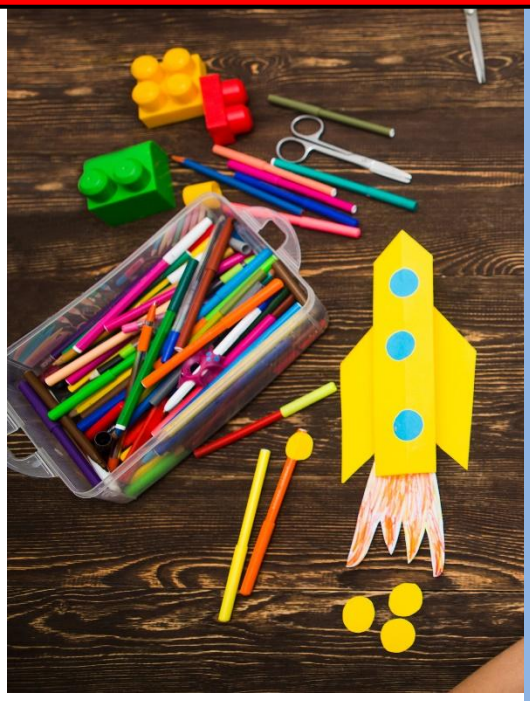
South Central Iowa Community Action Program

# Head Start/ Early Head Start

# Annual Self-Assessment



South Central Iowa Community Action Program

SCICAP Early Childhood Program Head Start/Early Head Start, along with parents, staff, and community partner feedback, perform a comprehensive self-assessment each year to look at the program's operations to ensure compliance and to form strategies for a continuous process of improvement in all areas.

**SCICAP Early Childhood Program Head Start/Early Head Start 2023/2024 Annual Self-Assessment was approved on**

_____

South Central Iowa Community Action Program

# Early Childhood Program Self-Assessment

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# Verification of Approval

**SCICAP Early Childhood Program Head Start/Early Head Start Annual Self-Assessment 2023/2024 was approved by the SCICAP Early Childhood Program Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council on _____.**

**_____ _____**

**SCICAP Early Childhood Program Policy Council Chairperson** **Date**

**SCICAP Early Childhood Program Head Start/Early Head Start Annual Self-Assessment 2023/2024 was approved by the SCICAP Governing Board on _____.**

**_____ _____**

**SCICAP Governing Board Chairperson** **Date**

## Introduction:

SCICAP Early Childhood Program serves families and children through an integrated delivery model. Our program is designed to serve 32 Early Head Start (EHS) and 180 Head Start (HS) children and their families through comprehensive services focused on education, health, self-sufficiency, and community. Our EHS program serves prenatal moms and children 0-3 through home-based and center-based services in Clarke, Decatur, Lucas, Monroe, and Wayne Counties. Our HS program serves children ages 3-5 years and has independent centers in Albia, Chariton, Corydon, and Osceola. We also partner with several school districts including Central Decatur, Lamoni, Mormon Trail and Murray.

The main goals of the self-assessment are to share program accomplishments, strengths, and to identify areas where possible improvements are needed. Our goal through this self-monitoring process is to have a continuous process of improvement.

Our mission is to provide a quality program to empower children and families for lifelong learning and success.

## Methodology

The SCICAP ECE Program conducted the annual self-assessment using data gathered from August 2024 thru May of 2025. The process included an in depth look of current program practices, operations, and management systems. Multiple methods were used to gather information including meetings, group conversations, Policy Council and Governing Board feedback, monitoring plan and strategic plan review, ongoing monitoring, document review and comprehensive program data review. They utilize ChildPlus Data, Monitoring Reports of Management Staff, Observations, Surveys, Checklists, Screenings, Referral data, Staff and collaboration feedback, Health Advisory Committee/Community Partner feedback, and any other information that gives a snapshot of the program for that current year. The relationships we have with our staff, families, and partners, combined with conversations and the review of data and practices, were able to help guide this process as we work on a continuous model of improvement in all areas. This document helps summarize how well SCICAP ECE Program is doing at delivering quality, comprehensive services to children and families, preparing them for the future.

## Self-Assessment Procedure

SCICAP Early Childhood Program Head Start/Early Head Start performs a comprehensive self-assessment annually looking at the program's entire operations to measure its effectiveness in meeting program goals and objectives. Goals and objectives include but not limited to the areas of School Readiness Goals aligned with the Head Start child Outcomes Framework, State Early Learning Standards as appropriate, and requirements and expectations of the schools the children will be attending. The program's Five-Year Strategic Goals are also reviewed and discussed as we approach the end of our second year.

Members of the self-assessment team include parents, community partners, members of governing body, and policy council members along with program staff.

Information from the self-assessment, along with program data, is used to develop long and short-term goals and a strategic plan for the program to improve and excel beyond compliance requirements. The information is also used as a part of planning for the annual budgets.

## SCICAP Early Childhood Program Self-Assessment Process

SCICAP Early Childhood Program Head Start/Early Head Start performs a Five Phase strength based self-assessment annually looking at the program's Linkage of Systems – Record Keeping, Program Planning, Ongoing Monitoring, Fiscal Management and Self-Assessment. Through systems the program sets goals and objectives. These goals and objectives are reflected in the Programs School Readiness Goals, Child and Family Outcomes and On-Going Monitoring.
The Pre-Self-Assessment task includes the Director of Programming and Central Staff team who collect data, prioritize areas for investigating and summaries of the data.

