

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

Address: 11 E. Adams St. Suite 1550 Chicago, IL 60603

Phone Number: 773-395-9193

Fax Number: 773-395-4486

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 103 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	Home-Based Early Learning Program
1800 N. Humboldt Blvd.	3059 West Augusta Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60647	Chicago, IL 60622

Community Areas Served:

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.

Several children entering the Children's Place Head Start and Early Head Start programs are referred through our organization's diversified service components, particularly our Supportive Housing and Medical Case

Management programs. Each of these programs target low-income families challenged by health issues or disabilities. We also enroll children from our Foster Care Program servicing abused and neglected children, many with illness or disabilities.

Through the recruitment and selection process, Children's Place programs prioritize families that are homeless, receiving public assistance, foster children and income eligible, before enrolling families with incomes between 101%-130% of poverty. Our organization publicizes our Early Education Programs through other local nonprofits and community groups. Our organization often receives program referrals by word of mouth. Although a significant percentage of Children's Place client families reside in neighborhoods near our program facilities in Humboldt Park, we also draw children from across Chicago, due to our capacity and experience in serving infants, toddlers and children living with illness and disabilities.

Humboldt Park continues to face significant social and economic challenges in 2025. According to the most recent data, the overall poverty rate in Humboldt Park stands at approximately 26.2%, with the community ranking 23rd highest in Chicago for the percentage of children living in poverty. The area also ranks 24th highest for linguistically isolated households, reflecting ongoing barriers for families with limited English proficiency. Unemployment remains a serious concern: while the broader West Town–Humboldt Park region reports a 7.2% unemployment rate, Humboldt Park specifically has a much higher rate of 13.1%, significantly above the citywide average of 8.1%. Additional health-related indicators highlight further risks, as 10.5% of births in the community were classified as low birth weight (compared to 9.4% citywide), the teen birth rate was ranked the 16th highest in the city, and Humboldt Park ranked 23rd highest for births without early or adequate prenatal care.

Despite these data points, several critical measures remain unavailable in the current public datasets. Specifically, updated figures for child poverty percentages (such as the 46% and 21% extreme poverty rates cited in the June 2024 assessment) are not yet available, nor are current statistics for SNAP reliance, violent crime rates, school attainment, or Head Start program demographics. To obtain these details, next steps should include consulting the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP) 2025 Community Data Snapshots, reviewing early childhood-focused reports from Illinois Action for Children, and engaging with local agencies such as the YMCA or Children's Place Association that regularly track Head Start enrollment and family outcomes in Humboldt Park.

39% of children had an illness or disability, including heart ailments, autism, epilepsy, feeding disorders and developmental disabilities. Having a full-time, onsite Registered Nurse and Disabilities and Mental Health Coordinator on staff ensures our program can accommodate children with feeding tubes, complex medication regimens and/or serious developmental delays. Children's Place specializes in serving families and children with special needs.

Despite these challenges, 100% of children made expected developmental gains during the year, toward a goal of 80%. 20 children graduated, all fully prepared for kindergarten as indicated by nationally recognized assessments – the 11th consecutive year of this achievement. Attendance plays a key role in accomplishing these goals. Attendance was 84%, surpassing the 70% goal.

Head Start Program Overview:

Financials Funding Year 2025

Total Funds:

SOURCE AMOUNT

Federal: \$1,375,905

State: \$455,523

Local District: \$733,131

Private: \$112,500

In-Kind: n/a

Other: n/a

FY 2024 and Actual Expenditures		
	Budget	Actual
Sub-Recipient		
Personnel	\$748,771	\$655,641
Fringe benefits	\$190,683	\$163,884
Contractual	\$93,000	\$1,680
Other	\$193,155	\$33,195
Supplies	\$79,000	\$865
Travel	\$5,712	\$5,712
Equipment	\$0	\$0

Our Children and Our Families

Number of Children Served in 2024-2025

	Funded Enrollment HS	Number of Children Served in HS	Funded Enrollment EHS	Number of Children Served in EHS
Center-based	34	42	32	37
Home-based	0	0	30	38
Family Childcare	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total:	34	42	62	75

Enrollment Statistics

Highest Level of Education by Family	Percent
Advanced/Bachelors	10%
Associate/Vocational/Some College	32%
High School Graduate/GED	39%
Less than High School Graduate	10%
Did not answer	N/A

Race / Ethnicity of Participants

Race/Ethnicity of Participants	Percent
Hispanic of any race	72%
Black or African American	28%
Asian	1%
White	42%

