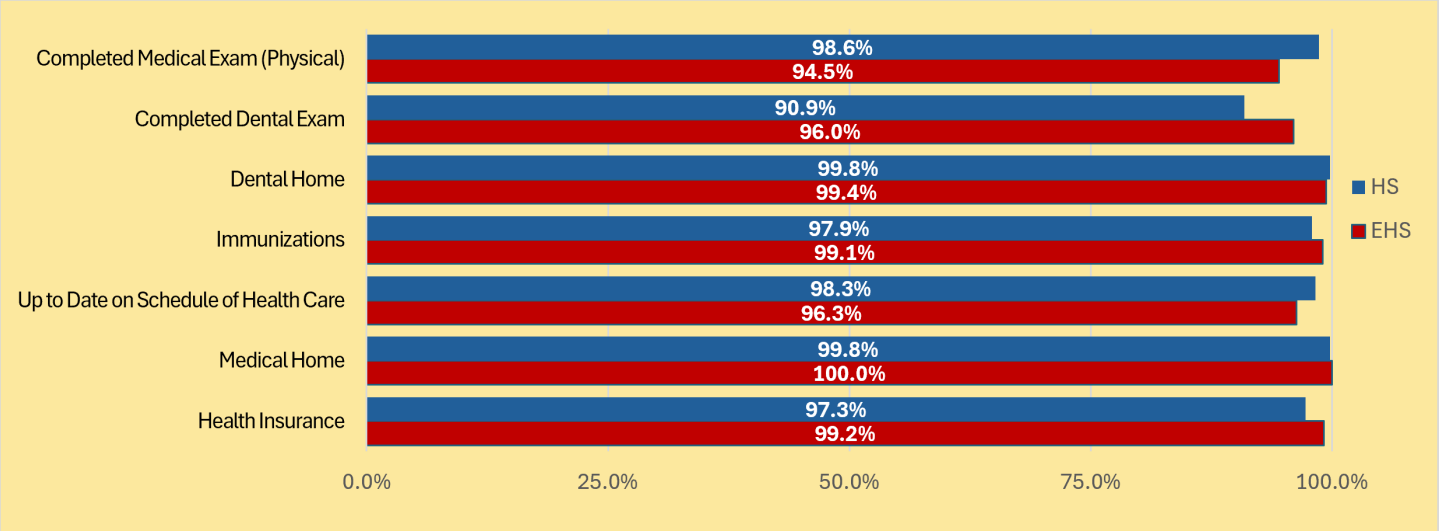


Monthly Enrollment

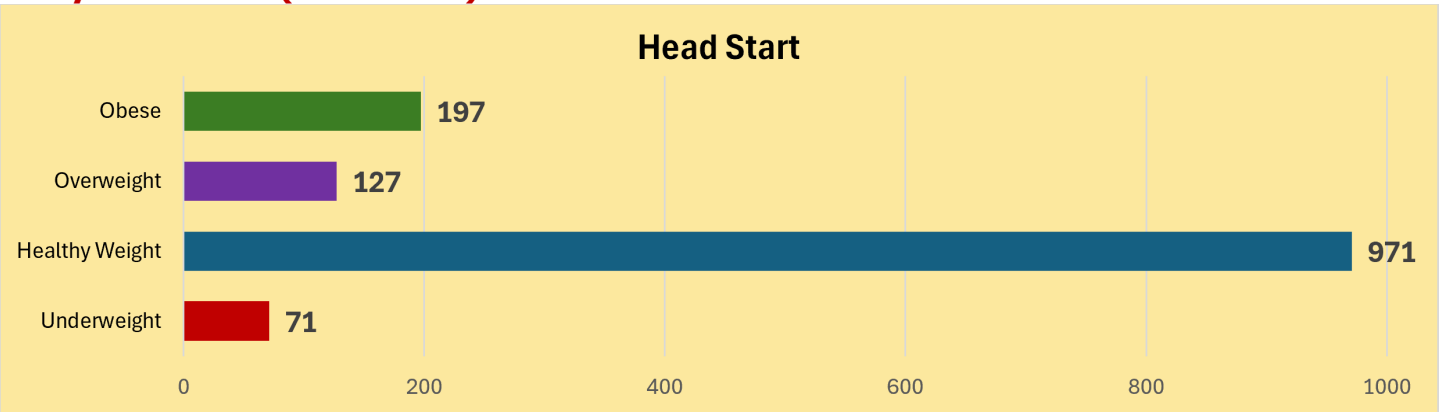
Month	Head Start Preschool		Early Head Start	
	Enrolled	% of Funded Enrollment	Enrolled	% of Funded Enrollment
Aug. 2025	1,026	80.79 %	630	87.50 %
Sept. 2025	1,083	85.28 %	686	95.28 %
Oct. 2025	1,205	94.88 %	710	98.61%
Nov. 2025	1,232	97.01 %	707	98.19 %
Dec. 2025	1,232	97.01 %	705	97.92 %
Jan. 2026	1,242	97.80 %	709	98.47%
Feb. 2026	1,257	98.98 %	710	98.61 %
Mar. 2026	1,257	98.98 %	710	98.61 %
Apr. 2026	1,256	98.90 %	712	98.89 %
May 2026	1,248	98.27 %	715	99.31 %
Jun. 2026*	111	100%	720	100%