The Five Phase Approach:

1. Design the Process
2. Engage the team
3. Analyze and Dialogue
4. Recommend
5. Prepare Report

The Post Self-Assessment task includes reviewing feedback from the assessment team to assist with planning for next year, to utilize assessment reports to revise program goals and objectives, to add or revise program action plans and to communicate assessment insights to staff and program stakeholders.

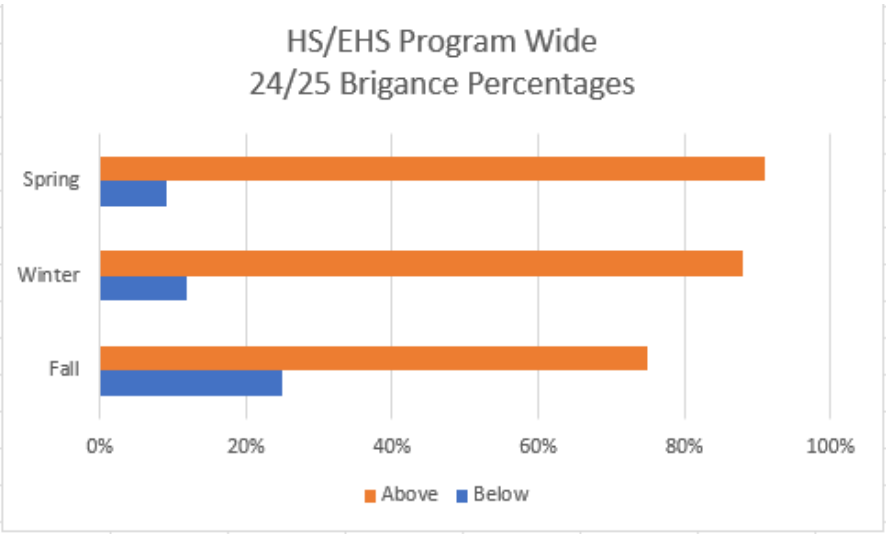
# Summary of Content Areas

**Education**

Effective, nurturing, and responsive teaching practices and interactions are key for all learning in early childhood settings. They foster trust and emotional security, are communication and language rich, and promote critical thinking and problem solving. They also support social, emotional, behavioral, and language development; provide supportive feedback for learning; and motivate continued effort. Teaching practices and interactions are responsive to and build on each child's pattern of development and learning. They can be measured by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®), an adult-child interaction tool. These observations may then be used to support professional development. Teaching practices also include how schedules and routines are carried out, how settings are managed, and how children's challenging behaviors are addressed.

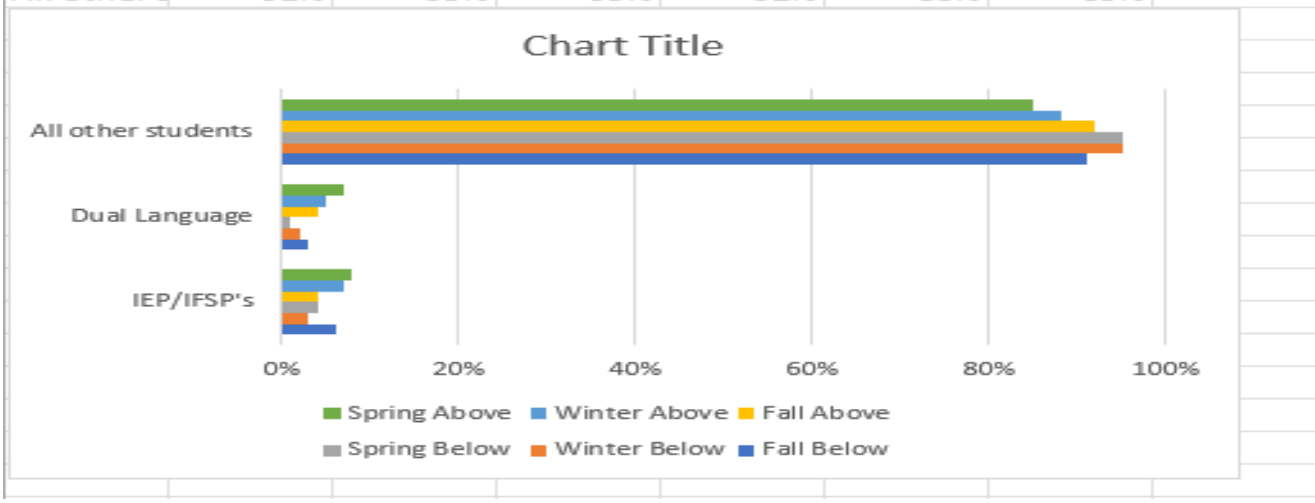
The graph below shows the growth made by students in the Head Start Program throughout the 2024/2025 school year. From fall to winter our students made a 13% growth in their Brigance scores. From winter to spring students made another 3% growth and as a program we had 91% of our Head Start/Early Head Start students meeting their expectation for their age on the Brigance Developmental Screener.

| | Below | Above |
|---|---|---|
| Fall | 25% | 75% |
| Winter | 12% | 88% |
| Spring | 9% | 91% |



The following graph breaks down our students by those on IEP/IFSP's, dual language, and all other students. It allows us to see if we are giving all students the proper materials and services so that they are becoming school ready before entering kindergarten.

| | Fall Below | Winter Be | Spring Bel | Fall Above | Winter Ab | Spring Above |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| IEP/IFSP's | 6% | 3% | 4% | 4% | 7% | 8% |
| Dual Langu | 3% | 2% | 1% | 4% | 5% | 7% |
| All other s | 91% | 95% | 95% | 92% | 88% | 85% |




Areas of Strength:

- Students continue to show growth throughout the school year on their Brigance scores.
- Teaching staff are all working to ensure students are school ready when they leave our Program.