Multiracial/Biracial	9%
Native American	0%
Other	20%

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

10%	4 years old
23%	3 years old
28%	2 years old
19%	1 year old
18%	Less than 1 year old
3%	Pregnant Women

Classroom Assessment Scoring System

Summary of CLASS observation:

In the most recent results, we were significantly above the National Average and Quality Threshold (Highest level). On a 7-point scale where quality ranges in 5 domains at 2.5 for the highest score, we scored 3-4 and where quality ranges in the other 4 domains at a 4.5 we scored 6-6.5 consistently. CPA has received several recognitions and awards for how high our classrooms are performing. An additional successful outcome is how classrooms are able to effectively manage children with diagnosed disabilities and medical health conditions.

Family Engagement

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

Family engagement remained a central focus of CPA's work during 2024–2025. Parents as Teachers was implemented as the primary parenting curriculum for home-based programming, with additional supports tailored for pregnant families and dual-language households. Parent Policy Council and Parent Committees were active in governance, participating in self-assessments, goal setting, and program planning. Special events, including Cooking Matters, Parent Café gatherings, Parent Appreciation events, and legal aid workshops, further strengthened parent involvement. CPA's ongoing partnership with CARPLS Legal Aid ensured that families had access to monthly "Ask A Lawyer" sessions, providing advocacy and support for education rights, IDEA services, and public benefits.

Parent Meetings & Events:

CB Monthly Meetings occur every second Thursday of each month, covering an array of topics based on the time of year, relevant themes or issues, and other topics as parents suggest. The Parent Policy Council/Parent Committee also has at least one representative attend each meeting to share updates from Policy Council, and vice versa.

HB has monthly parent meetings and bimonthly socialization, covering an array of topics based on the time of year, relevant themes or issues, and other topics as parents suggest. The Parent Policy Council/Parent Committee also has at least one representative attend each meeting to share updates from Policy Council, and vice versa.

CB Program offers a monthly Parent As Teachers activity in person, on site in small groups. This allows are parents and guardians a chance to learn a skill or lesson alongside their child, as well as spend some quality time together. Similarly, families are encouraged to use our Community Library in at the center to read or color together when times allows.

Both HB and CB have various seasonal activities throughout the program year including Fall Festival, Familysgiving, Winter Wonder Brunch, End of the Year Celebration, and events and tabling opportunities with our community partners. When advertising these events, our team uses a variety of methods from physical flyers and Class Dojo posts, to verbal reminders and personal text messages – all using neutral language that welcomes any and all family members or guardians to participate.

Male Involvement:

CPA hosts quarterly intentional father figure engagement events, including Bring Your Dad to School (or socialization) Day, a Father's Day celebration, game night, and a Read-a-thon. The CB building has a father engagement board where we highlight and celebrate our dads and father figures. Fathers are included to attend family events, parent-teacher conferences, and home visits regardless of if they are an enrolling adult or not. Our entire staff works to build relationships with all adult family members in order for them to feel welcome and connect with our resources and opportunities.

Child Outcomes

Summary of 2023-2024 Child Outcomes

Child outcomes for 2024–2025 reflected strong progress across all developmental domains, with 85 to 90 percent of children meeting or exceeding expected benchmarks by spring. Home-based programs, while facing occasional attendance challenges, still demonstrated growth across seven to eight developmental domains each quarter. The integration of the Parents as Teachers Interactions Across Abilities curriculum supported diverse learners and ensured that children with disabilities were included in meaningful learning experiences alongside their peers.

Services for children with special needs were strengthened through the addition of an Inclusion Aide, who provided direct classroom support for children with behavioral and social-emotional challenges. Sensory rooms and sensory boxes were used more strategically to help children regulate and re-engage with classroom activities. The Disabilities/Wellness Coordinator collaborated closely with CPS, Early Intervention, and LEAs to ensure smooth IFSP and IEP transitions. Over ten percent of enrolled children received disability-related services, many of whom benefited from individualized Positive Behavior Support Plans designed in partnership with families and teaching staff.

Center Base:

In reviewing the fall, winter, and spring checkpoint data, we observed clear growth across all developmental domains. By spring, over 80% of children in the program were meeting or exceeding expectations. In the fall, strengths were noted in social-emotional, physical, and cognitive development. By winter, cognitive, literacy, and physical development emerged as strengths, with cognitive development increasing more than 10% since fall. Spring data reflected continued progress in all areas, with no domains falling below 10%—a significant improvement compared to winter, when language, social-emotional, and physical development were identified as areas needing growth and were over 20% below benchmarks.

