

General Information

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

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Head Start Director Name: Porsche Snowden

Head Start Director Email: psnowden@childrens-place.org

Agency Web Site Address: 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 Start Early operating 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 Start Early 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, are undergoing 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 may need to explore having more over-income slots for the next program year, if slots cannot be filled with families meeting the income guidelines.

Prior to COVID 19, we did not anticipate significant changes from last program year. However, some anticipated changes now include families experiencing 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.

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 32% of children served by the Early Learning Center are Black, 51% Hispanic, 14% multiracial, 1% Arabic, and 1% White. In the Home-Based program 92% of families are Hispanic and 7% 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 2020, 80% 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: 89% 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, 45%, in FY 2020 had an illness or disability; furthermore, 14% had a parent living with a disability or medical condition. 20% 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. In the Home-Based program, 13% of children had a disability or medical condition and 4% had a parent living with a disability or medical condition. More than 25% 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.

Head Start Program Overview:

Financials Funding Year 2020

Total Funds:
SOURCE AMOUNT

Federal: \$1,271,125

State: \$1,195,003

Local District: n/a

Private: \$33,274

In-Kind: n/a

Other: n/a

FY 2020 and Actual Expenditures		
	Budget	Actual
Sub-Recipient		
Personnel	\$1,180,861	\$857,299
Fringe benefits	Included above	Included above
Contractual	\$59,260	\$28,256
Other	n/a	n/a
Supplies	\$134,595	\$9,637
Travel	n/a	n/a
Equipment	\$5,000	\$0
Facilities/Construction	\$39,203	\$5,082

Our Children and Our Families

Number of Children Served in 2020-2021

	Funded Enrollment HS	Number of Children Served in HS	Funded Enrollment EHS	Number of Children Served in EHS
Center-based	41	44	32	32
Home-based	0	0	60	52
Family Childcare	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total:	41	44	92	84

Enrollment Statistics

Highest Level of Education by Family	Percent
Advanced/Bachelors	12%
Associate/Vocational/Some College	19%
High School Graduate/GED	35%
Less than High School Graduate	27%
Did not answer 3%	n/a

Race / Ethnicity of Participants

Race/Ethnicity of Participants	Percent
Hispanic of any race	55%
Black or African American	5%
Asian	1%
White	3%
Multiracial/Biracial	8%

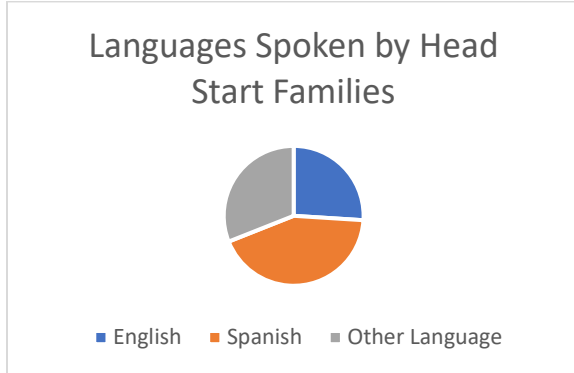
Ages of Children and Pregnant Women Served in Head Start / Early Head Start

% 20 4 years old
 % 22 3 years old
 % 33 2 years old

% 30 1 year old
 % 23 less than 1 year old
 % n/a Pregnant Women

Languages Spoken by Head Start Families

Insert Chart of languages spoken by Head Start families



Preparing Children for Kindergarten

Teacher Level of Education	Percent
Master's Degree	11%
Bachelor's Degree	16%
Associate's Degree	21%
Child Development Associate	21%
Home Visitor Credential	1%

Classroom Assessment Scoring System

Summary of CLASS observation:

No CLASS observation in 2020-2021 PY due to pandemic.

Family Engagement

Summary of Parent Education Activities/ Parent Committee Meetings/Other special gatherings or activities Male Involvement/ resources provided to families.

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. During the latter part of the year, all meetings were held virtually to continue to provide support during COVID-19.

Other special gatherings or activities:

Parents participate in socialization events every month. They are also offered the opportunity to participate in a holiday party and end of the year celebration with their children.

Families are encouraged to attend Parent Teacher Conferences, Home Visits, Parent Meetings and Socializations to maximize participation and engagement with their children's education.