Opportunities for growth:

1. *Increase math and literacy activities throughout all aspects of the daily routine in classrooms.*
2. *Work with all centers to ensure new math curriculum is being implemented with fidelity*

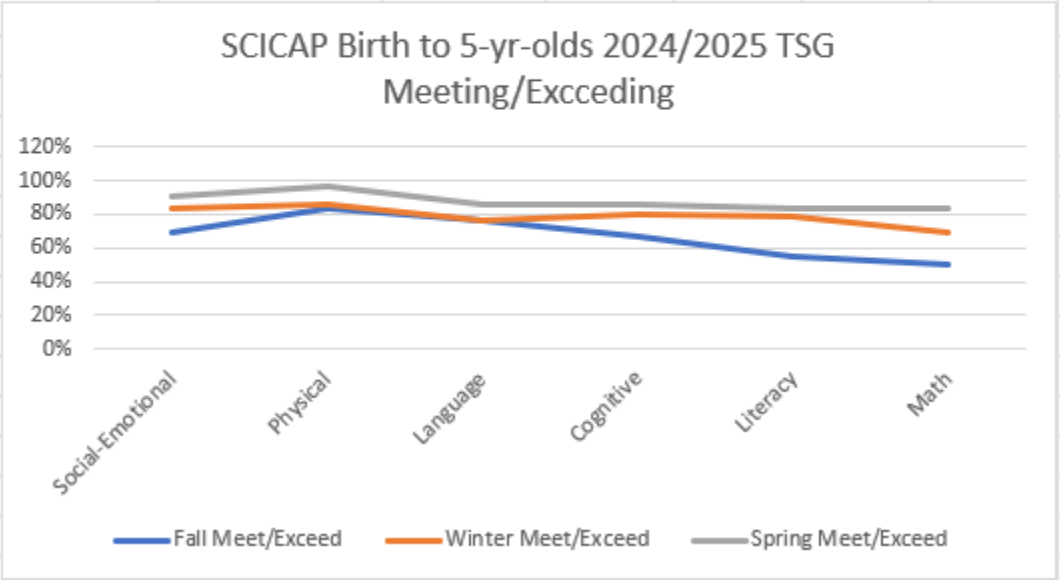
| Action Steps | Time Frame | Responsible Party |
|---|---|---|
| Provide a JumpStart Training for all new teachers and TA's. | As needed | Education Specialists<br>Teaching Staff<br>Disability Specialist |
| Work with outside agency to provide a math training to all teachers and TA's. | Ongoing | Education Specialists<br>Teaching Staff<br>Disability Specialist |
| All staff will be trained on new math curriculum during the summer (July 2025) | Summer 2025 | Education Coordinator<br>CLASS Specialist |
| Monitor lesson plans as well as email reminders about when units should be completed and beginning new units. Classroom observations to | Ongoing | Education Coordinator<br>CLASS Specialist |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ensure math curriculum is being implemented. | | |

Explanation of Head Start/Early Head Start Teaching Strategies Gold Widely Held Expectations:

This graph depicts average, program wide percentages in six developmental areas for the three report periods. The graph shows the percentage of children birth to 5-years-old who were meeting/exceeding expectations in Fall, Winter, and Spring during the 2024-2025 school year. There was growth in each developmental area throughout the school year. The significant growth that we see in this graph would be Social-Emotional, Literacy, and Math. With IFSP/IEPs in place, it has shown some improvements in Social-Emotional and Language. Our JumpStart Phonics program has helped us increase our literacy skills throughout the year.

| | Social-Emotional | Physical | Language | Cognitive | Literacy | Math |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fall | 69% | 83% | 76% | 67% | 55% | 50% |
| Winter | 84% | 86% | 76% | 80% | 79% | 69% |
| Spring | 91% | 96% | 86% | 86% | 83% | 83% |




**CLASS**

CLASS stands for Classroom Assessment Scoring System and is based on research that interactions between students and adults are the primary mechanism of student development and learning. Ten dimensions, intended to be analytically distinct from each other comprise the observation: Positive Climate, Negative Climate, Teacher Sensitivity, Regard for Student Perspectives, Behavior Management, Productivity, Instructional Learning Formats, Concept Development, Quality of Feedback, and Language Modeling.

