

## Head Start and Early Head Start Annual Report FY 2021

**Name of Agency:** Children's Place Association

**Program Number:** 05CH8456/03

**Program Name: Place Association:** Arthur E. Jones Early Childhood Care and Learning Center and Home-Based Early Learning Program

**Address:** 700 N. Sacramento, Suite 300, Chicago, IL 60612-1046

**Phone Number:** 773-395-9193

**Fax Number:** 773-395-4486

**Head Start Director Name:** Porsche Snowden

**Head Start Director Email:** [psnowden@childrens-place.org](mailto:psnowden@childrens-place.org)

**Agency Web Site Address:** [www.childrens-place.org](http://www.childrens-place.org)

**Agency Type:** Nonprofit. Center-based Head Start/Early Head Start, home-visiting Early Head Start

**Agency Description:** Children's Place Association has 133 Head Start/Early Head Start-eligible slots. Children's Place provides comprehensive support services to children and families affected by illness and poverty. Programs include nursing for medically complex children, mental health counseling, case management, summer camp, foster care and adoption, emergency assistance, supportive family housing and early education services that include a Home-Based program and the Arthur E. Jones Early Childhood Care and Learning Center. The Early Learning Center serves 0-5-year-old children with age-specific classrooms, degreed teachers and specially trained aides, an onsite nurse, nutritious meals, transportation and a secure, private playground. The Home-Based program serves 0-3-year-old children, providing developmental and emotional screenings, nutrition education and assessments, monthly infant health checks by a Registered Nurse, advocacy, referrals and group socialization. The Center-based programs includes Head Start and Early Head Start programming, and the Home-Based program provides Early Head Start programming.

### Site Locations:

Early Learning Center 1800 N. Humboldt Blvd. Chicago, IL 60647	Home-Based Early Learning Program 3059 West Augusta Blvd. Chicago, Il 60622
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### Community Areas Served:

Both programs supported by the Ounce operate out of Humboldt Park on Chicago's West Side. While a large percentage of Children's Place client families live near our program facilities, we serve children from across Chicago due to our capacity and experience in serving infants, toddlers and children living with illness or disabilities.

While Children's Place Association's catchment area is the entire city, the annual Community Assessment conducted by the Ounce of Prevention and Children's Place evaluates the areas surrounding/adjacent to the Early Learning Center since a large percentage of children served come from these areas. Some, such as Logan Square and West Town, continue to undergo gentrification, but pockets of poverty remain; others face ongoing issues of high poverty rates and racial disparities. Humboldt Park had a high economic hardship index, high rates of unemployment and child poverty and increased crime rates.

Neighborhood demographics near the center have changed as the Logan Square and East Humboldt Park areas continue experiencing gentrification. As a result, we continue to explore having more over-income slots for slots that cannot be filled with families meeting the income guidelines. Additionally, we are increasing our

community partner directory as well as exploring, without competing, other nearby neighborhoods. We identify which neighborhoods to recruit from thorough analysis of our community assessment.

Since COVID 19, ongoing anticipated changes include families experiencing continued increased economic hardship due to loss of employment or reduction in work hours. Additionally, the children may require more educational supports due to the transition from classroom to e-learning. One of the most significant impacts include social/emotional and health regression.

The city of Chicago has created a Chicago COVID-19 Community Vulnerability Index that takes several factors into account in determining a Chicago community area's vulnerability to the pandemic. The Index identifies communities that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID and are vulnerable to barriers in vaccination rates. The index is a combination of:

- Sociodemographic factors
- Epidemiological factors
- Occupational factors
- Cumulative COVID burden

The index and rankings of Chicago community areas ranged from 4 (the lowest) to 64 (the highest). A high score correlated with high rates of COVID hospitalizations and mortality, low socioeconomic status and high mobility during COVID (unable to shelter in place, likely due to occupation). Humboldt Park was among high risk neighborhoods having a score of 52.

The Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership devoted their annual report to the Governor to the effects of the COVID-19 virus on children's mental health and on the effect of structural and persistent racism, overtly recognized as never before this past year, to the mental health of children. You can access the full report here: <https://www.icmhp.org/our-work/our-annual-reports/>.

Below are salient and main points from the report:

- The impacts on health are accompanied by significant impacts to family life
- Many children are likely to spend crucial formative years raised by parents who are more financially and psychologically stressed because of the pandemic
- When caretakers are engaged as first responders or as “essential personnel,” those caretakers may need to isolate themselves from the family given their risk of being exposed to the virus at work
- **This absence of caretakers, presence of family illness, and the death of extended family can cause major loss and grief issues for a child, beyond the basic stresses of social distancing**
- Many children were already experiencing family instability and loss prior to the pandemic. For these children, the pandemic just heightened existing struggles, often worsening their impact
- All children had their education disrupted including social and emotional learning processes as well as academic instruction
- Immigrant children faced additional difficulties with increased exposure if in shelter facilities or in families avoiding medical and mental health care due to the "public charge rule" (contested in the courts)

last year and rescinded by President Biden but the fear it engendered likely will exist for some time to come) and families with undocumented parents were denied the stimulus checks of the federal CARES Act

Poverty rates for children in the evaluated communities varied greatly by race/ethnicity, with African American and Hispanic children having the higher rates than White children. (The exception was Hermosa, where poverty percentages were similar for all racial groups.) The majority of children served by Children’s Place early education programs are African American and Hispanic. Approximately 21% of children served by the Early Learning Center are Black, 55% Hispanic, 15% multiracial, 1% Asian, and 3% White. In the Home-Based program 98% of families are Hispanic and 2% African American.