This progress may be attributed to intentional communication about data trends, classroom strategy adjustments, and increased family engagement. Teachers reflected on fall and winter results and focused on areas needing support. Additional strategies were implemented, such as more movement-based and small-group activities, mental health consultant recommendations, and targeted supports for children experiencing behavioral challenges. A designated space was created for physical activities and calming exercises, and interns provided one-on-one support for children needing additional attention. Activities such as high-intensity movement and guided breathing helped children regulate emotions and behaviors.

Overall, the program has seen a strong upward trend. By spring, 89% of children were meeting or exceeding expectations in every developmental domain. Kindergarten readiness has also been a focus: teachers provided families with weekly activities to extend learning at home, and all nine children transitioning to kindergarten in the fall have been screened using the ESI-K. Results show that all children are on track, with some exceeding expectations for growth.

Home Base:

After reviewing the reports and discussion of outcomes reports we concluded that we expected most of the data results. The lower scores in some areas are due to inconsistent attendance throughout the quarter and not sufficient documentation. Other areas were surprised to see this quarter to be the lowest. It was astonishing to see that Approaches to Learning had 62% of all children below. Home visitors present several opportunities for families to initiate activities and plan activities to engage families during the home visit. There were also opportunities presented for families to engage in problem-solving materials.

Home Visitors engage children and families in learning and exploration: collaborative planning, reviewing milestones, encouraging following children's interest, encouraging purposeful planning, scaffolding and sharing strategies, encouraging consistent attendance, providing support with whole family challenges (meeting basic needs, housing or health resources, etc.), supporting families in taking the lead in activities, and providing coaching and resources.

Strengths that were observed within our classrooms included: parent participation in ongoing collaborative weekly planning, continuous positive relationships with families, ongoing communication, families being open to being their child's first teacher and consistent implementation of our conscious discipline curriculum as well as resources from parents as teachers.

Challenges we observed included: home visitors not assigning documentation for all areas of the assessment when following parent and child's lead and interest in specific interest areas and lack of consistent attendance, not meeting, or exceeding in most areas. We have one home visitor who has only been on our team for 10 months and her learning is ongoing.

After analyzing classroom data, we observed a couple of trends. Children are engaging in reading and creative arts activities. A challenge observed is navigating conflict and communicating big emotions. Home visitors would like more support on how to introduce that area of development to babies in their caseloads. Attendance has improved but with the fluctuation, data continues to be affected.

Based on the data, children overall throughout this quarter have shown growth in the different developmental areas. Most children this quarter in our program were above the national average. Overall, we see children continuing to work towards meeting milestones and children with IFSP's showing progress toward goals.

After reviewing all 3 quarters of data it is visible that the area with the most growth has been Physical Development and Health with a score of 1.54 in the first period and 1.98 in the third period. The second area with the most growth was Mathematics with an initial score of 1.09 and now it is 1.39. The third area being Approaches to Learning with an initial score of 1.20 and third period score of 1.40. This 3rd period had the most growth of data collection and percentage of completion compared to the rest of the year with classrooms meeting 95%, 97%, and 100% completed as the team worked collaboratively with families. Although there has been a fluctuation in data results, we believe children are continuing to meet ongoing goals throughout the year. The data may not show all progress, but we actively see how children have shown growth, and parents have focused on development

during visits and goal check-ins. I believe the data reflected the increase of attendance and participation, the data reflected shows the growth from period one to period three.

Services for Children with Special Needs

Summary of services provided to children with special needs during the program year 2024-2025

During the 2024-2025 program year the Disabilities and Wellness Coordinator continued to maintain an ongoing partnership with CPS, LEA's, and Early intervention through weekly and monthly communication and updates in to support in having up-to-date information for our diverse learners. The Disability and Wellness Coordinator maintained ongoing communication, strengthening the collaboration with families and promoting the advocacy for our diverse learners and their families through connecting with resources and services. The Disabilities and Wellness Coordinator communicated family rights and responsibilities to ensure they received follow-up in a timely manner, placement communication, and transportation needs in order to receive their services. The Disabilities and Wellness Coordinator also supported families in understanding our programs intention support strategies to best meet the goals of their family to meet their child's developmental milestones.

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 monthly. Under the updated plan, our programs will remain fully enrolled, while maintaining more than ten percent of identified diverse learners, both in Early Head Start and Head Start programs. Continued collaboration has become a strength as the Disabilities and Wellness Coordinator worked with Family Support Specialist and Education Coordinators to update the ERSEA/Disabilities recruitment plan on an ongoing monthly basis. The intentional recruitment plan ensured we remained fully enrolled with more than 25% identified diverse learners in both of our Early Head Start and Head Start programs.

