



# 2016-2017 EARLY CHILDHOOD SEMIANNUAL REPORT

December 2016

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## Introduction

Since 1974, Council on Rural Services has been providing quality comprehensive educational and support services to individuals and families while building partnerships with people of all ages and inspiring them to seek new opportunities that increase their potential for growth. For 39 years, the early childhood education program of Council on Rural Services (CORS), known as Kids Learning Place (KLP), has helped provide quality education and care for over 30,000 children. Kids Learning Place centers meet Ohio's child care licensing requirements and Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) standards. In addition, KLP meets the safety, health, education, and tracking requirements established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Children are exposed to research based curricula employed by certified and degreed teachers in every classroom ensuring they receive the highest level of quality early childhood education possible.

Council on Rural Services (CORS) established a self-assessment process in order to continuously improve the quality of services and programs. The evaluation process utilizes data gathered throughout the program year to learn about the effectiveness of our services and programs. Data is monitored continually, analyzed quarterly, and reports are produced semiannually to drive decision-making. This report is intended to provide a comprehensive snapshot of the program's semi-annual progress based on the four outcomes developed from the four long term goals stated in the continuation grant. The four outcomes are: 1) Improve the health and wellness of children and families; 2) Ensure our children are school ready; 3) Continuously improve CORS Head Start systems to serve as best practices for the nation; and 4) Fully engage parents in the HS/EHS program.

## Executive Summary

The Data Department analyzed program data from the first half of the program year (July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 through December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016). The analysis was driven by four outcomes which tie into the agency's long and short term goals outlined in the grant and continuous improvement plans. The outcomes reflect the agency's mission and follow objectives and priorities of the Office of Head Start.

In summary, for **Outcome 1**: Improve the health and wellness of children and families, CORS continues to build systems that support children and families in accessing health and developmental services for early detection and intervention services. Ongoing monitoring, improved tracking and reporting systems, formalized service partnerships with health care providers, updated interagency agreements, an active Health Services Advisory Committee, and continued referral and support services to parents are actions in motion to improve the health related outcomes for children and families. CORS will continue to educate parents on the importance of early intervention and healthy active living through innovative programs that help apply healthy living to everyday life.

For **Outcome 2**: CORS Head Start systems are continuously improved, CORS constantly examines data from a systems perspective to engage in the continuous improvement cycle. Great efforts have been made to create a culture where children, families, staff and community feel supported and heard through communication and transparency with staff both *from* the leadership and *to* the leadership.

In addition, the COPA data management system continues to be refined and barriers to data entry continued to be addressed with the staff. Exploring new and innovative operational procedures, staffing patterns, and daily schedules will be a priority. The Managers are committed to using data to inform decisions and drive results for the organization. This data will be shared with the governing bodies and staff to direct their priorities in addressing the needs of the families and communities being served.

For **Outcome 3**: Parents are fully engaged in the HS/EHS program, CORS continues to implement and adjust the usage of the Family Engagement Plan by refining its connections to the Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework. CORS strives to have families invest into the goal setting process and achieve family goals through ongoing training and support to Family Advocates and Home Visitors. Sustained enrollment and attendance are the utmost priorities. Employees at all levels of the organization are committed to raising the awareness of CORS and our impact on children, families and communities.

The CORS Policy Council is active and engaged. The monthly meetings are dynamic. The Policy Council has a parent representative on the Board of Directors. In addition, three members have been working through the Ambassador Program offered through OHSAI and will be visiting Capitol Hill in January to meet with members of Congress.

For **Outcome 4**: Ensure children are school ready, CORS continues to use data to drive program planning for children and their families. The continued implementation and refinement of the school readiness

plan in addition to creating procedures for both preschool and infant and toddler programs will help to guide and focus both staff and parents in preparing their children for school. The commitment to continuing and growing meaningful collaborations with public schools will strengthen the role that a community of educators plays in the long-term success of children as learners and citizens. CORS will continue to monitor CLASS and Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) data to offer ongoing training and support to partners, teaching staff, children and families.

## Results

### **Outcome One: Improve the health and wellness of our children and families**

*“Life is not merely to be alive, but to be well.” –Marcus Valerius Martial*

In keeping with the Head Start Performance Standards, but also mindful of the necessary steps for the whole to be well, CORS promotes and ensures completion of all age appropriate preventive and primary health care (e.g. immunizations, developmental/behavioral assessment). Kids Learning Place (KLP) center staff educate families on the importance of receiving adequate care by ensuring and monitoring their adherence to Ohio’s Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) guidelines. Parents learn about proper pediatric care to identify health care related issues that otherwise would go unnoticed and, possibly, untreated or undiagnosed.