*Otis Klar and Raul Yzaguirre were the only HS in operation with Funded Enrollment of 111.

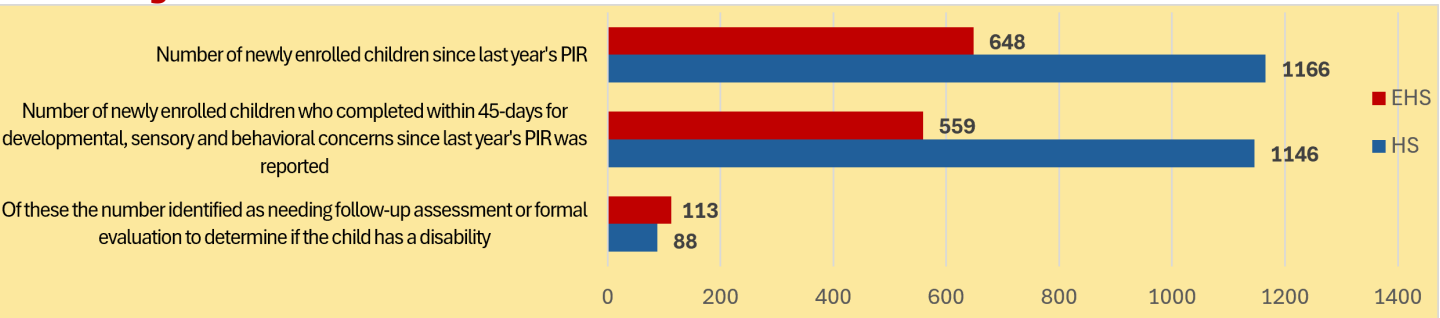
Health Data



Body Mass Index (Head Start)

