



Gulf Regional
Early Childhood Services

ANNUAL REPORT

2020

“

One of the
best
investments
we can make
in a child's life
is **high-quality
early
education.**

”

BARAK OBAMA



LETTER FROM PRESIDENT / CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

This year's annual report finds us reflecting on incredibly challenging times. In 2020 we experienced a global pandemic, an economic crisis, and challenging societal issues that dramatically impacted our lives and that will have significant repercussions for years to come. In our early childhood industry, the onset of COVID-19 saw nearly everyone finally realize the importance of safe and high-quality early care and education. Without it, first responders can't work, economies can't reopen, and we all suffer. Indeed, early educators are and have always been essential. GRECS is proud of the work we do to support them with opportunities for professional growth and helping them advance in their career goals. For close to 30 years, we have provided training, teaching resources, and technical assistance to early childhood professionals and programs with the goal of closing the school readiness gap so that all children arrive at kindergarten ready to learn. This work has never been more important or urgent.

While we continue to strive to help child care providers recover and to meet the demands of our community for early learning programs and services, I must also acknowledge the amazing commitment of those who make our work possible. To our Board of Directors, thank you for providing oversight and guidance on behalf of GRECS's mission. To our funders, thank you for supporting our work and believing in us. To our community, thank you for your investment in the future of young children, and to our GRECS staff, thank you for your perseverance and dedication. I must also thank our child care center partner programs and our GRECS Head Start centers that worked hard to find ways to keep classrooms safe so that the children could return. We also appreciated the innovative educators and family advocates who supported a variety of services so that children who needed to stay safe at home could continue to enjoy healthy growth and development and have important early learning experiences. I look forward to our continued partnerships as we adapt to respond to the needs of this moment.

Thank you for being a part of the GRECS community.

Sincerely,

Wendy McEarchern

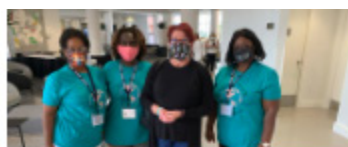




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PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START

- Comprehensive services for infants and toddlers of families who live in poverty

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

- Face-to-face workshops and training events; Online and distance learning courses for CEU credit; Quarterly newsletters; Reproducible resources for parents and early childhood education professionals

THE RESOURCE PLACE - A lending library of developmentally appropriate materials, teacher workroom and reusable resource materials

ALABAMA PATHWAYS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REGISTRY - Support services for state-wide professional development registry for those programs eligible to participate in Alabama Quality Stars

READING IS FUNDAMENTAL - Early literacy initiative that provides books and resources to over 2,000 children annually



“Children participating in high-quality early childhood education had **increased college graduation rates and increased rates of employment.”**

*Garcia, J.L., Heckman, J.J., Leaf, D.E., and Prados, M.J. The Lifecycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program white paper (December 11, 2016). University of Chicago, Department of Economics: Human Capital and Economic Opportunity Global Working Group (HCEO)



“Great things
are brought
about and
burdens are
lightened
through the
efforts of many
hands
anxiously
engaged in a
good cause.”

ELDER M. RUSSEL BALLARD

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dr. Abigail Baxter;

Professor, Leadership and Teacher Education,
University of South Alabama

Ms. Alex Garrett;

Attorney; Silver, Voit & Thompson, PC

Ms. Suzy Hardy;

Banking, Community Services

Ms. Paula Reese;

School-Home-Community Programs Manager;
Mobile County Public School System

Ms. Linda Steele;

City of Mobile Comptroller (Retired);
Forensic Financial Services Group, LLC

Dr. Katrina Trammell, M.D.;

Assistant Professor of Pediatrics,
University of South Alabama

Mr. Micah Wheeler;

Wilkins Miller CPA

Mrs. Patricia Vanderpool;

President, EAP Lifestyle Management

John S. Marshall, LPC

Family Counselor

Ms. Sasha Parrish

Former Head Start Parent

SENIOR LEADERSHIP

Wendy McEarchern;

President/Chief Executive Officer &
Executive Head Start/Early Head Start
Director

Ruth Vollmer;

Executive Vice President/Chief Financial Officer
of Finance & Administration

Kym Carroll;

Vice President of Research, Policy & Programs

Catherine Kreger;

Head Start/Early Head Start for
Baldwin, Clarke & Escambia Counties' Programs

Angela Blancovargas;

Early Head Start Deputy Director for
Mobile County Programs

Sallie Martin;