In recognizing the importance that the above factors play in overall health and the effect of healthy bodies and minds on an individual’s ability to learn, CORS has established the following health related goals to help ensure that children it serves are school ready.

***Goal one: Children and families have identified sources of continuous health care with a focus on immunizations and oral health care and follow-up.***

The connection between the health of children and their ability to be school ready is a huge focus within the agency. Given this connection a great deal of effort has been expended to educate parents on the importance of good overall health. One of most important factors to maintaining this is obtaining a medical and dental home, as well as being up to date with all immunizations.

In regards to immunizations 96.5% of Head Start children and 91.2% are current, have received all immunizations they possibly could to this point, or have state exemptions from immunization. Family Advocates and health staff will continue to work with families to get those missing items caught up as soon as possible.

Through December 15<sup>th</sup> of the 2016-2017 program year 80.23% of HS and 70.75% of EHS children had a current dental exam. In regard to dental exam follow up, 40.71% of HS children had follow up work completed for identified dental issues. Barriers to service continue to be a lack of providers in the service area who either accept the medical card or are accepting new patients. For follow-up care many families must travel 50-75 miles to find a provider.

Great effort has been put into improving the usage of dental resources within the communities in the CORS service area. The Health Coordinator has been making personal visits to local offices to discuss ways that services can be improved on both the parts of providers and the families and children that are served. These efforts have begun to bear fruit as we are exploring an MOU for expanded dental and medical services throughout our service area with Health Partners of Western Ohio. There has been an increased focus on proper oral hygiene and the importance it plays in helping children be school ready from a young age.

Mobile Dental vans continue to be used to help meet the dental needs of our children. These vans allow many children who otherwise would not have access to dental care to at a minimum receive an oral screening. All avenues will be explored to ensure that as many children as possible receive dental care.

***Goal two: Parents will participate in a healthy lifestyle training at the center***

Staff has worked diligently to ensure that healthy lifestyle educational activities have been included in each of our parent center meetings. These have ranged from items such as simple exercises to do with the family to healthy meal planning for busy days. In addition, CORS is again applying for the *Cooking Matters* grant which continues to encourage partnering with local grocery stores to educate parents on how to shop for nutritious foods. The Family Engagement Coordinator has taken the lead role with this project. It will include leading all parent participant groups through a local store in their area and educating them on how to shop for healthy items, what items to avoid, and ideas for meal prep. The hands on aspect of this program is intended to make it easier for families to grasp and provided guidance in a new, exciting, and innovative way.

***Goal three: To complete 45 day screenings for 100% of children in a timely manner.***

Through December of the 2016-2017 program year CORS served 1528 children. Currently 81.18% of HS and 71.24% of EHS children are up to date on, or have completed all required exams and screenings per Ohio's EPSDT guidelines. This follows the historical trend for CORS programs and continued efforts will be made to connect children and families to medical resources and ensure they meet the EPSDT guidelines.

Please see Appendix A for a full breakdown of all screening statuses.

***Goal four: Children will engage in active gross motor activities each day in the classroom.***

Classrooms have made a commitment to engage children in more *I am Moving; I am Learning* activities. In addition, they have invested time in each of their daily schedules for gross motor activities. These have ranged across the activity spectrum from yoga to dancing. Teachers have used these opportunities to show children the importance of being active in their overall well-being.

***Goal five: To achieve and maintain a healthy weight through active living for children, staff and families.***

For the 2016-2017 program year, Council on Rural Services is again focusing on the services provided to children who were categorized as being of “abnormal weight” meaning underweight, overweight, or obese according to federal guidance on body mass index as we found that for the agency roughly 37% of our children met this definition.

CORS was one of the 10 programs selected from 183 applicants to receive a grant to support healthy active living in our Head Start/Early Head Start programs. The funder is the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness (NCECHW) Healthy Active Living Collaborative. The purpose of the grant is to develop, implement and evaluate a best practice programmatic and policy interventions. Teams of two-three staff and parents will attend learning sessions and will receive virtual training and technical assistance to increase their fundamental knowledge and skills of staff wellness, nutrition education, physical activity and family engagement and to develop a pilot project. The grant amount is \$3,000 to cover costs associated with the pilot project. The training and technical assistance is funded separately by NCECHW.