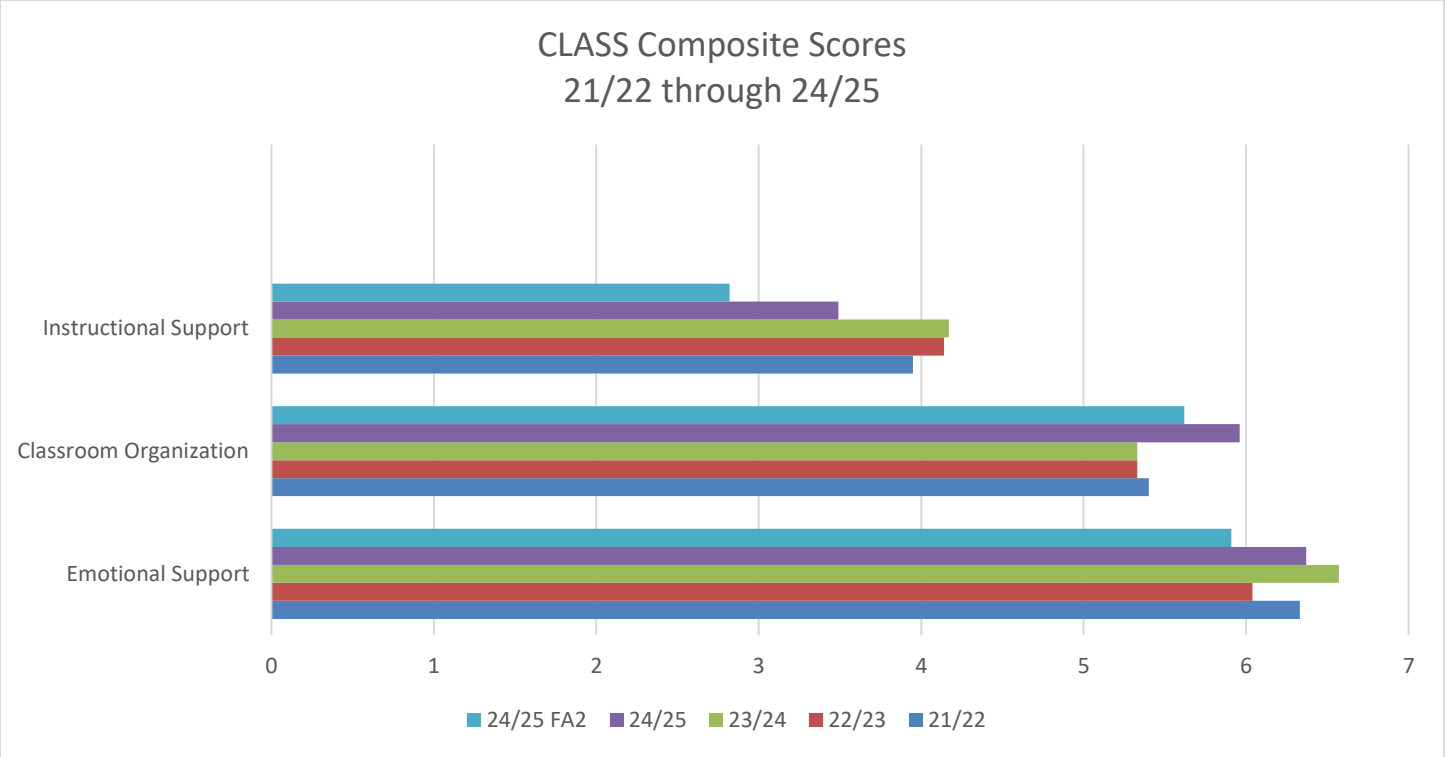
There are three levels of CLASS Evaluator Trainings: Infant, Toddler, and Pre-K through 3rd grade. SCICAP currently has one CLASS Specialist who is certified to observe at the Infant/ Toddler level and two CLASS Specialists who are certified to observe at the Pre-K through 3rd grade level.

This past year, we dedicated a full day during pre-service training to take a deeper dive into the CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) domains. This training was provided to all staff who interact with

children to strengthen their understanding and better prepare for the upcoming CLASS Federal Review. Throughout the year, we conducted two formal CLASS observations, one in the fall and one in the spring, to monitor progress and compare results across the CLASS domains and dimensions. After each observation, the CLASS Specialist shared a written report with the teaching team, either via email or through a personal visit to the center. These reports highlighted areas of strength, identified opportunities for growth, and included recommended goals for continued professional development.

CLASS is broken down into three major domains and rated on a seven-point scale. SCICAP's Head Start Composite Scores showed growth from the 2020-2021 school year:

| | 2021-2022 School Year: | 2022-2023 School Year: | 2023-2024 School Year: | 2024-2025 School Year: | 2024-2025 FA2 Review |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Emotional Support | 6.33 | 6.04 | 6.57 | 6.37 | 5.91 |
| Classroom Organization | 5.40 | 5.33 | 6.33 | 5.96 | 5.62 |
| Instructional Support | 3.95 | 4.17 | 4.68 | 3.49 | 2.82 |




Areas of Strength:

- Hired a new CLASS Specialist
- CLASS Specialist recertified in Preschool-3rd and Infant/Toddler
- Pre-Service training dedicated to CLASS
- SCICAP average CLASS Scores are above the national averages

Opportunities for growth:

