

Minnesota Head Start

Covid-19 Response 2021



Minnesota Head Start Response to COVID-19

Minnesota's 33 Head Start and Early Head Start (HS/EHS) programs have remained open serving families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Lead by families' needs and sound public health guidance, service models have varied from virtual home visits to face-to-face center-based services and child care partnerships. Here is a look at the variety of services offered at different stages of the pandemic.

MARCH TO MAY 2020: HS/EHS Adapted to Virtual Services and Door Deliveries

of Children and Families Served¹

Virtual Head Start
9,191

Virtual Early
Head Start
2,904

Early Head Start/
Child Care
Partnerships
(open throughout)
392

of Families Receiving Supportive Services

Educational Supplies
and Learning Packets
13,207

Meals or other
Food Deliveries
9,086

Cleaning and other
Household Supplies
685

Mental Health Referrals
and Connections
165

Head Start and the Federal CARES II Act

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES II) Act included \$10 million for Minnesota Head Start programs under the Federal Head Start Act to support preventative, preparedness, and responsive activities during the coronavirus pandemic.

This one-time funding was allocated to Head Start programs to address the additional health and safety requirements to support enrolled families during the COVID 19 pandemic. Minnesota Head Start programs were awarded CARES II funds to use toward:

- Summer programming for enrolled children
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Cleaning and disinfecting supplies
- Technology to support families in remote learning
- Extra staff to support smaller group size
- Additional transportation costs to support social distancing
- Mental health supports for staff and families

Most programs expect these one-time funds to launch the new school year but they will not cover the additional costs of operating in the pandemic as the year progresses.

Other frequently mentioned family supports included distributions of baby formula and diapers, phone cards, internet connections, technology supports, and assistance with unemployment and rental assistance.

¹ Data provided by 30 of the 33 Minnesota Head Start Programs in response to a COVID Survey conducted by the Minnesota Head Start Association in September, 2020.

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JUNE TO AUGUST, 2020: HS/EHS Offers Face-to-Face Supplemental Summer Services

of Children Receiving Summer Services

EHS Home Visiting
(Face-to-Face)

391

Summer
Center-Based EHS

251

Summer
Center-Based HS

1,589

Transportation
to/from EHS/HS

971

Throughout the summer, many programs continued to offer virtual HS/EHS home visits and connect with families to offer supports as needed.

2020/2021: School Year Launch

Most Minnesota HS/EHS will be open for face-to-face services by September 21, 2020.

EHS Home Visiting
(Face-to-Face)

1,163

EHS Center-Based

938

HS Center-Based

5,517

HS Hybrid—
Center and Distance

3,191

HS/EHS services will shift to meet families needs and public health guidance.

Pictures and Stories from the Field



In partnership with the MN Department of Health, Hennepin County, and the City of Minneapolis, **Parents in Community Action (PICA)** conducted 4 community wide, barrier free, Covid-19 testing events. This effort resulted in over 4,000 people getting tested including PICA staff, parents, children, and the broader community. These events highlighted the comprehensive work that Head Start does and the impact we have on the various communities that we serve.

Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington County staff distributed food boxes in the week after their Syndicate Street location was badly damaged by unrest in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd. Over 200 families showed up and Head Start services didn't miss a beat.

A parent shared this message with **Families First of Minnesota serving Southeastern MN** "Can I just honestly say you have been so wonderful thru this whole experience from the start of the boys actually being in class to present you have been a blessing and I feel you have over exceeded your expectations as a teacher! You helped me thru days I didn't think I'd get thru because of your simple texts or emails thru out some days. I feel like I can express my concerns or experiences whether be good or bad and without judgement even if it doesn't concern Tristan or Kiyan. And for that I'm so beyond grateful!!! I hope you have a wonderful day!"

Red Lake Tribal Head Start will remain virtual through 1/05/2021 to protect staff and children with underlying health conditions. This was a hard decision to make and required making changes to policies. Staff missed the children but were happy to see everyone at their drive-thru graduation. It was difficult for the staff at first getting the meals out to the children, as time went on, they had everything under control.

MAHUBE-OTWA Community Action Partnership in Northwestern MN kept child care open in some capacity at 13 family child care partner sites, 3 center child care partnership sites, and 4 EHS classrooms to serve up to 150 children since the start of the pandemic. They also offered summer camp to 64 K-eligible children in 4 different communities and increased their bussing capacity for 2 additional bus routes this fall.

For more information contact:

Minnesota Head Start Association, Inc.

www.mnheadstart.org