Community Connections Coordinator & AL Early
Head Start Child Care Partnership Program
Manager

Allison Goff;

Early Learning Career Center Director

Sarah McKay;

Operations Director

HEAD START & EARLY HEAD START LOCATIONS

Dearborn YMCA

321 N Warren St.; Mobile, AL 36603

Small Wonders Childcare Center

11100 AL-188; Grand Bay, AL 36541

Soaring Eagles Child Development Center

1655-B Eagle Dr.; Mobile, AL 36605

Starlight Daycare Center

22017 US-43; Mt. Vernon, AL 36560

Nina Nicks Joseph Child Development Center

209 S Washington Ave.; Mobile, AL 36602

Lighthouse Academy of Excellence - Grand Bay

9930 Cody Driskell Rd.; Grand Bay, AL 36541

Lighthouse Academy of Excellence - Prichard

218 South Wilson Ave.; Prichard, AL 36610

Watch Me Grow Child Development Center

1809 Wolf Ridge Rd.; Mobile, AL 36618

Highpoint Christian School

2421 Lott Rd.; Prichard, AL 36613

Mount Ararat Learning & Development Center

7172 Old Military Rd.; Theodore, AL 36582

Jubilee Head Start & Early Head Start Center

24044 US-98; Fairhope, AL 36532

Little Crusaders Learning Center

9023 Lawson Rd.; Daphne, AL 36526

Lighthouse Academy of Excellence - Bay Minette

1829 S US Hwy 31; Bay Minette, AL 36507

Atmore Head Start at

Rachel Patterson Elementary School

1102 W Craig St.; Atmore, AL 36502

Brewton Head Start & Early Head Start Center

1207 Belleville Ave.; Brewton, AL 36426

Jackson Head Start

131 Mayton Dr.; Jackson, AL 36545

Thomasville Head Start at

Thomasville Elementary School

300 Quincy Ingram St.; Thomasville, AL 36784



COVID-19 IMPACT AND RESPONSE

.....

In March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic. With much still unknown about the disease, its transmission, and how to respond, the entire world found itself in a fluid crisis situation that was rapidly changing and evolving.

With the health and safety of our staff, children, families and partners being a top priority, GRECS closely monitored reports and guidance, following recommendations from local and state government officials, the Office of Head Start and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The harmful health and economic effects of COVID-19 grew severe for families and businesses in our communities very quickly, alerting us to the importance of our vigilance.

In the months to follow it became increasingly clear that the work required of us in response to COVID-19 was only just beginning. Our GRECS team swiftly made adjustments to programs and services, where applicable, to ensure families and early childhood professionals had access to resources and support. With the use of technology and additional health and safety measures, we were able to continue our work of supporting adults and children in new and different ways.

Over a year has passed since COVID-19 roared into our lives, upending our routines and norms. But as we grappled with pandemic-inspired change, something else occurred: ***we started learning.***

The pandemic changed the way we communicate with families and each other. It has brought about a renewed commitment to connect in a variety of ways, including email, social media, text messaging and virtual video activities.

Ironically, we've learned that even in these unprecedented times, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Supporting educators, children and families during these times requires the same qualities and considerations that a normal year requires. The difference is magnitude. This year has required ***more*** patience, ***more*** empathy, ***more*** commitment, and ***more*** flexibility than ever before.





HEAD START & EARLY HEAD START GRANT #04CH011168 - BALDWIN, CLARKE & ESCAMBIA COUNTIES

Enrollment					
Month	EHS Enrollment EHS/HS	Funded Enrollment EHS/HS	Attendance	Disability Enrollment	Waitlist
August 2019	0 (Start-Up)	64/275	N/A	N/A	0
September 2019	0 (Start-Up)	64/275	N/A	N/A	0
October 2019	0 (Start-Up)	64/275	N/A	N/A	Not Available
November 2019	5/49	64/275	95%	1.2%	Not Available
December 2019	5/98	64/275	96%	1.2%	Not Available
January 2020	38/176	64/275	88.6%	2.2%	Not Available
February 2020	38/178	64/275	86.3%	3%	Not Available
March 2020	37/178	64/275	N/A due to COVID-19	3%	Not Available
April 2020	37/178	64/275	N/A due to COVID-19	3%	Not Available
May 2020	37/178	64/275	N/A due to COVID-19	3%	Not Available
June 2020	37/178	64/275	N/A due to COVID-19	3%	Not Available
July 2020	37/178	64/275	N/A due to COVID-19	3%	Not Available