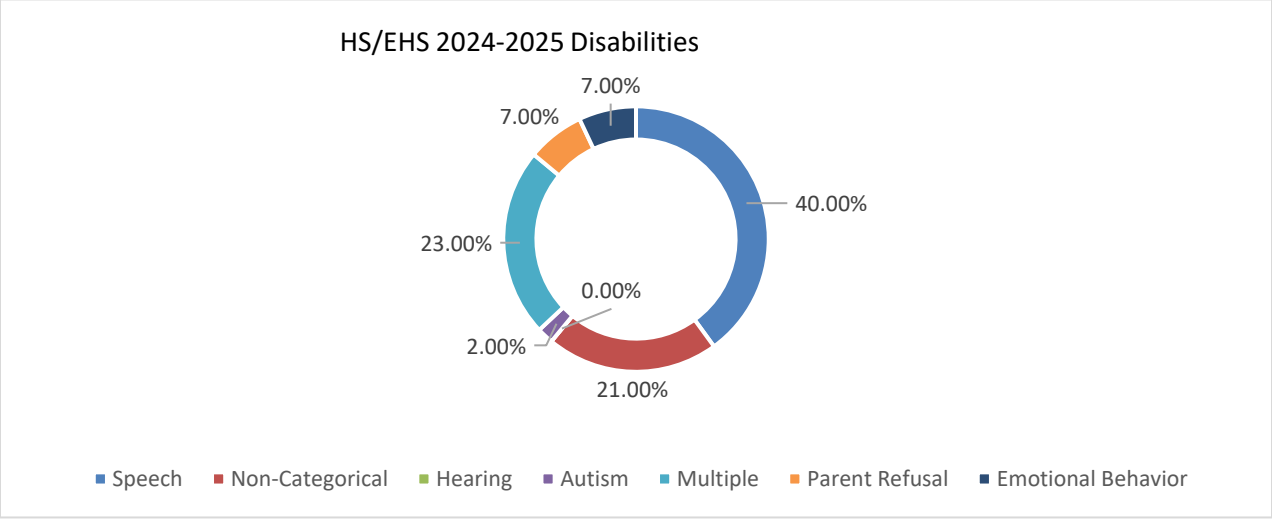
1. *Improve the following dimensions that were lower during our FA2 Review*
    a. *Emotional Support*
        i. *Regard for Student Perspectives*
            1. *FA2 Review scores = 4.54*
    b. *Classroom Organization*
        i. *Instructional Learning Formats*
            1. *FA2 Review scores = 4.89*
    c. *Instruction Support*
        i. *Concept Development*
            1. *FA2 Review scores = 2.07*

| Action Steps | Time Frame | Responsible Party |
|---|---|---|
| Offer CLASS trainings for all new teaching staff | 2025-2026 | Education and CLASS Specialists<br>Teaching Staff |
| Provide individualized coaching as needed | Ongoing | Education and CLASS Specialists |
| Provide CLASS training for any new Education Specialists | Ongoing | Director of Programming<br>Director of Operations |

**Disabilities**

We provide high-quality services for children with disabilities and their families. We have a program-wide coordinated approach to ensure full and effective participation of all children with disabilities.

Throughout the 2024/2025 school year, the SCICAP HS/EHS Early Childhood Program maintained the 10% disabilities. By the end of the school year, we were at 15% disabilities program wide. The graph below shows that throughout the year we had IEP's and IFSP's in speech and non-categorical/developmental delays. This year we saw more emotional behavior/adaptive behavior goals on IEP's and IFSP's.




Areas of Strength:

- All Referrals, IEP's and all assessments are tracked in ChildPlus
- We have strong partnerships with both AEA agencies
- We have strong collaborations in the school districts who provide services to children with disabilities.
- Program staff are present at all IEP and IFSP meetings

Opportunities for growth:

1. *Working with AEA/Early Access to get specific data collection they are wanting our HS/EHS staff to collect to help keep the referral process running smoothly.*
2. *Coming up with a plan to make sure all children with disabilities are being served even with the changes happening in our AEA Agencies.*

| Action Steps | Time Frame | Responsible Party |
|---|---|---|
| Continue to follow through with IEP and IFSP plans and recommendations | Ongoing | Education Specialists<br>Teaching Staff<br>Disability Specialist |
| Continue to work with both AEA's (Great Prairie & Green Hills) to ensure children are getting the IEP/IFSP services needed during the school year. | Ongoing | Education Specialist<br>Teaching Staff<br>Disability Specialist<br>Parents |
| Continue to work with both AEA's as they are going through changes to determine how children will be receiving their services during this time of change. Communicate with collaboration sites to come up with a plan to ensure children are being served if not by the AEA. | 2025-2026 | Director of Programming<br>Disabilities Specialist<br>Teaching Staff<br>Parents<br>AEA |

**Family and Community:**

During this year the Family and Community Engagement area had a dedicated staff in five of our Head Start Centers to serve as a Family Resource Advocate (FRA) for the families enrolled in the program. These staff were able to be present in the centers throughout the day and were available for families to meet with as needed. For centers without a dedicated staff those centers were assigned an FRA who floated between centers and was available for home visits, conferences and when needed to meet with families. This resulted in families who were able to have more meaningful contact with PFCE staff, therefore they received more assistance and connections to resources in their communities.

FRA's met one time per month as a group to discuss questions or concerns, to receive needed training and to network with other PFCE staff. These meetings were helpful for staff to increase their knowledge about the PFCE area, and other community resources that are available in other counties than they one they work in, and helped staff feel more connected to other PFCE staff.

Areas of Strength:

- Overall parent feedback was positive
  - " Thankful for them (staff)"
  - "Love the attention given to the kids"
  - "Great program"
- Assigned FRA staff at each center, collaboration and home visitor
- Dedicated FRAs provide more time communicating with parents
- Several staff members (FRAs) have completed their Family Service Credentialing
- Improved ChildPlus data collection

- Improved referral and follow up documentation

Opportunities for growth:

1. *FRAs will present parent curriculum all parent meetings*

| Action Steps | Time Frame | Responsible Party |
|---|---|---|
| Behavior Specialist will create parent curriculum educational piece | 2025-2026 | FRA Supervisor<br>Behavior Specialist/Mental Health Coordinator<br>FRAs |

**Mental Health:**

We started the school year with a new Behavior Specialist/Mental Health Coordinator who replaced the previous employee who left during the prior school year. The Mental Health Coordinator can assist families and staff in locating available mental health services that fit their needs. This staff member also does classroom observations to support challenging behavior strategies. She collaborates with teaching staff, parents, mental health consultants and AEA staff to help develop an individualized plan.