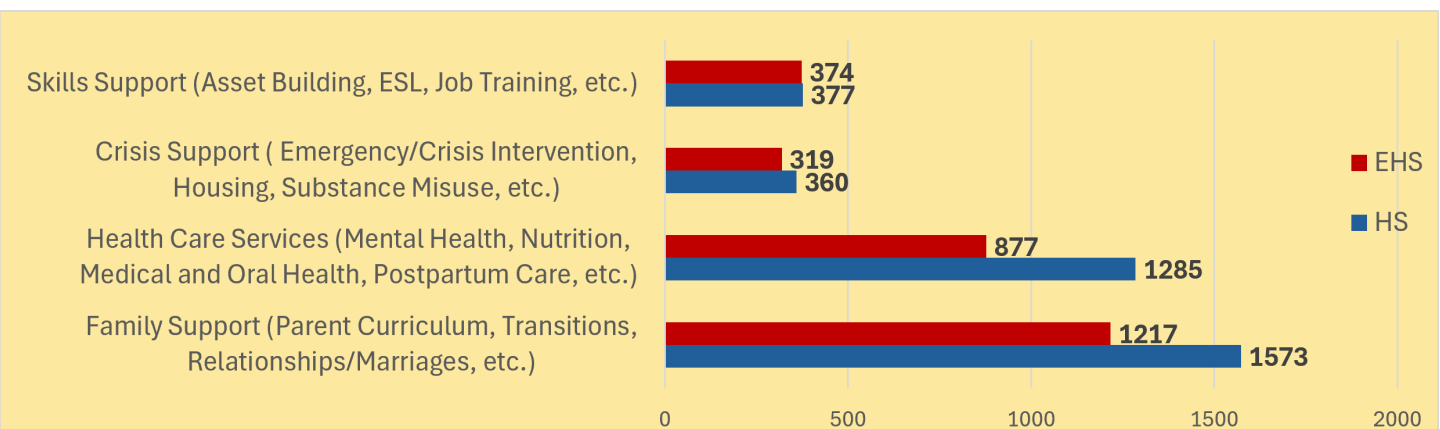


Screenings



Family Support and Services

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



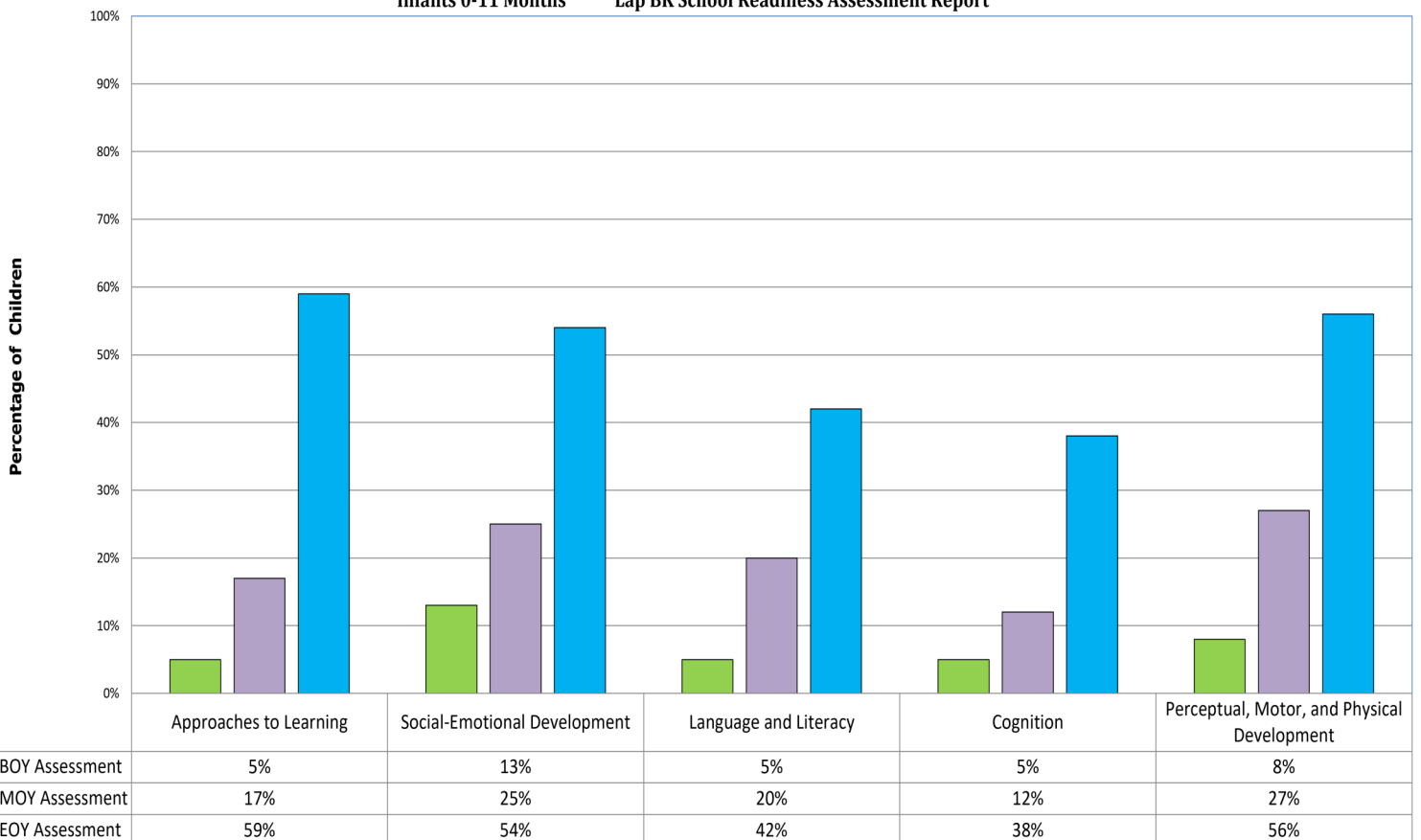