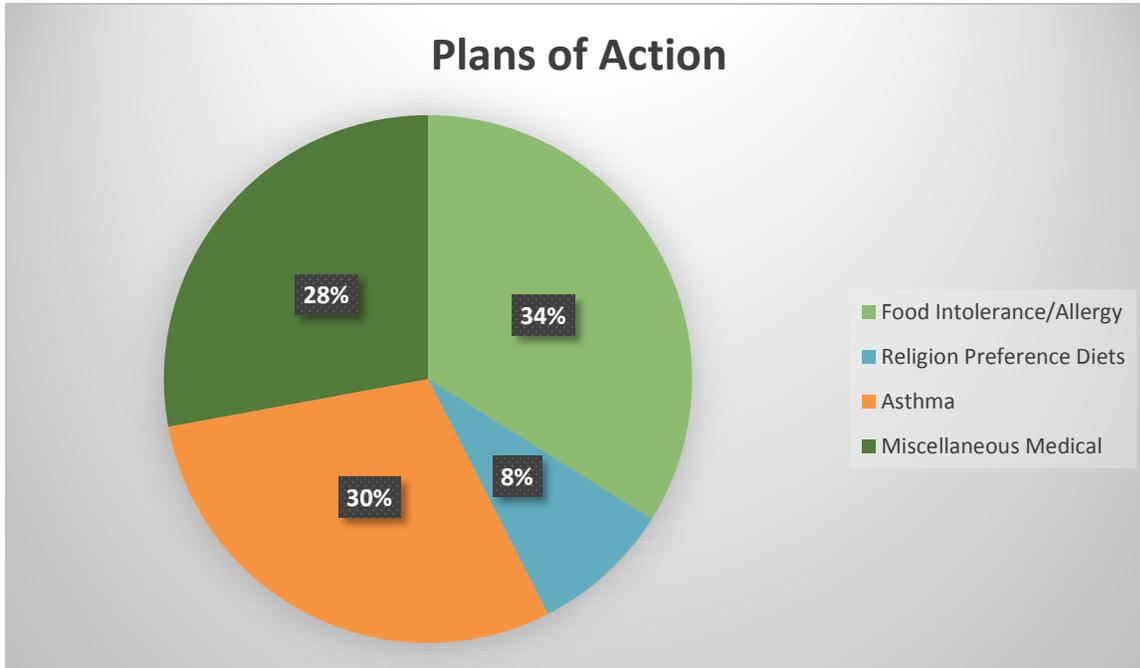
As an agency we are an enthusiastic advocate of the *Healthy Active Living Initiative* and realize that it is a major piece of educating and helping families’ live healthier lives. In conjunction with this initiative, the agency the program has made a concerted effort to partner with local WIC agencies, Health Departments, and SNAP Education programs to provide additional health related resources to the families being served. Additional visits by “Choosy”, the agency mascot for healthy active living have been made. The new height and weight measuring tools continue to be used by all home visitors and classrooms and additional training has been provided to ensure that measurements are consistent and reliable. Wellness opportunities and education are circulated to staff. This is done by an annual wellness day, monthly employee updates, newsletters, and periodic competitions that encourage wellness.

***Serving Special Populations***

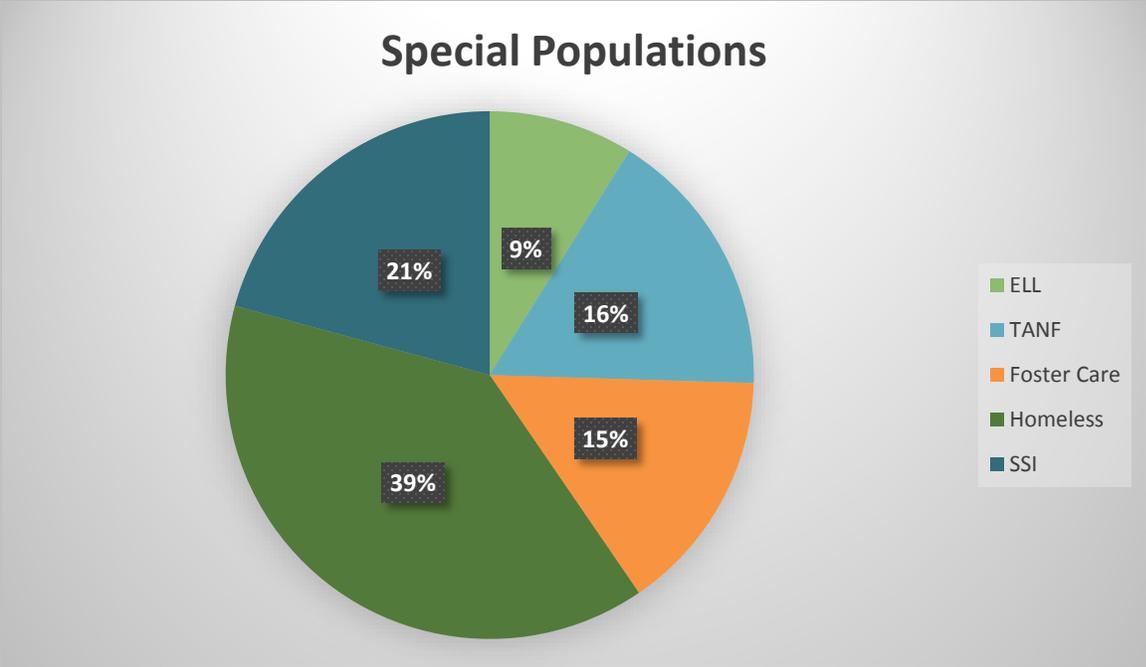
Serving special populations is extremely important in improving the health and wellness of our families. The Health Coordinator continues to make home visits to address specific health related issues