SCICAP Early Childhood program contracts with Infinity Health and The Holding Space LLC to provide mental health observations in our Head Start classrooms two times per year and with our Early Head Start program three times per year. In addition to these observations Infinity Health and The Holding Space LLC are also able to provide individual observations and recommendations on children enrolled in the program as needed.

During this school year we have been able to offer several training opportunities to all staff to help them be proactive in the classroom instead of reactive to children's behaviors. Staff were offered the opportunity to attend Spring IHSA conference which offered training to staff who attended. Additionally, teachers were offered the opportunity to attend the Region VII Head Start Association Annual Conference in Overland Park, KS. Three teachers accepted the invitation and learned a lot while during the conference.

Areas of Strength:

- New staff member hired as Mental Health Coordinator/Behavior Specialist
- Strong collaboration with Infinity Health and The Holding Space LLC for mental health observations/consulting/observations
- Conscious Discipline Curriculum is being implemented more in the classrooms
- Additional resources and interventions are becoming more available for teacher and teacher assistants

Opportunities for growth:

1. *Staff will be more confident utilizing Conscious Discipline (CD) techniques and documenting BIR's*

| Action Steps | Time Frame | Responsible Party |
|---|---|---|
| Providing calming centers to every classroom complete with calming sensory tools | 2025-2026 | Mental Health Coordinator/Behavioral Specialist<br>Teaching Staff |
| Provide additional training on use of calming center and additional tools as needed | Ongoing | Mental Health Coordinator/Behavioral Specialist<br>Teaching Staff |
| Providing education on BIR's and data collection | Ongoing | Mental Health Coordinator/Behavioral Specialist |

**ERSEA:**

For the 2024–2025 school year, SCICAP Head Start received a total of 279 applications for the Head Start program. We were able to serve 185 of those children at our center-based locations. For the Early Head Start program, we received 82 applications and provided services to 41 children either through our Early Head Start Center or our home-based program.

Compared to the previous year, we received a higher number of applications for both Head Start and Early Head Start. We served more children in Early Head Start this year than last, while Head Start enrollment saw a slight decrease. In several counties, reduced access to transportation contributed to the decline in Head Start enrollment.

Our teaching and management staff are available year-round to assist families with the application process. Applications are accepted over the phone, in person by appointment, and now through our newly implemented online application system. We've received positive feedback from families who appreciate the convenience of completing the application on their own schedule and uploading required documents directly. Approximately 30% of our applications for the upcoming program year have been submitted online.

While online applications have slightly reduced foot traffic at in-person recruitment events, our team continues to follow up with families by phone and email to complete their application process.

This year, timely communication with families has been a top priority. We have expanded our use of social media to promote enrollment, particularly as population growth across our five-county service area increases. We've also observed a growing number of families experiencing hardships due to the incarceration of one parent, leaving the other to support the family on a single income. In response, we've added QR codes to recruitment flyers, making it easier for families to access information and begin the application process online.

SCICAP Head Start is proud to partner with four local school districts—Murray Community School, Lamoni Community School, Central Decatur Community School, and Mormon Trail Community School—to serve qualifying families. This year, we served 61 Head Start children through these collaborative sites.

A significant number of families in our region are employed by the Hy-Vee Distribution Center in Chariton, commute to Des Moines, or work in local factories. While these jobs provide steady employment, many working families are unable to qualify for Head Start and Early Head Start due to low federal poverty income guidelines. Unfortunately, this continues to be a barrier for families who could benefit from our services.

**Child Health, Nutrition and Safety:**

This year our focus was on getting leads and dentals done. In past years it has been a challenge to get dental visits scheduled and to get the parents/guardians help in getting the lead levels their children have gotten. This year it seems there has been an increase in overall participation by families in doing this. Receiving the lead testing documentation from parents and providers is very important to ensure that we aren't doing any unnecessary testing on children. There has been more of a focus on education, sending monthly health fliers out to families each month about different topics that may be affecting their families now or in the future. We continue to utilize a variety of methods to stay connected with families including emails, Facebook posts, letters, telephone calls and text messaging.

**Physical exams** – Our non-collaboration sites, physical exams are, again, consistently turned in and up to date at 100%. We continue to see that our collaboration schools have a harder time enforcing this metric, however, this year has again seen improvement. With continued support from our family resource advocates, we have been able to obtain a measurable increase in physicals. We continue to support these families by sending reminders, aiding in making appointments, and asking families to sign release of information forms once the appointment has been completed to retrieve the exam. Family resource advocates assist in this process. Head Start physicals for collaboration sites are at 100% which is an increase from last year. Non-collaboration sites are 100% for physicals. EHS is at 100% for physicals which is a marked improvement as well.

**Hearing/Vision** – We continue to work with Green Hills and Great Prairie AEA agencies. AEA continues to provide all hearing screenings for our students. We utilize our evidence-based screener, Welch Allen audiometry device to support AEA and to also screen our EHS infants. The Lion's club made it to all of the sites this year to conduct vision screenings with Kids Sight. We do have a Head Start approved PlusOptix machine to check our vision ourselves as well. We were able to provide detailed vision results/findings to our families with an evidence-based screening tool. Our HeadStart children were 100% for both hearing and vision on testing being completed. EHS, which includes Home Base, vision is at 100% and hearing is at 54% completion.