School Readiness Goals & Outcomes

2025-2026 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.

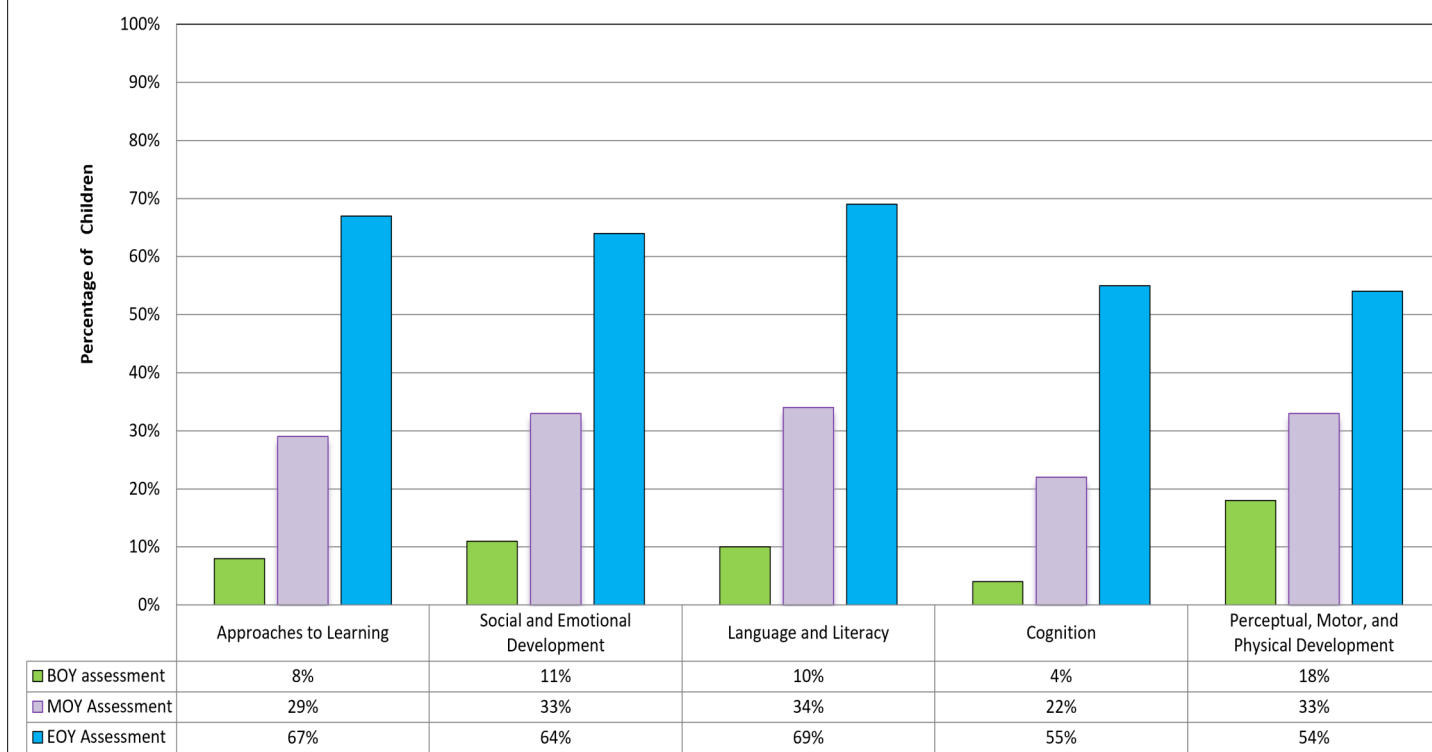
Children Outcomes End of the Year 2025-2026