Program Year Attendance by Center						
Month	Bay Minette (Lighthouse) 24 EHS 42 HS	Daphne (Lil Crusaders) 8 EHS 22 HS	Atmore (Patterson Sch) 0 EHS 40 HS	Jackson 0 EHS 102 HS	Jubilee 16 EHS 42 HS	Brewton 16 EHS 57 HS
August 2019	0 (Start-Up)	0 (Start-Up)	0 (Start-Up)	0 (Start-Up)	0 (Start-Up)	0 (Start-Up)
September 2019	0 (Start-Up)	0 (Start-Up)	0 (Start-Up)	0 (Start-Up)	0 (Start-Up)	0 (Start-Up)
October 2019	0 (Start-Up)	0 (Start-Up)	0 (Start-Up)	0 (Start-Up)	0 (Start-Up)	0 (Start-Up)
November 2019	0 (Start-Up)	91% (est)	97%	0 (Start-Up)	0 (Start-Up)	0 (Start-Up)
December 2019	89%	87%	93%	90%	0 (Start-Up)	0 (Start-Up)
January 2020	93.5%	87.9%	77.6%	89.4%	91%	0 (Start-Up)
February 2020	90.1%	79.9%	82.2%	89.1%	83.2%	0 (Start-Up)
March 2020	N/A due to COVID-19	N/A due to COVID-19	N/A due to COVID-19	N/A due to COVID-19	N/A due to COVID-19	0 (Start-Up)
April 2020	N/A due to COVID-19	N/A due to COVID-19	N/A due to COVID-19	N/A due to COVID-19	N/A due to COVID-19	0 (Start-Up)
May 2020	N/A due to COVID-19	N/A due to COVID-19	N/A due to COVID-19	N/A due to COVID-19	N/A due to COVID-19	0 (Start-Up)
June 2020	N/A due to COVID-19	N/A due to COVID-19	N/A due to COVID-19	N/A due to COVID-19	N/A due to COVID-19	0 (Start-Up)
July 2020	21.21%	N/A due to COVID-19	N/A due to COVID-19	5.88%	1.72%	0 (Start-Up)

EARLY HEAD START - GRANT #04CH011305

MOBILE COUNTY

Enrollment					
Month	EHS Enrollment	Funded Enrollment	Attendance	Disability Enrollment	Waitlist
August 2019	104	104	92%	10%	-
September 2019	104	104	91%	11%	13
October 2019	104	104	89%	13%	12
November 2019	104	104	81%	14%	18
December 2019	104	104	85%	14%	21
January 2020	104	104	84%	16%	29
February 2020	104	104	83%	14%	31
March 2020	104	104	77%	11%	34
April 2020	104	104	COVID-19 Closure	15%	33
May 2020	104	104	COVID-19 Closure	13%	33
June 2020	104	104	COVID-19 Closure	13%	37
July 2020	104	104	26%	6%	45

Program Year Attendance by Center				
Month	Lighthouse	GESGC	Soaring Eagles	Nina Nicks
August 2019	88%	93%	97%	91%
September 2019	85%	91%	93%	93%
October 2019	87%	91%	92%	88%
November 2019	78%	80%	83%	83%
December 2019	82%	88%	91%	82%
January 2020	82%	82%	90%	81%
February 2020	84%	85%	95%	74%
March 2020	80%	73%	79%	75%
April 2020	COVID-19 Closure	COVID-19 Closure	COVID-19 Closure	COVID-19 Closure
May 2020	COVID-19 Closure	COVID-19 Closure	COVID-19 Closure	COVID-19 Closure
June 2020	COVID-19 Closure	COVID-19 Closure	COVID-19 Closure	COVID-19 Closure
July 2020	44%	15%	COVID-19 Closure	19%

*Pregnant Moms are not included in the attendance data.