**Dental Health** –. EHS dental exams/screenings are at 66% for the year. We continue to hand out lists of dental providers who accept Medicaid and Hawk-I in our five-county area and have expanded this list to neighboring counties. There is still a shortage of dental providers for Medicaid children, these families speak of it all the time. It is a clear and present problem; these families aren't always able to drive several miles to another town for care. We are continuing to take opportunities in the classrooms every day to brush our teeth and practice good oral care. We continue to collaborate with Matura as our I-Smile partner. Head Start for dental exams/screenings are at 87%

**Nutrition** –Family style meal service is still preferred in our centers but not always possible, where it is not we do follow CACFP guidelines regarding serving of food. School Nutritional Services met the dietary needs of children while meeting CACFP requirements. The Registered Dietitian on staff reviewed the menus and provided recommendations as needed. Nutritional screening and assessments were also reviewed and completed by the registered dietitian on staff and recommendations given to families in the program. HeadStart is at a 100% completion rate and EHS is at 100% completion rate. We are continuing to monitor and address BMI's for children in the program by sending home educational materials as well as adding an additional growth assessment during the year. If referrals are thought to be necessary letters are sent home to families to discuss the results with their family provider.

**Lead Screens** – Our program has received a CLIA waiver for SCICAP Early Childhood program for 5/21/23-05/20/25. So far this year we have conducted zero lead level checks. Per our site protocol parents must sign the release to have blood drawn as well as be present when the blood is being drawn from the patient by finger poke. Currently our lead rate for EHS stands at 100% and HeadStart is at 69%.

**Health & Mental Health Advisory Board** - This year we held one virtual meeting and attendance remained steady. We also sent a newsletter in place of the fall meeting due to staff changes.

**2024-2025 Strengths** – Health Services

- Our program had much better communication this year between staff and parents.
- Our health staff are still reaching out to our Home-Based homes to offer screenings for families if they would like.

- ChildPlus documentation continues to improve.
- We had improved numbers for follow ups and referrals due to the increased communication and increased types of communication as well.
- Family resource staff was successful at supporting families' needs, finding insurance and medical homes, making appointments, providing referrals, educating families, and providing follow up interactions.
- Toothbrushing is still being implemented in daily routines to encourage good oral health.
- We are working on getting more educational materials on the importance of lead testing to parents/guardians.
- We will be hiring new staff to help in different areas of the Health and Nutrition Department

Opportunities for growth:

1. *Increase the number of Collaboration Head Start students turning in leads*

| **Action Steps** | **Time Frame** | Responsible Party |
|---|---|---|
| Educate parents as well as collaboration staff on importance of children being up to date on lead level requirements and why this is necessary, the consequences if not done and how to go about getting testing done if they need this performed. | 2025-2026 | Health Specialist Staff, Teaching Staff |
| Continue to have FRA's communicate with and support families in getting exams completed and turned in, use alternative communication systems if necessary, texting, emailing, sending letters etc. | 2025-2026 | Health Specialist Staff, Teaching Staff |

2. *Improve Health Education*

| **Action Steps** | **Time Frame** | Responsible Party |
|---|---|---|
| Health Specialists/CMA continue to review and distribute material to families to encourage healthy habits and inform family decision making. | 2025-2026 | Health Specialty Staff Home Based Staff |
| Use Public Health contractors only as needed | Ongoing | Health Specialty Staff |

**Facilities- Safe and Healthy Environment**:

During this year we continued to work on updating facilities and ensuring children have a safe environment to learn. Safe and Healthy facilities are top priority for enrolled children, families and staff. The following are areas of improvements made and a working list of projects.

**Program facility improvements for this year have included:**

**Early Head Start Leon-** Had new hot water heater put in . Removed the border for plants and lattice on East of side deck and put new lattice up. Removed old wood chips and border and planted grass seed. This center had security cameras installed. Removed playground equipment that had cracked and become unsafe.
**Chariton Head Start**- Replaced old playground equipment and surfacing with new playground equipment and surfacing. New metal roof was done. Security cameras were installed.
**Corydon Head Start-** The decks on the West side and South side of the center were taken out and replaced with new decks that have gates attached for safety . Both children's bathrooms were gutted and remodeled. Crawl space was installed to get under the building if needed. Had updates done to the furnace. Fire alarm system is fixed and working correctly. Security cameras were installed .

**Albia Head Start**-. 2 decks on the west side of the head start center were replaced with new decks. 1 which is now a ramp and is handicapped accessible. The playground surfacing was relaced with rubber mulch and now has a border with it as well. Security Cameras were installed.
**Osceola Head Start**- Worked with landlord to fix minor repairs (toilets, doors).

**Projects in the works/needing done:**

**Chariton Head Start**- Gutting and fully remodel kitchen. Get new washer and dryer. Gutting and fully remodeling the children's bathrooms. Having new gutters installed. Working on replacing 2 smaller decks at the center. Planning on staining and seal deck.
**Albia Head Start**- Planning on staining and sealing decks. Add a new heating/cooling unit to the entryway.
**Corydon Head Start**- Planning on having new flooring installed in 2 areas in the head start center. Working on getting new gutters installed. Planning on staining and sealing decks .
**Early Head Start (Leon)-** Stain and Seal Deck , Planting more grass seed, Working on getting a new dishwasher.
**Osceola Head Start-** Flooring is getting cleaned and the tile is getting VCT done in both classrooms.