Infants 0-11 Months Lap BK School Readiness Assessment Report



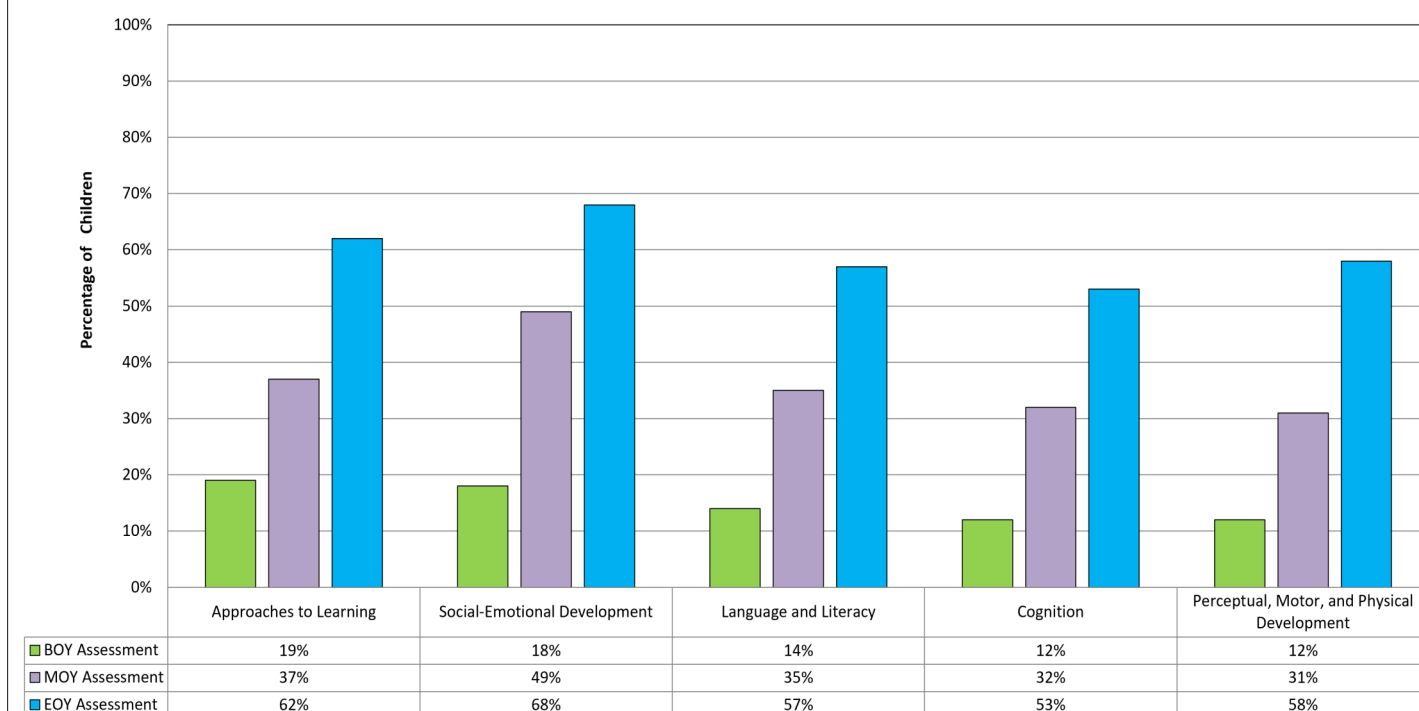
Children Outcomes End of the Year 2025-2026