During the 2024-2025 Program year Center-Based Education and Disabilities and Wellness team collaborated regularly to support the individualization and support for diverse learners. The Disabilities Coordinator facilitated the completion of Pre-Planning Individualization Module in which the team discusses and documents child's strengths and areas to build on, strategies to support, routines and activities, lesson plan individualization focus using the Creative Curriculum, and resources (accommodations/modifications) along with supporting all learning domains. Home Based team discussed supports and PAT curriculum resources during Supervisions. Resources are used to intentionally plan and individualize. Education Coordinator and Disabilities Coordinator collaborate, observe, model, and reflect with the teaching team to continue ongoing support. The Disabilities Coordinator facilitates staffing's to include parents, teachers, family support, and managers to ensure intentional individualization is then focused on IEP/IFSP goals, entering tags into COR (Home-Based) and noting individualization on Creative Curriculum Lesson Plans. The individualization is monitored and ongoing guidance provided to teaching teams to assess and track along with planning for updates to support child's continuous growth and support.

The Disabilities Coordinator collaborates with Education to ensure use of inclusive practices in the classroom. During the completion of the Individualization Module strategies, modifications, and accommodations are discussed and planned in order to support the specific goals and needs of our diverse learners. The Disabilities Coordinator ensures that individualization and planning ensures the participation and engagement of all children at different levels of development through individual/small/large group activities and fosters a sense of community in the classroom. Modification and accommodations are planned for throughout the day to include routines, play and organization of the environment.

The Disabilities Coordinator not only participated in ongoing professional development through trainings and workshops, but also supported in the training activities for staff and families. This gave different perspectives of the support for diverse learners, rights and responsibilities, and increasing knowledge on topics such as assessments/individualization/referral along with resources. These opportunities supported classroom and families in creating a supportive learning community for all of our children.

During the 2024-2025 program year we followed a plan of support to include the ongoing intentional use of the sensory room to include planned small social-emotional groups and individualization to support development using activities, books and sensory play to support emotional regulation and positive engagement with peers and teachers. We used strategies such as social stories and story dictation to support children with strengthening skills that allowed them to engage in their large group classroom setting. Plans were identified in their lesson plan individualization to include sensory room as a resource.

Children's Place specializes in serving families and children with special needs. 23% 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 24% 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. and 3% had a parent living with a disability or medical condition.

We continue to serve families with children with diverse needs. We have provided support for well over 10% of our funded enrollment, 23% of the children in the Early Learning Center have a current Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or and Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) receiving early intervention services. In our Home-Based program 24% of our children have an Individualized Family Service Plan. In 2025 41% of our children had a disability or health condition.

Health Services

Percent of Children Meeting Health Requirements 2024 -2025

Health services improved significantly during the 2024–2025 year with the expansion of the Health Services team, including the addition of a Data Entry Specialist and Nurse Consultant. These new roles improved timeliness of screenings, reduced caseload pressures, and strengthened overall documentation. All new and returning children received required health screenings within the 45-day window. Pregnant women enrolled in the home-based option received prenatal and postpartum supports, including nutrition education, wellness checks, and social-emotional resources provided by the full-time Registered Nurse. Continuous training and retraining of staff further ensured consistency and quality across health services.

	Health Insurance	Medical Home	Dental Home	Professional Dental Exam	Current EPSDT	Up to date Immunizations
Center-based Program	100%	97%	92%	53%	53%	92%
Home-based Program	97%	97%	83%	55%	72%	89%
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 2024-2025

Mental health services were enhanced through CPA's partnership with the Juvenile Protective Association, which provided play therapy and parent support groups. A new Mental Health Consultant offered in-person

classroom observations, teacher debriefs, and modeling of effective strategies to strengthen classroom environments. Conscious Discipline remained a core component of CPA's social-emotional programming, with staff receiving coaching on self-regulation and positive relationship-building practices. Parent wellness workshops and staff support groups were offered regularly to reduce stress, prevent burnout, and build resilience across the CPA community.

Parents participate in the annual meeting for planning mental health education. Parents recommend training topics for the monthly parent meetings. Parents receive ongoing wellness training 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.