**Transportation:**

The program currently has Contract agreements with 10-15 Transit that serves the Chariton and Albia sites and Southern Iowa Trolley Transit that serves the Osceola Site. The program currently has waivers with all school districts as they provide bussing for our students. Due to the shortage of drivers, Southern Iowa Trolley Transit was unable to provide transportation services for our Osceola Head Start center during part of the 2024-2025 school year.

Strengths:

- We have a grant through Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) that supports transportation in Albia and Chariton.
- We have a large number of children utilizing transportation services
- We have collaborations with school districts to provide transportation to our students
- We were able to add transportation services for Osceola mid-year

Opportunities for growth:

1. *Having Transportation available/provided*

| **Action Steps** | **Time Frame** | Responsible Party |
|---|---|---|
| Continue to communicate with SIT and 10-15 to ensure they will have enough drivers to provide transportation during the 2025-2026 school year. | 2025-2026 | HS Director, Transportation Specialist |

**Program Planning Overview:**

Program Planning is a continuous cycle that integrates program data into:

- Developing of broad program goals and short-term objectives, action plans, budgets
- Implementing the action plans
    - Collecting data
    - Spot checks of action plans

    - Record keeping and reporting
- Evaluating through Ongoing Monitoring
- Evaluating program through self-assessment
- Conduct/Update Community Assessment

Through this cycle the program is continually assessing its program to provide the services to the individual needs of the communities it serves.

**On-Going Monitoring:**

The Head Start Program Performance Standards prescribe the management of program data and support its availability, usability, integrity, and security. Our program has a procedure on data management, and through ongoing assessment, we use data to effectively oversee progress toward addressing program needs, evaluate compliance, and successfully achieve program goals.

All staff is held accountable for their specific job duties. Through on-going monitoring, the program works to ensure all areas are monitored. Through ChildPlus documentation and reports, TSG assessment data, end of month reports, community needs assessments, parent feedback, Policy Council and Governing Board feedback, along with individual staff monitoring documents, our program has a continuous process of evaluating program effectiveness.

**Human Resources/Staff:**

SCICAP, INC serves as the program's Human Resources manager.

In June of 2025, we were able to send six Central Staff members along with three teachers including one new teacher to the Region VII Head Start Conference in Overland Park, Kansas. This was a great way for teachers and Central Staff to network and learn about upcoming changes.

We have two staff members trained in CLASS Assessment, two Education Specialists on staff, one additional Family Resource Advocate with credentialling this past year and a Registered and Licensed Dietician, and Certified Medical Assistant on staff.

**Communication:**

The program's communication plan currently consists of the SCICAP Agency Communication Plan and Head Start Communication plan. We have added monthly central and center staff meetings and quarterly staff newsletters. Supervisors are meeting with their staff regularly.

**Record Keeping:**

ChildPlus continues to be the choice for program data. Staff receive ongoing training in ChildPlus and are able to access the ChildPlus Learning Library.

There is a Child File Record Keeping System and Reporting System Check in place. Through the systems, the program ensures there is accountability for required info, forms, correspondence, etc. for program quality.

New strategies have been implemented to protect PII (personally identifiable information).

**Program Governance:**
The Governing Board and Policy Council of the program received training on their duties and responsibilities as the governing bodies. Both governing bodies receive program updates as they occur and are part of the board's minutes.

**Fiscal:**
The program receives an annual audit to ensure fiscal integrity with the Performance Standards. The current completed audit had no deficiencies or findings noted with Head Start.

South Central Iowa Community Action Program

# Early Childhood Program

## Self-Assessment Improvement Plan

| Program Design and Management | Target Date | Standard | Responsible Party |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| **Education and Disabilities** | | | |
| Teachers and TAs will learn and understand the math curriculum (New 2025-26) and will implement it with fidelity. | Ongoing | 1302.31<br>1302.32 | CLASS Specialist<br>Education Specialist<br>Teaching Staff |
| Teachers and Tas will have a better understanding of when and how to implement interventions to collect data. | Ongoing | 1302.33 | Disability Specialist<br>Teaching Staff |
| **Mental Health/Behavior Specialist** | | | |
| Teachers and TAs will have a better understanding of behavior management | Ongoing | 1302.31(b) (i)(ii) | Education Specialist<br>CLASS Specialist<br>Teaching Staff |
| **Family and Community** | | | |
| FRA's will have increased parent contacts/referrals and follow ups throughout the school year | On-Going | 1302.50(b)(2,3)<br><br>1302.51(b | Family Resource Specialists |
| **ERSEA** | | | |
| Continue to explore and expand multiple recruitment opportunities for program | On-Going | 1302.13 | ERSEA Specialist<br>All Program Staff |
| **Child Health and Safety** | | | |
| Increase the number of Head Start children within collaborations to get up to date on EPSDT schedule | On-going | 1302.42(b)(1)(i) | Health and Nutrition FRA/FRA<br>Teaching Staff<br>Collaboration Staff |
| **Facilities** | | | |
| Continue working on preventative maintenance plan for program sites | On-Going | 1302.47 | Facility Specialist,<br>Director of Operations,<br>Director of Programming |
| **Networking/Marketing** | | | |
| Staff will attend more community meetings and share data and promote recruitment | On-going | 1302.53 | Program Staff<br>Director |