Toddlers 12-23 Months Lap BK School Readiness Assessment Report



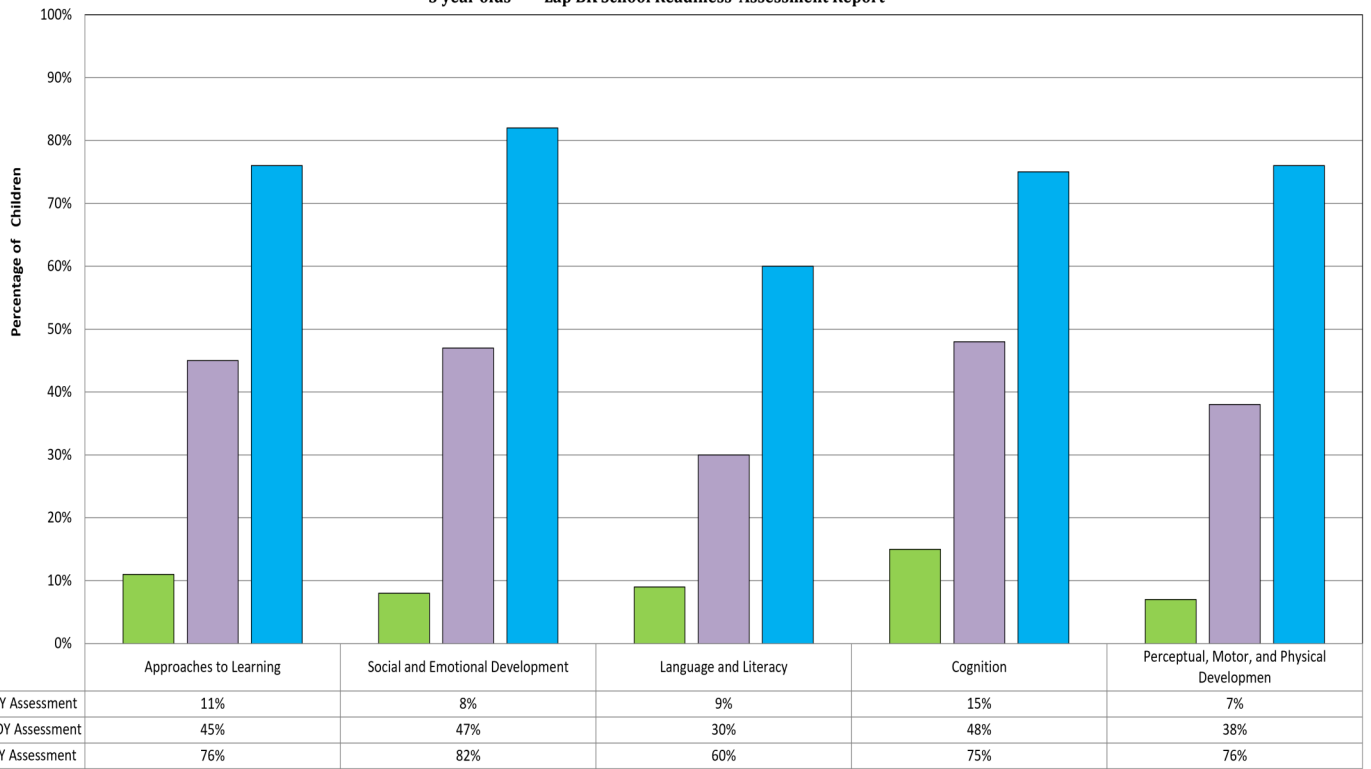
Children Outcomes End of the Year 2025-2026

