Our Mission

Committed to the future of Knox County and its changing and diverse needs, Knox County Head Start works in partnership with the community to provide quality preschool, child care, and family services. Our purpose is to engage children, families, and staff in reaching their full potential.

Together with parents and families, KCHS teachers and other professionals open doors for children’s success in school and in life.

Guiding Values

A. We value families, fathers, mothers, and primary caregivers as the first and most important teachers and advocates for their children.
B. We strive to make a difference through the education, care, and support of our children, families, and staff by:
  1. Committing to provide quality services
  2. Hiring, training, and retaining competent staff
  3. Providing opportunities for personal and professional growth
  4. Developing and nurturing personal and professional, trusting relationships built on honesty and open communication
  5. Acknowledging and seeking diversity through our program design
  6. Creating and maintaining healthy and productive community partnerships

Did You Know?

- Knox County Head Start was founded in 1965 as Kokosing Day Care Centers, Inc.
- We are the largest single provider of early care and education services in Knox County with 99% of children qualifying as low-income. Over 280 children served in Head Start and Early Head Start.
- Seven centers throughout Knox County.
- Largest child care provider since 1998 in full-day programs for 143 children in three centers (Fredericktown, Gamber & Mount Vernon).
- Operating 6 bus routes, traveling 503 miles per day, exceeding 71,554 miles annually, transporting 130 children.
- 238 volunteers provide 1544 hours of service.
Knox County Head Start and the local community benefit from federal funding to support Head Start services to 216 children and families and Early Head Start services for 66 pregnant mothers, infants, toddlers, and their families. (Funding is based on available slots; the actual number of children served in these programs last year was 354). The current funding year includes a .72% increase in the Head Start and Early Head Start base grant funding, resulting in a .72% cost of living adjustment to employee salaries.

Carryover funds from the Early Head Start ARRA program enabled completion of a renovation project at the Fredericktown Center. The Head Start and Early Head Start base grant funding enabled KCHS to increase classroom space, provide more individualized services, and achieve a .72% cost of living adjustment to employee salaries.

KCHS was named one of ten National Head Start Centers of Excellence in September 2012. This project at the Fredericktown Center.

The Energy Cooperative Operation Round Up Foundation provided funding for upgrades to Building 1 at the Fredericktown Center.

The Ohio Children’s Trust Fund, operating through the Knox County Career Center’s GRADS and the Mount Vernon City Schools, provided $40,000 toward the purchase of the Fredericktown Center.

The support of local grants is greatly appreciated and recognized as important to KCHS’ providing quality services to children and families in Knox County.

The United Way of Knox County provided significant funding for Head Start and Early Head Start employee salaries and parent trainings. This funding is an important part of the required 25% local match of federal funding.

The Community Foundation of Mount Vernon and Knox County provided $40,000 toward the purchase of the Fredericktown Center.

KCHS had 20 parent events this year. 88% ($312) of enrolled children’s families attended at least one event. Total attendance: 3,934!

Over 92,031 breakfasts, lunches, snacks, and dinners were served to children and their families!

Number of Children Served by KCHS
August 1, 2011 - July 31, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Children Served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head Start</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Head Start</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EHS Pregnant Moms</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>493</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Medical Screenings (Physicals)
- 343 (97%) children (EHS & Preschool-Age) received an annual physical and all medical screenings, including hearing, vision, lead, and hemoglobin
- 56 children received medical follow-up
- 56 (100%) children received follow-up

Dental Services (Preschool Age)
- 223 (88.5%) children received a dental exam
- 36 children needed follow-up
- 30 (83%) children received follow-up

Mental Health Services

KCHS’ Child Mental Health Coordinator partners with Behavioral Health Partners of Central Ohio to provide Jump Start services for children exhibiting ongoing, challenging behaviors at home and/or in the classroom. Our goal is to provide effective interventions at an early age as possible.
- 58 parents were provided with consultations about their child’s behavioral or mental health.

Immunization Services (EHS & Preschool-Age)
- 306 children are categorized as up-to-date on their required immunizations
- 35 children are categorized as in-progress, having received all overdue shots for their age group

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Knox County Head Start’s employment has grown over the years, with the majority of classroom staff holding an associate or bachelor’s degree. In the past six years, 16 employees have received their college degrees or an advanced degree.

KCHS exceeds the Head Start 2007 standards for classroom quality in terms of education and professional development of teachers. All classroom preschool teachers hold a minimum of an associate degree, with 78.6% of them holding their bachelor or master’s degree. All infant/toddler teachers hold a minimum of a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. Fifty percent (50%) hold a bachelor’s degree and 30% hold an associate’s degree in early childhood education.

KCHS observes and assesses teacher performance throughout the program year, in particular assessing the quality of teacher-child interactions. KCHS’ Center of Excellence funding has enabled the program to enhance teacher mentoring so as to support the creation of a high-quality learning environment in which purposeful interactions with children support learning. Reliable assessors complete the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) twice a year in each preschool classroom to illustrate growth in teacher performance.