with newborns and their mothers. She has provided this service to four families so far this program year. The focus of these visits is addressing postnatal depression and proper newborn care.

A Plan of Action (POA) is established for children for whom a special health related need has been identified. A total of 233 POAs have been submitted from the beginning of the program year (July 1). These are classified as pertaining to food or medical reasons; 42% of them were food related and 58% were due to a child's medical condition. The largest food issue is an allergy and or food intolerance and the biggest medical problem our children face is Asthma.



CORS has served 361 children who are either homeless, in foster care, receiving SSI, or are English Language Learners (ELL) through December of this program year. The breakdown of these special populations is below.



CORS prides itself on getting children and families the support they need to strengthen their ability to be successful. As such identifying children with disabilities who are in need of an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) is crucial. Through December of the 2016-2017 program year, 69 children were identified as in need of an IEP and 35 children were identified as needing an IFSP. This represents slightly under 8% of our funded enrollment. In addition, another 35 children are suspected and currently working through the evaluation process. CORS continues to work with local LEA's to ensure that every child who is suspected receives proper evaluation and support. This process ensures that the most current information is available to help staff identify what services are available and who is to provide each of those services.

***Social Emotional and Mental Health Services***

Along with physical health CORS has placed a large focus on importance of social-emotional development and mental health to promote the concept of the overall wellness. In line with this focus the agency has fully embraced the Conscious Discipline concept. Key staff attended sessions sponsored by OHSAI on Conscious Discipline and how to maximize its effectiveness and implementation. Also, CORS contracted with Joni Spencer, mental health consultant, for support of individual classrooms, real-time mentoring for teaching staff and in-depth training for Child Advocates. Moreover, Joni is working to create “model” classrooms at Piqua, Bellefontaine and Fairborn KLP's to serve as training labs for new and existing staff.

The Child Advocate position continues to evolve, providing support to classrooms and staff in behavior management and child evaluation. The primary responsibilities of this position are to complete

classroom mental health observations, individual child screenings (DECA-C) and observations, to refer children needing additional evaluation and follow up for social-emotional, developmental and behavioral evaluations, to support families through these processes, and to refer classroom staff to the Preschool and Infant/Toddler Coordinators for classroom management support. In this manner the Child Advocates provide the key link to mental health services in our service area.

Finally, with the support and reflective feedback of the Child Advocates and management groups, the Program Development Manager completed the Mental Health and Disabilities guide to provide all staff with a consistent source of the policies and procedures around identification, referral, and ongoing support for children with social/emotional and/or developmental needs. The Mental Health and Disabilities guide is appropriately aligned with the new Head Start Performance Standards in addition to other State and Federal requirements. As part of this process, a classroom observation tool for Mental Health was developed for both Infant/Toddler and Preschool. Both tools were aligned with the agency selected social/emotional approach and the Preschool tool was aligned with the CLASS assessment tool as well.

### ***Health Education and Collaboration***

The Health Services Advisory Committees (HSAC) have been refocused and strengthened. At this point a HSAC has been held or is scheduled to be held within every county that we currently serve. These have helped to grow our partnerships with the health community and provided valuable information on resources and ideas to overcome the challenges faced by the population we serve.

### **Outcome Two: Improved operational efficiency**

*“Arriving at one goal is the starting point of another.” –John Dewey*

The goal of any organization should be consistent improvement upon the services it provides and the effectively perform its operations. CORS has made it a priority to invest in the operations of the organization and to maximize the efficiency at which it can provide services. The following goals outline the steps that CORS has taken in striving to meet this outcome.

#### ***Goal One: CLASS scores improve across the program.***

The agency currently has 16 CLASS certified assessors employed in a variety of positions, as well as 1 certified trainer. The CLASS Readiness Screener completed in September and early October in all 38 preschool classrooms presented above average scores in all three domains for the start of the year in 97% of the classrooms. The Formal CLASS observations completed in November and December continued this positive trend with 98% of the classrooms presenting above average scores in all three domains. All classroom options continue to show consistent scores with positive growth across the agency. This commitment has yielded great growth in our CLASS scores both through internal and external measures.