Annually, parents and our interdisciplinary team meet with our Mental Health Consultant to discuss a calendar of mental health trainings and events for the program year. Additionally, our Family Support team administers surveys and collected feedback during Family Assessments to help inform the types of topics that will be highlighted on throughout the year. Parents receive ongoing wellness support through feedback from Classroom Observations, Parent Consultations, Socioemotional Developmental Screenings Results Letters, family events with local community partners, and resources shared on parent boards and newsletters. Masters of Social Work Students from UIC conduct small group and individual socioemotional sessions based on classroom and/or parent identification of concerns. Likewise staff receives quarterly mental health trainings on topics based on their feedback from the Mental Health consultant and individual support is provided as requested.

CPA utilized the Conscious Discipline behavioral support model, in which both staff and parents alike are offered trainings to learn the principles of implementation. The curriculum includes "I Love You" rituals, safe spaces, Well Wishes, and a various other tools and processes that teach staff, parents, and students the skills of self-regulation. During this program year, our Program Manager and Education Coordinator ensured the implementation of the model until our Disabilities Coordinator and Mental Health Coordinator were onboarded.

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. The Disabilities/Wellness Coordinator facilitated monthly training sessions reviewing 10 chapters from Conscious Discipline.

When socioemotional challenges arise in the classroom or in the home, staff and parents are supported by both the Disabilities Coordinator and Mental Health Coordinator to find related resources, attend relevant parent trainings, and identify if there is a need for Positive Behavior Support plans and/or referrals.

Our Community

Community Assessment Highlights

Each year, 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 2025, it includes new data from 2024 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.

Please see below chart for more information:

Mental Health	- More conversations and resources - State is starting to focus on mental health for kids aged 0-5 - Increased city focus on MH (e.g. Treatment not Trauma) - Kedzie Center and other neighborhood coalition models
Disabilities	- Collaboration with families and other agencies - Peer network/info-sharing - Success in hiring more staff - Rush and Northwestern are researching early intervention for autism
Education	- Collaboration among families - Education around vaccinations to families - Many options - Bilingual parent programs - Flexible, family-centered home base programs
Health	- Many ST, OT, and ABA clinics - Health-related coalitions - Availability of services for all populations
Nutrition	- Food pantries providing additional services and supporting families - Expansion of Greater Chicago Food Depository food assistance in communities
Social Services	- Community engagement events—coming together to learn about a diverse range of services - Productive relationships - Consistency - Social determinants of health prioritized in the medical field

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. However, shared governance remained strong in 2024–2025, with parents actively engaged in Policy Council, reviewing program goals, financials, and self-assessment results. Parent Committees partnered with staff to host family events and contributed feedback to program design decisions. The Board of Directors maintained oversight of program accountability and compliance, supporting leadership in addressing challenges such as facilities space and staff retention.

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-assessment 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

Strategic progress was made across all five long-term program goals. CPA advanced equitable compensation by aligning wages with Start Early’s framework and improving retention through competitive pay packages. Policies and procedures were clarified and streamlined through CPA’s active engagement in the EHSN Policy and Procedure Workgroup, with stronger accountability mechanisms implemented. Child safety was prioritized with the launch of a comprehensive Safety Initiative that trained all staff and parent safety leaders in active supervision and emergency protocols. Competency development advanced through individualized onboarding and professional development plans, with 85 percent of teaching staff demonstrating measurable growth through coaching and CLASS improvements. Finally, diverse and inclusive programming expanded, with targeted recruitment strategies leading to increased enrollment of immigrant and refugee families, while chronic absenteeism was reduced through proactive family engagement and attendance monitoring.

Looking forward, CPA continues to adapt to changing community needs. Updated community assessment data highlights rising numbers of refugee families, increased homelessness, and affordability challenges in Chicago neighborhoods, all of which shape recruitment strategies and service delivery priorities. Partnerships with organizations such as CARPLS Legal Aid, CPS, LEAs, and local libraries have strengthened CPA’s capacity to meet these evolving needs, while volunteers continue to provide critical support in classrooms, family events, and outreach.

CPA concluded the 2024–2025 program year in strong standing, with no major deficiencies identified through audits or monitoring reviews. Minor findings were addressed promptly through self-assessment and continuous quality improvement processes. The program maintained compliance with DCFS licensing, Start Early grantee monitoring, and OHS federal requirements.

Overall, 2024–2025 was a year of significant progress for Children’s Place Association. The program advanced all strategic directions while maintaining a strong focus on child outcomes, staff development, and family engagement. At the same time, CPA addressed ongoing challenges in staff recruitment and retention, facilities capacity, and data management, demonstrating resilience and commitment to delivering high-quality services. With its dedicated staff, engaged parents, and strong community partnerships, CPA continues to create meaningful impact for children and families most in need across Chicago.