Older Toddlers 24-35 Months Lap BK School Readiness Assessment Report



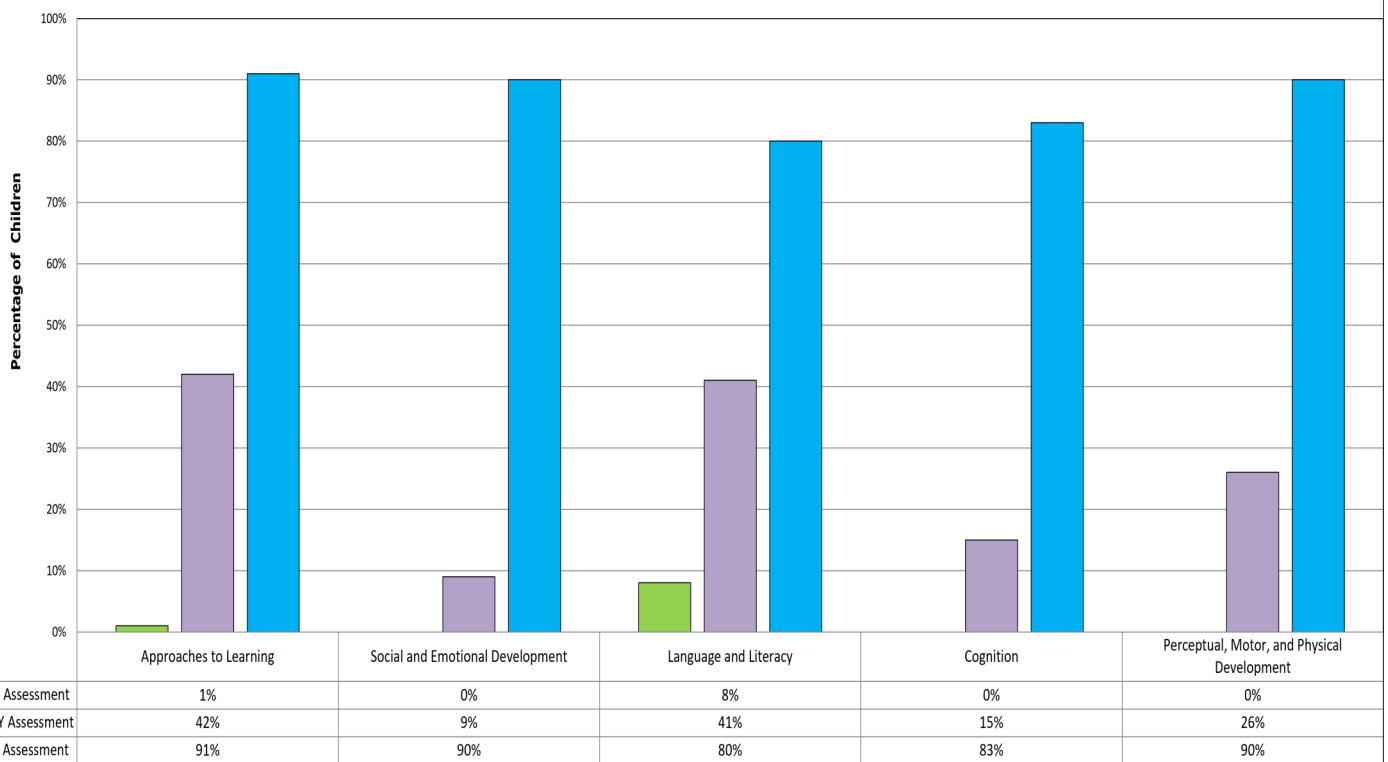
Children Outcomes End of the Year 2025-2026