EARLY HEAD START CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIPS - GRANT #04HP000073; MOBILE COUNTY

Enrollment					
Month	EHS Enrollment	Funded Enrollment	Attendance	Disability Enrollment	Waitlist
August 2019	88	88	95%	7%	
September 2019	88	88	92%	8%	17
October 2019	88	88	87%	9%	17
November 2019	88	88	79%	9%	23
December 2019	88	88	84%	9%	31
January 2020	88	88	85%	8%	44
February 2020	88	88	90%	7%	48
March 2020	88	88	79%	6%	53
April 2020	88	88	COVID-19 Closure	7%	53
May 2020	88	88	COVID-19 Closure	5%	53
June 2020	88	88	COVID-19 Closure	5%	59
July 2020	88	88	25%	2%	63

Program Year Attendance by Center				
Month	Highpoint	Lighthouse 2	Soaring Eagles	Mt. Ararat
August 2019	97%	100%	96%	88%
September 2019	92%	93%	92%	91%
October 2019	83%	84%	94%	88%
November 2019	78%	76%	73%	85%
December 2019	76%	82%	91%	87%
January 2020	80%	80%	86%	87%
February 2020	88%	85%	92%	95%
March 2020	82%	68%	82%	87%
April 2020	COVID-19 Closure	COVID-19 Closure	COVID-19 Closure	COVID-19 Closure
May 2020	COVID-19 Closure	COVID-19 Closure	COVID-19 Closure	COVID-19 Closure
June 2020	COVID-19 Closure	COVID-19 Closure	COVID-19 Closure	COVID-19 Closure
July 2020	COVID-19 Closure	25%	COVID-19 Closure	COVID-19 Closure

HIGHLIGHTED 2019 - 2020 ACTIVITIES

- In celebration of **Read Across America** month, GRECS staff attended the **Literacy Day/Grand Opening of Lighthouse Academy of Excellence in Bay Minette, AL**. We participated in delivering books for each child, face painting, and other activities with children and families.
- **Week of the Young Child** and **Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Awareness Month** were observed differently in 2020. Our agency's team members engaged with professionals and families on social media channels, posting videos with activities and resources for families and professionals that reached 2,307 people. Pinwheels, blue ribbons and teacher activity packets were delivered to each program/family that engaged with posted activities or simply reached out to request one.
- In partnership with **The Alabama Literacy Coalition & Community Foundation of South Alabama**, GRECS distributed over 2,000 school readiness calendars to families of children that would be preparing to enter kindergarten.
- GRECS was a part of Alabama's annual **Statewide Parenting Day** with **Mobile County Public School System**. Our agency provided information on services and community resources, gave away free books, and handed out promotional items including hand sanitizer, band-aids and other materials to parents as they came to schools to pick up first quarter report cards.
- Staff members supported **Whole Foods 5% Giving Back Day** to benefit **Alabama Partnership for Children** by providing information to customers on healthy snacks for children, free training classes, hand sanitizer and back packs in the Mobile, AL location. We also engaged in a healthy snack activity, "Apple Car", and gave "Lola Plants a Garden" books to children.
- In partnership with the **Boys and Girls Clubs of South Alabama** and **Gulf Coast Children's Book Festival**, GRECS staff members delivered materials from the Lending Library, training calendars and educational materials to open childcare programs and family day care home providers.
- GRECS registered and maintained records for 4,679 early childhood education professionals in **Alabama Pathways**, Alabama's statewide professional development registry (PDR). The PDR serves to support the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System, **Alabama Quality STARS**, administered by the **University of Alabama**.





GRECS adapted to the precautions and policies put into place during COVID and continued to provide the following services to children, families and early childhood education professionals:

- Awarding Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for eligible professional development online and face-to-face training sessions;
- Mentoring and technical assistance to professionals working towards attainment of a Child Development Associate credential;
- Designing and hosting specific professional development events for program Directors and Administrators;
- Conducting hearing and vision screens for children enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start;
- Assisting parents with finding resources to establish a medical and dental home for children and/or verifying that families have a medical and dental home;
- Educating families on concepts of child development, explaining assessment methods and underscoring the importance of regular attendance. Our family engagement professionals also work with families to identify potential challenges to regular attendance and establish a plan of proactive plan of action should those challenges arise.
- Establishing family goals with Head Start and Early Head Start families, and completing goal progression assessments throughout the year;
- Enrolling children at all locations throughout Mobile, Baldwin, Escambia and Clarke Counties. This includes opening new classrooms at 6 programs for 339 children in Baldwin, Escambia and Clarke Counties;
- Collaborating with Mental Health Consultant's at **Lifelines** to visit Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms to ensure that classroom environments and adult/child interactions support children's ongoing mental health and social and emotional well-being;
- Providing referrals for children to receive Part C intervention or LEA (local education agency) services;
- Hosting Community Spotlight Meetings at GRECS office with invited guest speakers from other community agencies to educate and inform GRECS staff of resources available to early childhood education professionals as well as Head Start and Early Head Start families.