When advertising or discussing program events or meetings, staff use neutral language such as parent or guardian to ensure that fathers or male figures feel welcome and included.

We provide families with access to our lending library, Reading is Fundamental literacy activities, and we have partnered with UIC Center for Literacy to facilitate activities on introducing and improving at-home literacy skills. This year we were able to continue these activities virtually.

Male Involvement:

Children's Place hosts a quarterly Father/Male Figure Involvement Night to encourage male participation in our program and provide an engaging, fun and educational event specifically for the fathers/male figures.

Pandemic Response

The needs of our families changed dramatically this program year due to COVID. In the Fall our families continued to struggle with virtual learning for various reasons, including a lack of technological literacy, access to appropriate devices, and balancing the needs of their older children and their e-learning. Our families who opted for in-person services at our Center needed consistent and extended childcare; due COVID-related protocols and closures, however, this was not always possible for Children's Place Association to provide. During closures some parents were forced to take long-term leaves from jobs or give up positions entirely. Our Center's reduced hours put additional strains on families, including the need for new or expanded transportation support, such as carpools, after school caretakers, and other family members taking on responsibility of dropping off and picking up the participants. Transportation needs were also a challenge for families who previously relied on public transit or ride share services. In addition to an overall reduction in public transit availability in Chicago, many parents opted not to use trains or buses due to fear of infection during the pandemic. Ride sharing has posed similar issues, with few drivers and higher prices per ride. When children were able to attend in person, our staff and parents noted higher levels of separation anxiety among students and increased difficulty interacting with peers. This is reflected in our parents reporting the need for Positive Parent-Child relationships, such as healthy attachments with their young children. Family Assessments and Family Partnership Agreement Goals also illustrate the need for housing. A few of our families have spent time in shelters and transitional housing programs, while many others remain doubled up or in housing that is subpar. For such participants, it is often difficult to find appropriate and available programming or resources, as many housing services have long waitlists or do not accept persons who are not living in shelters or on the streets.

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. We were able to support families with a variety of resources such as internet access and emergency use of laptops when needed. Staff also accommodated parents by being flexible with their work schedules to allow for later or very early visits during times when other family members in the home participate in virtual services for elementary and/or high school. In some households, this would be the only time that technology was available.

Also, families have become overwhelmed with the pressures and responsibilities of home life during the pandemic. For some, this means not always being able to complete visits, activities, and meetings. We have emphasized the support available through our mental health wellness consultant, as a mode of destressing, and encouraged families to access other community resources to continue the focus on our family's well-being.

Family Support staff used an array of tools to assess families: conversations during the initial intake, the Family Assessment tool, COVID-19 Assessment tool, Home Visits, and Parent-Teacher Conferences, with this information we can complete the Family Outcomes Rating Scale (FORS) and update the Family Services Information tab in Child Plus. Family Support staff use the attached Outcome Rating Scale to determine each family's rating for every category. The FORS data then helps to inform connection with resources, frequency of follow up, and the topics addressed in parent meetings and newsletters. For example, families with a rating under 3 for Food would be connected to local food pantries and applicable social services and encouraged to attend meetings focusing on nutrition and grocery shopping on a budget.

For clothing, school supplies, hygiene products, and books we partner with Cradles to Crayons. Our partnership ensures that our Family Support staff can request weather-appropriate clothing and shoes for any child in the families we serve, as well as share additional supplies such as educational bags and bicycles.

For both CB and HB, FSS staff contacted families regularly to assure that they were safe as well as checking on their wellbeing. We offered extra support to families that were having difficulties by referring them to our Mental Health consultant or offering additional time to discuss how they were doing. FSS's also supported families with food insecurities by partnering with food pantries which provided monthly food boxes. They also assisted parents in completing the required CPS form for food drop off to their residence.

Child Outcomes

Summary of 2020-2021 Child Outcomes

Center Base:

The Early Head Start teachers found that collaboration between the classrooms and the program leadership providing strategies to support inside the classroom to be extremely helpful. On an average 23 of the 32 children were in attendance daily, which helped the carry out the planning and activities. Conversations with the teaching teams increased as well as identifying the importance of weekly observation input. While the area of Language is continuously improving in the toddler and twos classrooms, all other domains remain strong. Teachers expressed value found in many of the experiences that took place for the week of the young child as well as the preparation experiences that were provided for them prior to that week. This particular planning style has been noted as the best mechanism for supporting teachers.