3 year olds Lap BK School Readiness Assessment Report



Children Outcomes End of the Year 2025-2026

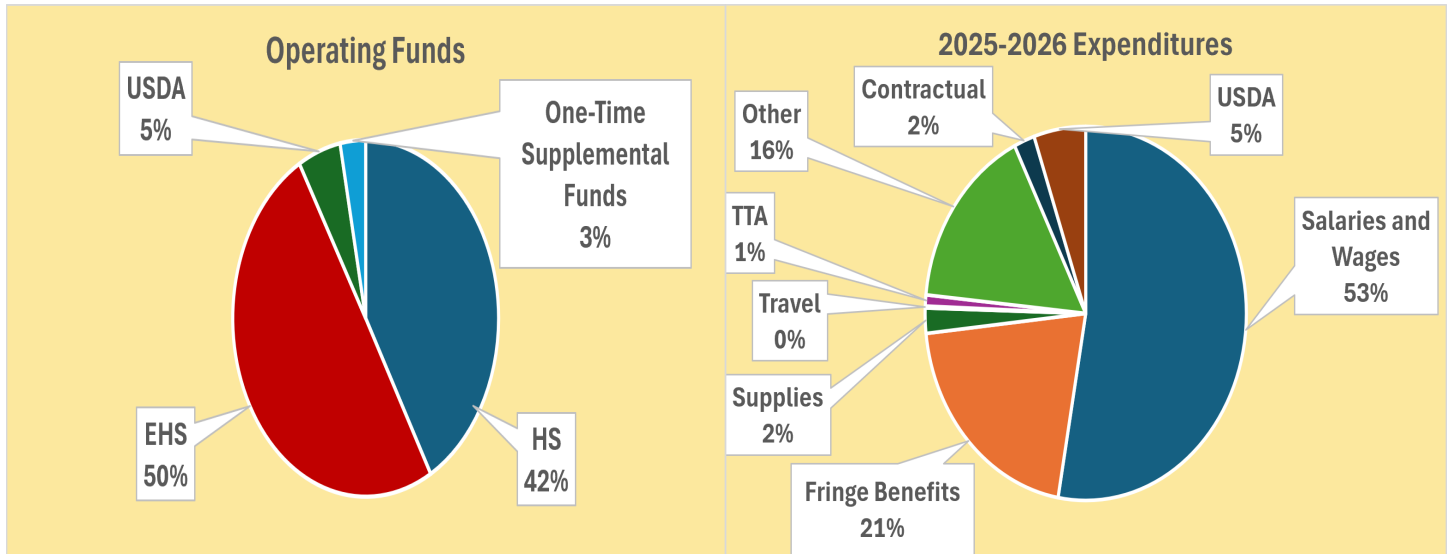
4 year olds Lap BK School Readiness Assessment Report



FINANCIAL REPORTS

Results of Audited Annual Consolidated Financial Report for FY Ending March 31, 2025.

Oscar R. Gonzalez CPA & Associates PLLC conducted an independent audit on NINOS that results in no findings and a clear audit. The independent auditors reports concluded that the combined financial statement present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of NINOS and its subsidiaries as of March 31, 2025, and the changes in its assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the USA.



Operating Grant Funds

	2025-2026
Head Start Federal Funding	\$9,378,370
Early Head Start Federal Funding	\$11,160,778
Texas Department of Agriculture Funding (USDA)	\$1,168,462
One-Time Supplemental Funds for Nutrition and Healthy Eating (HS/EHS)	\$693,131
Total	\$22,400,741

Non-Federal Share

Head Start and Early Head Start Non-Federal Share	\$7,343,219
---	-------------

Budgetary Expenditures & Proposed Budget

	2025-2026 Budget	2025-2026 Expenditures
Salaries and Wages	\$11,890,720	\$11,818,761
Fringe Benefits	\$4,860,839	\$4,599,155
Supplies	\$606,952	\$487,738
Travel	\$95,787	\$36,328
Training and Technical Assistance (TTA)	\$214,932.00	\$214,932.00
Other	\$3,129,922	\$3,608,220
Contractual	\$433,127	\$467,145
Texas Department of Agriculture (USDA)	\$1,168,462	\$1,168,462
Total	\$22,400,741	\$22,400,741



Neighbors In Need of Services Inc.
Head Start Preschool



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

ninosinc.org



For more information on NINOS Head Start Preschool visit:

www.ninosinc.org