This data will continue to be analyzed to outline areas of needed improvement for professional development and to ensure that the amazing time and quality that all staff put into preparing children for the next steps in their lives is optimized.

***Goal Two: Sites/options meet and sustain full enrollment and maintain active waiting lists.***

The need to strengthen recruiting and enrollment services was previously identified as a need through the continuous improvement process. In response to this need several decisions were made including the submission and approval of a slot reduction request and extending the scope of the family advocates and home visitors from part year to full year. This decision meant that they were now able to recruit, meet with, and maintain contact with families over the summer. This change has led to greater enrollment, as the agency is fully enrolled in Early Head Start and fully enrolled in Head Start in July and August, with an average of 98% thereafter. Once the bus transportation is fully operational in Van Wert County it is believed full enrollment will be reached in Head Start.

***Goal Three: The calculations of income verifications are error free.***

The integrity of the ERSEA process hinges on the ability to create and maintain valid eligibility documentation records. CORS has developed a strong process to thoroughly audit all of these records before a child and family are enrolled for services. It is determined that no errors have been made and that eligibility determination is correct. This process has eliminated all errors from the income verification process and allowed the agency to achieve this goal. In an effort to keep the Board and Policy Council abreast of the ERSEA process The Manager of Data and Compliance (MDC) and the Lead Program Assistant (LPA) spent time with both program governance bodies training them on the expectations and requirements of the new ERSEA performance standards.

***Goal Four: Sites/options increase the amount of parent generated in-kind.***

During the previous fiscal year CORS was required to request a waiver as they did not meet their requirement for Non-Federal Match(NFM). In response CORS leadership requested the support of a Grantee Specialist in Summer 2016. On a monthly basis, Ametta Reaves, Grantee Specialist, has facilitated the development of a non-federal match continuous improvement plan which has resulted in considerable increases of in-kind over last year's amount. A smaller waiver request is expected.

An initiative that has come out of this guidance is while designing individualized at home activities for parent and child to experience together is beneficial for attainment of child and agency school readiness goals, it also required much educator time to develop on a weekly basis. Through conversations with staff and grantee specialist, some modifications to the at home in-kind form were presented and approved. These adjustments will reinforce skill development, offer parents more opportunities to connect with their child and provide feedback on child's progress and provide educators additional time to focus on classroom activities, an unanticipated positive outcome for this process.

***Goal Five: Families receive the education services that best meet their needs.***

CORS continues to offer a range of program options and models to best meet the educational needs of the children and families we serve. Early Head Start Options include full day/full year 5 day a week with wrap around child care and home based services. Head start has a greater number of options including the full day/full year 5 day a week with wrap around child care, full day/part year 4 day a week, part day/part year 4 day a week, and home based services.

The home based program option now better meets the needs of families as the 0-5 model becomes fully implemented. Under this model all children enrolled in the home base option are served by the same staff member. This allows greater continuity of educational delivery and social services.

CORS submitted a Duration Grant to extend the hours of service to an increased number of children and is still awaiting final notice of its status. In addition, CORS opened all public school partnership (Jamestown, Indian Lake, Ben Logan, West Milton, and Bradford) and single site locations (Union City) as a 6-hour day, 4 days per week option for the 2016-2017 program year. Next year, these locations (where school district calendars align) will move to the full duration of 1,020 hours per year.

***Goal Six: Staff is offered education around the growing drug problem in our service area.***

Drug issues are a large concern for the agency and the communities that encompass our service area. The nine counties are in the midst of an opioid epidemic and have continuing issues with substance abuse. In response to these concerns on December 16<sup>th</sup>, CORS welcomed Operation Street Smart to present a half day training. The officers presented what staff should be looking for when they go into homes, what signs they should be looking for when talking to families, and what resources are available to do further research. This was extremely enlightening and better prepared staff to handle these difficult conversations and situations.

***Goal Seven: Data entered by staff is accurate and timely.***

The agency has set expectations that all data be entered within 72 hours of being received. Efforts continue to express the importance of accurate and timely data entry to frontline staff. Training has been provided on tips and tricks to make entry more efficient. Barriers such as duplication of entry and lack of connectivity have also been addressed.

***Goal Eight: Child/family information is consistent between electronic and paper files.***

Child file checks were completed in October and November to evaluate the accuracy and completeness of files. This incorporated both the electronic and paper site file for a sampling of children. This year the audit was done using an electronic method that allowed for the aggregation and analysis of the results.

These were then shared with staff to support areas of growth and opportunity. This process highlighted both strengths and weaknesses.