Head Start outcomes were remarkable and majority of children met all widely expectations. In all three Head Start classrooms, teachers are very intentional in there planning for experiences that were captured daily. During the Spring term, teachers focused their attention on rhyming and letter/sound activities based on winter quarter snapshot report. Despite COVID barriers, children adjusted well to new daily routine such as wearing masks, checking the temperature, and changing shoes at arrival or departure. When weather permitted, we utilized the school's playground which allowed children to engage in more physical activities. On an average 30 of the 41 children, were in attendance daily.

All children with an IFSP/IEP have been receiving services through zoom inside and outside the classroom. There was continuous improvement shown in the diverse learners that received remote services via CPS. Though their services were provided during the high peak educational setting in their classrooms, Head Start teachers would provide those same experiences to the children in the evening so that they remain on target in CPA's classroom as well. Children with diagnosed disabilities are doing amazingly well given the new service delivery model due to COVID.

After reviewing the data from the Spring checkpoint, overall, both programs did exceptional. The data shows most of the children are meeting widely held expectations. This data was also shared during team meetings and

parent meetings to ensure everyone was on the same accord. The program focused all parent engagement activities on developmental domains to ensure families received intentional educational material to provide at home for congruency of care. In general, the program was able to provide support for the children and their families with experiences and activities. The teachers have been very reflective and intentional which is a reflection of conversations across classrooms around Teaching Strategies Gold.

Home Base:

After analyzing classroom data, we observed a couple trends including: Physical Development was low across the classrooms, children are becoming more independent and engaged in problem solving, consistency of increase in certain, and most children met most developmental milestones

Children overall continue to show growth in the different developmental areas. Most children in our program are meeting/above the national average. Overall, we see children meeting milestones. Most children with diagnosed disabilities fell below in most areas (7/8 areas). In the of Social and Emotional Development 50% of the children met expectations and 50% were below. The areas of Approaches to Learning, Physical Development and Health, and Social Studies had the highest percentage of children below (75%). Due to the pandemic some children's services continued to be stopped or delayed. Annual reviews or transitions to CPS have also been delayed. We continue to offer support and activities to families. Disabilities Coordinator will follow-up and we will all meet as a team to discuss support and planning strategies. Children are engaging, but during virtual visits some diverse learners find it more difficult to sustain attention during activities with parents.

After reviewing all 3 quarters of data it is visible that quarter 2 had the most growth in all areas. Quarter 3 had the most growth of data collection and percentage of completion compared to the beginning of the year. Although there has been a fluctuation in data results, we believe children are continuing to meet ongoing goals. The data may not show what we observe due to technical issues, but we actively see how children have shown growth and parents have focused on development during virtual visits and goal check-ins.

Services for Children with Special Needs

Summary of services provided to children with special needs during the program year 2020-2021

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Disabilities/Wellness Coordinator has maintained virtual partnerships with CPS, LEAs, and Early Intervention to ensure that Early Learning families have up-to-date information for their diverse learners. Currently, the responsibility of the Disabilities/Wellness Coordinator is to serve as a virtual liaison, working collaboratively with families advocating for the rights of their diverse learner. The Disabilities/Wellness coordinator also works in collaboration with the Mental Health Consultant (MHC) to schedule virtual workshops, or referrals for external mental health related services for staff, and families at Children's Place Association.

Additionally, to support with the individualization of children with disabilities, the program developed diverse learner educational bins that were dispersed during Children's Place pandemic donation distribution. These educational bags were specifically designed with sensory items, fidget toys, Play-Doh etc.

The Disabilities/Wellness Coordinator has worked collaboratively with the Family Support Specialists in both CB and HB programs to update the ERSEA/Disabilities recruitment plan to reflect changes due to COVID-19.

Under the updated plan, our programs will remain fully enrolled, while maintaining more than twenty percent of identified diverse learners.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Disabilities/Wellness Coordinator has met with staff regularly to continue to develop and update Positive Behavior Support Plans, implementation plans, and interim plans for children with IFPS/IEP, or an identified disability to help guide their individualization.