CLASS Scores range from 1-7, with 7 being the highest possible score. The tool looks at 10 dimensions, including language modeling, positive climate, teacher support, productivity, and concept development. These dimensions are grouped into summary domains of Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. The chart to the above right demonstrates that KCHS’ average teacher scores exceed national averages in all domains.
As one of ten National Head Start Center of Excellence programs, Knox County Head Start continued to expand Conscious Discipline® training in the largest Head Start community in Ohio, as well as nationally, during this second year of the five-year program.

The grant provides for enhancing KCHS’ classrooms and service delivery, as well as for enhancing the transitions of Head Start children from program to kindergarten, through increased opportunities to communicate effective strategies between kindergarten and Head Start teachers, as well as through the partnership with the Mount Vernon City Schools and our staff in assisting with kindergarten camps.

The grant allowed KCHS to extend Conscious Discipline® training and resources into the larger Knox county community, including other early childhood education and child care providers, elementary schools, and social service organizations. KCHS was able to extend Conscious Parenting trainings to a broader population within the Knox County community, as well as reach the broader Head Start and early childhood community throughout Ohio and the nation.

A Conscious Discipline® consultant observed and mentored KCHS teachers during the program year, and several trainings were provided for KCHS staff and community educators. KCHS staff and two elementary school teachers from Mount Vernon City Schools attended a week-long Conscious Discipline® training in Orlando, Florida, during June and July. KCHS staff provided trainings at the Ohio Head Start June Leadership Conference, the National Head Start Conference, and the Region V Head Start Conference.

In February 2012, the KCHS Center of Excellence team collaborated with researchers from Harvard University Graduate School of Education as part of a research project titled “Rigorous and Regulated Learning Environments,” which was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The project explores the impact of two generational approaches to social emotional well-being. KCHS anticipates the release of this case study during 2012-2013.

Since 2009-2010, all Knox County Head Start Centers have been annually recognized with Step Up To Quality awards by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services—Bureau of Child Care and Development for exceeding state licensing standards and providing high-quality childcare services. During 2011-2012, five of seven centers achieved or maintained three stars and two centers achieved or maintained two stars.

Three Star Centers:
- Centerburg Center
- Danville Legion Center
- Fredericktown Head Start and Child Care Center
- Gambier Community Center
- Northgate Center

Two Star Centers:
- Gambier Child Care Center
- New Hope Early Education Center

Office of Head Start Completes Federal Reviews

The new Early Head Start program was reviewed in its first year of operation during a Federal Review from 4/17/2011 to 4/20/2011. One finding was noted by the Review Team—that transitions from Early Head Start to Head Start and other preschool programs were not consistently initiated 6 months prior to a child turning three years of age. A follow-up review took place from 10/16/2011 to 10/22/2011 and confirmed that this finding had been corrected. The Office of Head Start affirmed that the finding was corrected and closed the report in a letter dated November 30, 2011, to Board Chairperson, Mark Kohlman.

A comprehensive triennial review of both Head Start and Early Head Start programs was conducted in December 2012 with no red flags reported. Findings and additional information that were reviewed in the 2012-2013 Annual Review.

We know that fathers are important in the lives of children. This year, 202 Head Start fathers or father figures participated in family or classroom events.

Teachers and support staff are trained to intentionally create classroom safety, to develop rituals and structures for creating a school family, and to increase the use of movement and music to encourage healthy brain development in young children.

The common language used in CD® and its consistent use is one of the strongest methods of implementing the practices and a significant reason why CD® improves quality at every level. When collaborators work within classrooms and with families, they build bridges between centers due to family changes, and when substitute employees move between centers, this common language creates cohesiveness and safety. Everywhere, employees remind each other and students to breathe, to be a STAR (Smile, Take A Deep Breath, and Relax), to recognize that “It is what it is,” to assume positive intent when dealing with difficult situations, and to approach conflicts as opportunities to teach.

KCHS conducts at least two six-week Conscious Parenting trainings annually, three-hour, single-topic trainings for expectant parents and parents of infants/toddlers; and one six-hour “Conscious Couples” training. The charts below detail statistics for these trainings in 2011-2012. KCHS also provided a six-week Conscious Parenting training for 13 Knox County Career Center GRADS students and for 15 parents from the Juvenile Court system by utilizing funding from the Ohio Child Trust Fund through Knox County Family and Children First Council. KCHS also facilitated a CD® video training series for 15 of KnoxCo’s Foster Grandparents and a 12-week book study in CD® with KCHS staff and five area early childhood education providers.

KCHS’ Executive Director reports that use of CD® has improved human resources management by promoting a positive approach to employee training, performance management, and discipline, ultimately re-