***Goal Nine: Sites/options conform or exceed the health and safety monitoring.***

In addition to the work initiated with NFM the Grantee Specialist, Ametta Reaves, has deeply explored the trends, patterns and circumstances regarding child safety and supervision incidents over the past 6 years. This in coordination with CORS new T/TA Early Childhood Specialist, Jennifer Buehler has provided the Head Start leadership team with resources and tools for ongoing monitoring. Specifically, in the areas of child safety and active supervision this has led to the development of tools and monitoring plans to focus in on specific areas of interest and create data and plans of improvement.

***Goal Ten: Home based parents are involved in socializations.***

In the Home Base Expectations booklet, Home Visitors are given details regarding group socialization expectations based upon the new Head Start Performance Standards and agency policies and procedures. In order to have more locally-designed and family-driven groups, Home Visitors can customize them to meet needs of children and families. While we hoped for better attendance with these efforts, we still struggle with parent response and follow-through. The Home Base Coordinator facilitated conversation about group socializations with other grantees at the OHSAI Community of Learners meeting to share successes, barriers, and possible ways to improve outcomes. In January, the Home Base Coordinator will be meeting with Home Visitors to review past data to identify strengths and opportunities for growth, brainstorm ideas to increase group attendance, share additional strategies and resources and discuss next steps. During future DISP meetings, attendance will be broken out into home visits and groups for home base as an ongoing, continuous improvement process.

***Goal Eleven: Staff is offered training on male involvement, cultural diversity, and COPA.***

COPA training continues to be offered to staff on a regular basis including targeted training as areas of need are identified. In addition, the capabilities of the system continue to be explored and expanded upon. Recently, COPA training was held with all bus drivers and members of the transportation team to demonstrate ways that they can simplify routing and ensure that all transportation information is as up to date as possible.

***Goal Twelve: Sites/options receive support to enhance science, disabilities, cultural diversity, and individualization of education and services.***

CORS has worked hard to develop a School Readiness Advisory Committee to guide the development of goals and plans to best prepare children for school. Past advisory members were invited along with newly identified members to take part in meetings in September and December. Meetings included review of

agency data, (DISP), and agency school readiness goals. The Preschool Education Coordinator led a discussion and planning activity to begin the process of identifying agency-specific goals for Science and Technology, Social Studies, and The Arts so that there was more direction and consistency for choosing which category best described the child's skills.

### ***Operations and Transportation***

The management team at CORS has been fully completed. The open Operations Manager (OP) has been filled and the new OP manager brings a plethora of HS experience to the organization. This is an exciting time within the agency as new ideas and concepts are constantly being driven forward by the renewed team to maximize the effect that agency has on its service area.

CORS had one federal monitoring events still pending resolution from the previous program year. The Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) event had findings that required follow-up. The areas of non-compliance have been corrected.

CORS welcomed a new Region V Specialist, Jason Rasmussen. Mr. Rasmussen has provided guidance and support through the continuation grant, EHS expansion grant, and duration grant applications as well as the non-federal match waiver and carry over fund request.

The YMCA's Executive Director contacted the CORS leadership to begin dialogue about a future partnership in Wapakoneta, Ohio. The YMCA is planning a capital expansion of their existing facility to include more community based services, which include additional services from an area hospital, the public library, CORS Head Start and Early Head Start, and the Public School preschool program. CORS leadership has discussed space needs and costs, viewed draft floor plans, and engaged in a SWOT analysis of the endeavor.

Ms. Reaves, our Grantee Specialist, provided one-on-one technical assistance to the Transportation and Facilities Manager which resulted in improved training and support for bus drivers. CORS has made several improvements this year to Transportation procedures. Driver checks have been improved in that the OBI check ride has been incorporated in the coordinator check ride to give everyone a better understanding of what should be looked for on a check ride. The coordinators feel better supported in their knowledge of what is expected when doing the check rides. Drivers have also been trained on the use of COPA to assist on routing and student notes. They are learning the program and have good things to say about the software. Finally, the new Head Start performance standards have been referenced in our Handbook for the drivers.

### ***Licensing Quality***

All CORS child care locations (Kids Learning Place) maintain and uphold licensing compliance through vigorous oversight with regular monitoring, staff training and annual and bi-annual licensing inspections

performed by state licensing specialists. Kids Learning Place (KLP) centers are recognized through their Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) ratings with Ohio Child Licensing and Quality System. Overall 14 KLP centers are star rated: 10 have achieved the highest level available through the system at 5 stars, 3 have received 4-Star ratings, 1 received 2-Star ratings.