2019-20 BUDGETED & ACTUAL REVENUE AND EXPENSES

2020 BUDGETED REVENUE & EXPENDITURES

Head Start/Early Head Start (Federal)	\$ 7,377,940.00	58%
Early Head Start (State)	\$ 1,728,000.00	14%
In-Kind	\$ 2,276,485.00	18%
Quality	\$ 933,625.00	7.3%
Registry	\$ 176,125.00	1.4%
United Way	\$ 62,000.00	0.5%
Caring for the Caregiver (CTF)	\$ 25,515.00	0.2%
Office of School Readiness Pre-K	\$ 91,000.00	0.7%
Other Contrib/Local Programs	\$ 121,000.00	0.9%
Total Revenue	\$ 12,791,690.00	

EXPENSES

Salaries & Benefits	\$ 3,872,344.00	56%
Contractual	\$ 3,455,015.00	50%
In-Kind	\$ 2,276,485.00	33%
Supplies	\$ 895,955.00	13.0%
Occupancy/Rent	\$ 1,210,004.00	17.5%
Professional Development	\$ 210,050.00	3.0%
Professional Fees	\$ 76,155.00	1.1%
Travel	\$ 58,250.00	0.8%
Other	\$ 495,110.00	7.2%
Total Expenses	\$ 12,549,368.00	

2020 ACTUAL REVENUE & EXPENDITURES

REVENUE

Head Start/Early Head Start (Federal)	\$ 8,712,908.00	63%
Early Head Start (State)	\$ 1,883,052.00	14%
In-Kind	\$ 1,754,957.00	13%
Quality	\$ 933,625.00	6.7%
Registry	\$ 176,125.00	1.3%
United Way	\$ 62,000.00	0.4%
Office of School Readiness Pre-K	\$ 187,000.00	1.4%
Other Contrib/Local Programs	\$ 140,984.00	1.0%
Total Revenue	\$ 13,850,651.00	100%

EXPENSES

Salaries & Benefits	\$ 4,681,241.00	38%
Contractual	\$ 3,504,687.00	28%
In-Kind	\$ 1,754,957.00	14%
Supplies	\$ 1,293,816.00	10.4%
Occupancy/Rent	\$ 667,057.00	5.4%
Equipment	\$ 128,984.00	1.0%
Professional Development	\$ 169,345.00	1.4%
Professional Fees	\$ 21,260.00	0.2%
Travel	\$ 30,056.00	0.2%
Other	\$ 176,083.00	1.4%
Total Expenses	\$ 12,427,486.00	100%



In February 2019, The Office of Head Start conducted a Focus Area One Review of GRECS's EHS programs. There were no findings or concerns. Further details of the review process and the findings of that report are published in the 2018-19 Annual Report. An OHS Focus Area 2 Review was originally scheduled for the 2019-20 program year. Due to COVID-19 and travel restrictions, the review was postponed and took place in February 2021. There were no findings or concerns. Further details can be found in published monthly activity reports and the upcoming 2020-21 annual report.

2020-21 BUDGETED REVENUE AND EXPENSES

REVENUE

Head Start/Early Head Start (Federal)	\$	7,243,017.00	56%
Early Head Start (State)	\$	2,264,520.00	18%
In-Kind	\$	1,754,957.00	14%
Quality	\$	933,625.00	7.2%
United Way	\$	62,000.00	0.5%
Office of School Readiness Pre-K	\$	355,000.00	2.7%
DHR Stabilizing Child Care Programs	\$	182,000.00	1.4%
Other Contrib/Local Programs	\$	121,000.00	0.9%
Total Revenue	\$	12,916,119.00	100%

EXPENSES

Salaries & Benefits	\$	4,681,241.00	37%
Contractual	\$	3,504,687.00	28%
In-Kind	\$	1,754,957.00	14%
Supplies	\$	1,293,816.00	10%
Occupancy/Rent	\$	667,057.00	5%
Equipment/Facilities	\$	252,000.00	2%
Professional Development	\$	169,345.00	1%
Professional Fees	\$	21,260.00	0%
Travel	\$	30,056.00	0%
Other	\$	176,083.00	1%
Total Expenses	\$	12,550,502.00	100%



An annual A-133 financial audit was conducted by Smith, Dukes & Buckalew, L.L.P. in accordance with Government Auditing Standards and indicates no finding or questioned costs. As a result of the most recent monitoring review by The Administration for Families and Children, GRECS was designated as a program in good standing and had no findings of non-compliance with the Federal Head Start Performance Standards.



Gulf Regional Early Childhood Services

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