Health Services

Percent of Children Meeting Health Requirements 2020 -2021

	Health Insurance	Medical Home	Dental Home	Professional Dental Exam	Current EPSDT	Up to date Immunizations
Center-based Program	100%	95%	82%	64%	n/a	100%
Home-based Program	96%	98%	75%	46%	n/a	93%
Family Childcare Home	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Mental Health Services

Summary of mental health services provided during the program year 2020-2021

Parents participate in the annual meeting for planning mental health education. Parents recommend training topics for the monthly parent meetings. Parents receive ongoing wellness trainings and support as identified/requested. Individual therapy and group Play Therapy is available for those children in need through partnership with the Juvenile Protective Association, a leader in child mental health. Additionally, staff support groups are held monthly. Individual support is provided to staff through MHC, DIS/MH Coordinator, and internal CPA wellness program.

To support the Social/Emotional Development of children, the Disabilities/Wellness Coordinator has continued to implement the Conscious Discipline curriculum with “I Love You” Rituals, self-regulation activities, and videos for parents on the importance of connecting with their children, and how to navigate during tantrums. The purpose of the Conscious Discipline curriculum is to implement a social/emotional supplemental curriculum that will support positive and nurturing caregiver and child relationships. Initially, the pilot program took place in an assigned classroom at the Center, where the Disabilities/Wellness Coordinator met with teachers monthly. Two train- the- trainer sessions were completed covering the following topics: introduction to Conscious Discipline and becoming brain smart. Due to COVID-19, the Disabilities/Wellness Coordinator has now engaged families of Diverse Learners by sharing valuable information received from the Grantee (Start Early) weekly virtual Conscious Discipline book club. During challenges with social/emotional development, families have reached out virtually to the Disabilities/Wellness Coordinator asking for support. The Disabilities/Wellness Coordinator worked collaboratively with families to identify appropriate activities that support the social/emotional goals on their IEP. Additionally, this year we were able to conduct virtual classroom and/or individual observations by our Mental Health Consultant (MHC). We were able to still support children and staff by utilizing this method. MHC would also provide feedback via virtual conference call. Based on this information a child was either referred out for additional services or education and support staff worked in collaboration with the MHC and DWC to implement and carry out a PBSP. The plan is revisited as needed for adjustments based on child outcomes.

Our Community

Community Assessment Highlights

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 2020, it includes new data for 2018 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 resource's community partners cited as strengths.

Children's Place parent focus groups and community partners identified several 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).

Partners and Volunteers

Children's Place Association partners with local agencies in the community to provide resources and supports to families. Each year, host an annual Community Assessment Brunch. During this brunch new and pre-existing MOU's are developed. Referrals to additional agencies are also revealed during the meeting. Additionally, throughout the year, FSS identify additional agencies that meet newly identified needs of the families we serve. CPA's Development teams partners with local companies seeking out volunteer opportunities. CPA works with programs to identify needs and matches volunteer to the program based on volunteer request of service they are interested in providing.

Shared Governance

Board Involvement

CPA is a partner agency with Start Early and is apart of their larger Board of Directors.

Head Start Policy Council Involvement

Children's Place Association has a Parent Committee Board (PCB) that meets monthly. Our Parent Committee Board Representatives also sit on Start Early's Policy Council. Each month, the representatives share findings and summaries of those meetings with the PCB. PC members also are responsible for, but not limited to, parent interviews, reapplication and budget approvals, new policy approval, self-assesment participation etc.

Summary of Audit Findings

Based on the audit findings, all content areas were overall on target. There were minor updates/areas of improvement that were all be rectified within a 30-60 day timeframe.

Summary of Information Required by the Secretary

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

Summary of Annual Review Findings

During the 2021 annual review, it was identified that overall, all content areas were very strong with little to no non-compliance. Areas in need of support were those where there was new staff, turnover and/or vacancies. There are written vacancy plans in place, however, it is still a great deal of support that is needed when there are vacancies. CPA is in the process of developing new partnerships with agencies, colleges, and universities to shorten the time vacancies are open. Also, CPA is developing a plan for staff retention.