## KIDS LEARNING PLACE LEGISLATIVE VISITS FALL 2016

The month of October/November was filled with visits from our Federal and State legislators. We thank US Congressman Jordan and Davidson along with State Representatives Perales and Senators Hite and Hackett. They visited children and staff and listened to our successes at Kids Learning Place as well as our difficulties.



### **Outcome Three: Improved family engagement**

*“Children are like wet cement. Whatever falls on them makes an impression.” –Dr. Hiam Ginnot*

#### ***Goal One: Families are engaged and receive one or more services.***

As of December 16<sup>th</sup> 92% of families in the CORS Head Start and Early Head Start programs have set goals and either have or are working on accomplishing those goals as part of a Family Partnership Agreement (FPA). Families are setting multiple goals and making a commitment to improving the situation for their families. Overall more than 3200 goals are in some state of completion. This shows their engagement and that they are receiving multiple services. FPA goal categories included: Adult Education, Child Support Enforcement, Employment, Families as Advocates and Leaders, Families as Lifelong Educators, Family Connections to Peers and Community, Family Well-Being, Health, Housing, Kindergarten Readiness, Parent Involvement, Parent-Child Relationships, and Poor Families as Learners.

#### ***Goal Two: Of those families who identify employment on their family partnership agreement they will make progress towards achievement of that goal.***

During this program year 66 families as part of their family partnership agreement identified employment as a goal. Twenty-four of those families have completed that goal and moved from either being unemployed to employed or found more stable employment. Fourteen are currently in the process of seeking employment and the rest have just recently been set. This is very encouraging as 64% have been successful or are close to success. This will continue to be a focus for staff to help connect individuals to services and move them from the ranks of the unemployed to employed.

#### ***Goal Three: Parents with less than a high school diploma will be referred to a GED program and supported to earn their GED.***

CORS is in the process of identifying education goals for parents and making referrals to connect them to the services that best meet their needs and increase their chances for success. To date 20 have set this goal.

#### ***Goal Four: Of those referred to a GED program will be working towards their GED, have obtained their GED, or improved their life skills.***

CORS is in the process of identifying education goals for parents and making referrals to connect them to the services that best meet their needs and increase their chances for success. To date 20 have set this goal.

### ***Parent Advocacy***

CORS Head Start and Early Head Start was featured in the Winter edition of Dayton Parent Magazine. The Early Childhood Director and the Parent Representative to the Board of Trustees were interviewed. In addition, CORS is proud to have three parents participating in the OHSAI Parent Ambassador program. Each parent has been active in advocating for their children locally, has a unique story to tell, and has a success to celebrate. CORS Leadership will be honored to accompany three of our finest parents to Capitol Hill this winter. It is THEIR time to be heard by legislators who hold the future of early childhood education funding in their hands.

The Policy Council (PC) continues to be extremely active and engaged. The agency regularly has representatives from eight of the nine counties served at the meeting. Preble County EHS is seeking a member. Parents and community representatives received and approved the Program Information Report; Head Start continuation grant application; financial reports, program reports and continuous improvement plans, and human resource policies. Members ask involved questions at the meeting about what they are asked to review and approve. All documents are uploaded to a secure web portal prior to the meeting.

### **Outcome Four: Ensuring children are school ready**

*“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” – Nelson Mandela*

CORS understands that investments in early care and education deliver economic returns and provide a foundation for success later in life. CORS staff members build trusting partnerships with parents and empower families to help their children perform at their fullest potential. Moreover, the classrooms expose children to settings essential for fostering the child’s familiarity with the classroom and school setting—a critical element for successful transitions into kindergarten. Our curricula, learning standards, and classroom routines, are parallel to those a child will experience when entering kindergarten, and CORS’ programs also focus on successful transitions for families by including parents/guardians in the process of determining curricula, sharing governance, providing them with information about their children, and familiarizing them with school routines.

### ***Goal One: Continue to use data to drive program planning for children and their families whose children did not meet or exceed in one or more of the nine development and content-area.***

The *Data Informed Support Plan* (DISP) meeting with each classroom and home base site continues to evolve. Based upon observations and brain-storming the process was changed to be more guided with increased facilitation and specific pieces for each position. This allowed the education staff and the family service staff to be more involved and fostered greater and deeper conversation. In an effort to make staff more cognizant of their data and how to use it they were required to access and bring their own data sets for analysis during strategic meetings.

***Goal Two: Drive the focus of the school readiness implementation plan toward the inclusion of parents in the preparation of their children for school***

The Office of Head Start sees kindergarten readiness as a top priority. Given that parents are the first teachers CORS has focused bringing parent input into preparing children for school. Parents have been tasked with partnering with education staff to develop three child specific goals that will be the focus of the preparation that year. In addition, a section has been added to the at-home in-kind sheet for parent feedback on the activities that are being performed in the home. This input is then being used by the teachers as part of the assessment process.