Per US Census data, the poverty level begins at annual incomes of \$12-44,000 depending on family size; in our last fiscal year, FY 2021, 89% of Early Learning Center and Home-Based client families made annual incomes below the federal poverty level of \$5,000 or less. A significant portion of families made considerably less: 79% of families served by the Early Learning Center and Home-Based program made annual incomes of \$20,000.

Children’s Place specializes in serving families and children with special needs. More than half of the children served in the Early Learning Center and in the Home Base Program, 64%, in FY 2020 had an illness or disability; furthermore, 12% had a parent living with a disability or medical condition. 15% of children in the Early Learning Center have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and receive early intervention services. More than 19% of children in the Home-Based program have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and receive early intervention services.

Please see below for additional information from the most recent Community Assessment.

**Overall Grantee Budget 2020**

**Total Public and Private Funds received:** \$2,531,790

Public Funds		Private Funds	
Source	Amount	Source	Amount
Federal	\$1,386,654	Individuals, Corporations, Foundations, etc.	\$115,203
State	\$1,029,933	In-kind	
Local School District			
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,416,587</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$115,203</b>

**Summary of your most current Community Assessment**

**Children and Families Served in 2021**

**Grantee Funded Enrollment**

	<b>Head Start Enrollment</b>	<b>Early Head Start Enrollment</b>
<b>Center-based Program</b>		
<b>a. 5 days per week</b>		
<b>1. Full-day enrollment</b>	57	32
<b>2. Part-day enrollment</b>		
<b>b. 4 days per week</b>		
<b>1. Full-day enrollment</b>		
<b>2. Part-day enrollment</b>		
<b>Home-based Program</b>		48
<b>Unallocated Slots</b>		
<b>Total:</b>	57	80

**Site:**

Total Children Served: 137

Total Families Served: 124

Average monthly enrollment (as percentage of funded enrollment): 83%

Number of Eligible Children in Community, ages 0-5	2,720
Percentage of children served in agency	5%

**Health**

**Percentage of enrolled children who received medical and dental exams**

**\*\*\* Please note that percentages are significantly lower due to the severe impact of COVID-19**

	<b>Received Medical Exams</b>	<b>Received Dental Exams</b>
Children’s Place Association	EHS 96% HS 100% 98%	EHS 42% HS 83% 63%

**Parental involvement in Directly Operated, Delegate and Partner Agencies**

**Community Assessment Summary:**

Each year, the Start Early supports Children’s Place Association in conducting/updating a community assessment outlining the strengths and needs of the communities served by the Children’s Place Early Learning Center and Home-Based early education program. The most recent community assessment was completed in June 2021, it includes new data for 2019 which, in accordance with Head Start Performance Standards, is used for program planning purposes.

As part of the Community Assessment, Children's Place client parents and community partners identified additional issues and needs in focus groups. Although the participating parents and community partners cited many strengths and resources in their communities, they also identified challenges and needs. Also, parents were often unaware of many of the resources community partners cited as strengths.

Children's Place parent focus groups and community partners identified a number of strengths, they also could identify challenges and needs in their communities: access to health care, activities for teens, immigration services, access to the Internet, Spanish speaking support, affordable extracurricular activities, fresh food markets, employment services, lack of available housing resources (waitlist too long).

## **Parent Education Activities**

### ***Parent Committee Meetings:***

Parent meetings are offered monthly. Parents participate in the planning of these meetings and suggest topics of interest, as noted above. A Parent committee also has a representative that attends our monthly Parent Policy Council Meetings. During that meeting, the representative provides an agency update that was discussed in a previous parent meeting. The representative then gathers the information discussed at the Grantee Parent Policy Meeting and shares it with the parents at the following parent meeting. All meetings continue to be held virtually to continue to provide support during COVID-19.

### ***Other special gatherings or activities:***

Parents participate in socialization events every month. Due to COVID, majority of the events were held virtual while supplying take home kits with materials used to participate during the meetings. The end of the year celebration and graduations were held in-person for the first time since the start of COVID, All safety measures were taken.

### ***Male Involvement:***

Children's Place hosts a quarterly Father/Male Figure Involvement Events to encourage male participation in our program and provide an engaging, fun and educational event specifically for the fathers/male figures. Additionally, Children's Place Association partners with Agencies Impacting/Supporting males with resources. We provide resources and/or referrals directly or indirectly through out partnerships.

### **Health:**

The Early Learning Center's Nurse and Family Support Specialists (FSS) for both the Center and Home-Based program train parents on Children's Place health and medical policies and procedures, and about the importance of medical and dental exams for children. The Nurse works with parents to make sure all health documentation is kept up to date. FSS support the Nurse in helping families obtain documentation and assist families with scheduling necessary appointments and securing medical and dental homes.