The overarching school readiness goals and objectives were reviewed and finalized at the end of the 2015-2016 program year as part of the School Readiness Team, which holds meetings quarterly. These are open to the public and parents and our school partners are encouraged to attend to help drive and discuss progress, along with soliciting feedback on the goals that have been created. Once the goals were finalized multiple years of data was analyzed to target specific growth level is for each specific metric within the Teaching Strategies Gold system. This will allow us to truly determine where we were successful and what areas need continued development and review.

***Goal Three: Recommit to building meaningful collaborations with public schools that will strengthen the role the community plays in the long- term success of children as learners and citizens.***

The efforts in partnering with local school districts to make the transition to kindergarten as easy as possible continue to be a high priority. Staff has worked tremendously hard in building relationships with the school districts and their staff that their individual centers are located within. This effort has led to greater communication between both groups and has been fruitful in growing partnerships with new school districts. In September 2016 CORS opened Head Start classroom in both Indian Lake and Benjamin Logan schools. These classrooms provide vital connections to the school districts that our children will attend when they exit our program and allow for easing the transition to kindergarten and building school readiness. We look forward to evaluating the impact these relationships will have and to growing future partnerships with other districts within our service area.

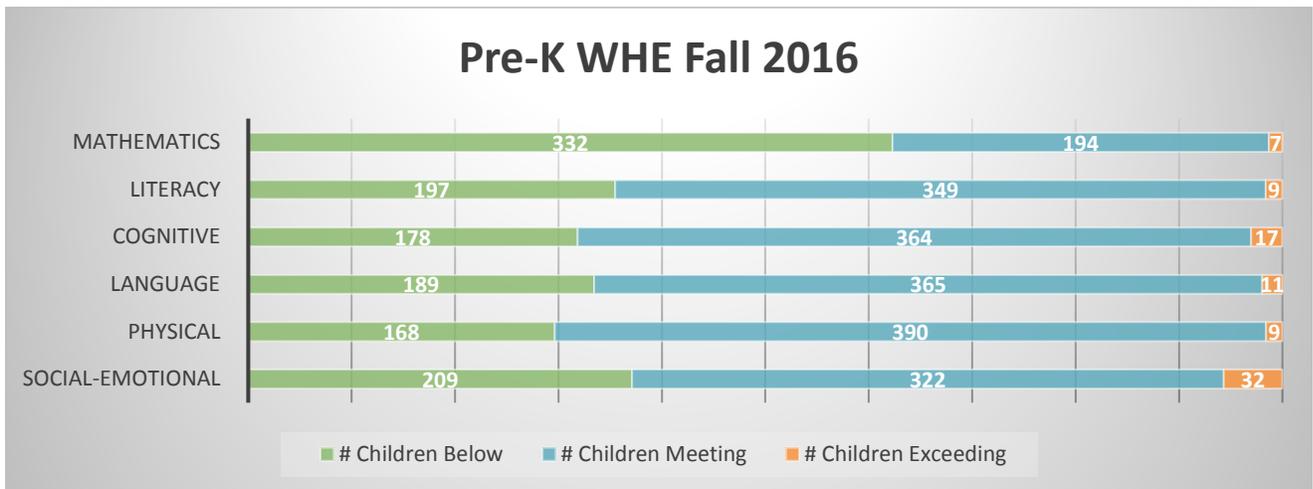
***Goal four: Continue to monitor TSG data to offer ongoing training and support to partners, teaching staff, children and families.***

TSG is a user-friendly and inclusive assessment tool based on the most recent works in the field of early childhood education. It allows teachers to use a variety of online tools to organize data in meaningful way. The system “blends ongoing observational assessment for all areas of development and learning with performance tasks for selected predictors of school success in the areas of literacy and numeracy” (Teaching Strategies, 2013). TSG documents children’s educational progress over time while identifying at-risk children. The tool uses 38 objectives organized into ten areas of development and content-area learning: Social-Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, Mathematics, Science and

Technology, Social Studies, the Arts, and English Language Acquisition. The content-areas are broken down into dimensions: Mathematics, Literacy, Cognitive, Language, Physical, and Social-Emotional.

The baseline data is broken down below and was compared to the developmentally appropriate levels for the children’s ages. The majority of pre-k students are currently meeting Widely Held Expectations (WHE) for their age group as outlined below. These results show the hard work of the teaching staff as they prepare students throughout the year for their transition to Kindergarten.

CORS Comparison of Pre-K Children to Widely Held Expectations



APPENDIX A

*Required Exams and Screenings Program Year 2016/2017*