### **Mental Health:**

Parents participate in the annual meeting for planning mental health education. Parents recommend training topics for the monthly parent meetings, Pastries with Parents meetings, and socialization events. Parent also receive wellness trainings and support if needed. The following supports provided to children, but not limited to, are general and individual observations, play therapy and group therapy are available for those children in need through partnership with the Juvenile Protective Association, a leader in child mental health and well as consultation services provided by Independent Mental Health Consultant.

### **Community and Social Services:**

Parents are provided with a variety of different resources at parent meetings, home-visits, parent-teacher conferences, family assessments throughout the year. Children's Place maintains numerous community partnerships within the local community and surrounding neighborhoods to help support parents with resources for needs identified.

### **Other Community-related Education:**

Children's Place offers trainings throughout the program year on topics in which parents express interest. For example, in the past year parents received training about autism, cooking classes, transition to kindergarten/school and other subjects.

### **Education**

While reviewing the data for the overall Program, there were five areas that stood out for CPA. Social-Emotional, Physical, Cognitive, Literacy, and Mathematics. 85% of the children are meeting and exceeding expectations in Social-Emotional development. 87% of children are meeting and exceeding in physical development. 95% of children are meeting and exceeding in Cognitive Development. In the area of Literacy 87% are meeting and exceeding expectations and 93% of children are meeting and exceeding in Mathematics. After the winter check points the program focused on the areas that were lacking. More children came back into the program and staff were able to support in classrooms. Classroom studies were being implemented and teachers were intentional in their planning. The movement breaks were still incorporated daily, and concisions discipline was also another component to helped teachers and children with strategies. Kindergarten readiness and transitions was highly focused. Teachers could be seen having conversations with other teachers in different classroom to help with activities and strategies to enhance development in all developmental areas. The program allowed time for staff-to-staff conversations regarding classroom practice and activities. Extra time was provided for teachers to plan and strategize experiences with children. The week of the young child was a great week for teachers, the experiences that were provided for the children were amazing. The children were able to visit learning spaces and gain new experiences and fun facts from all over the world. The Program director and Education Coordinator encouraged data dialogues with the staff and families to review Spring checkpoint data. The program target three areas and sent out activities to families to help keep the children progressing. The program implemented our first Literacy night where a read aloud was read in English and Spanish. We attached learning objectives to an activity and families were involved.

**Literacy:** Overall our literacy scores were outstanding, 87% percent of our children are meeting and exceeding expectations. Literacy will continue to be an area of focused. Teachers will increase store time, story dictations, letter recognition and a host of activities to build of literacy awareness. The program has incorporated Literacy nights to help families provide strategies in the home environment.

### **Kindergarten Readiness**

#### ***Special Efforts to Prepare Children for Kindergarten:***

Staff, parents and teachers meet at the beginning of the school year to develop school readiness goals, which assists staff in preparing children for kindergarten. Teachers and staff create individualized plans for children based on their goals and follow up with parents throughout the year during parent-teacher conferences

#### ***Transition Activities to Promote Kindergarten Readiness:***

Teachers meet with parents to prepare transition plans for children going to kindergarten. Parents are offered the opportunity to visit kindergarten with support from a classroom or FSS staff in order to prepare children, and

themselves, for the transition. Ongoing kindergarten transition support is offered throughout the year via parent meetings, workshops, one-on-one parent consultations and more.

### ***Virtual Support in Response to COVID-19***

During this time, technology is necessary to virtually support our families' educational and social service needs. Some of our families are more adept at using technology and others require more assistance. As a result, staff have created collaborations with Zoom, Class Dojo, FaceTime, Google Duo, Microsoft Teams etc. to continue with child and family engagement.

### ***Family and Child Support in Response to COVID-19***

Children's Place Association provided the below resource (and more) to families:

- Comprehensive local and federal resource catalog including content areas like COVID-19 updates, Food, Educational Activities, Info for Undocumented Persons, Unemployment, Financial Support, Mental Health, Fitness & Health, Parenting/ Communication, Hygiene Supplies (Diapers, Wipes etc.), Utilities & Services, Housing, and Domestic Violence
- Visa gift cards, to families to support them with meeting basic household needs
- Household needs/sanitization/hygiene products (soap, disinfectants, toothpaste, hand sanitizer etc.)
- Distributed winter coats
- Provided for families' home libraries - 2 books per family -
- EHS and HS virtual learning kits
- Financial support to pay phone bill in order to keep tablets and Wi-Fi access for virtual learning
- Lyft for attending school
- Food boxes
- Diapers and wipes to all EHS families
- reusable masks
- 39 backpacks and school supplies (
- Clothing and shoes
- Tech literacy support – how to use zoom, how to complete online applications, SNAP online Class Dojo, etc.
- Emergency housing resources – shelters and crisis nurse
- Unemployment application support
- Missing stimulus check support
- Employment & job training resources shared

### **Summary of Information Required by the Secretary**

The Ounce Board of Directors and Policy Council were given brief summaries and links to all Program Instructions and Information Memorandums.