



# EARLY HEAD START & HEAD START ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024





# LETTER FROM THE HEAD START EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Starfish Family Services Community,

We welcome you to look back at our 23/24 school year successes and challenges with us. As we all continue to find our "new normal" out of the worldwide pandemic, we experienced so much learning and growing alongside our little ones. As you will see we experienced setbacks in some areas, progress in others, and continue to grow as a team.

Our commitments moving out of the pandemic years continue to be the health, safety, and emotional regulation of ourselves and our little ones. The Surgeon General's report on loneliness this year titled "Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation" opened our eyes to the urgency of getting back to programs that support not only the children in our care, but whole families that put their trust in us, as well as our team of professionals that show up every day to do their best. The Surgeon General's report highlighted not only the emotional toll that the pandemic took on us, but the physical effects that social isolation and stress can cause on our brains and bodies.

The solution to how we are all feeling after the pandemic, is not an easy one. But re-building social connections and finding time and space for community engagement, and just being with each other, is a commitment that we will work towards in the new year and I hope you will join us. We re-commit to having fun together, increasing family events, improving the health and safety of our children and classrooms, and improving the way we engage with our families. We will also continue to grow and fine tune our developmental and behavioral supports that are offered in our classrooms and outside of our classrooms.

We hope you join us again next year!

Jennifer Jonika  
Executive Director, Early Childhood Programs





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# STARFISH FAMILY SERVICES

Starfish Family Services provides integrated, high-quality programs and support services that build on the strengths and assets of families with a focus on early childhood education, empowering parents and caregivers and wellness and behavioral health for children, youth and adults.

## Our Mission

Strengthening families to create brighter futures for children.

## Our Vision

A society in which all children, families, and communities have opportunities to grow, learn, and thrive.

## Who We Are

Founded in 1963, Starfish Family Services is a nonprofit human service agency, recognized as a champion for children and families across metro Detroit who have limited access to essential resources such as education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. We provide high-quality programs and support services that focus on early childhood education and development, behavioral health wellness, and empowered parents. Through our holistic approach, Starfish partners with families so they have access to the right resources at the right time.







# BLUEPRINT FOR BRIGHTER FUTURES

The Starfish Blueprint for Brighter Futures is an integrated strategy that articulates and defines a holistic approach for children and families to thrive. It will steer our course so that we are aligned as One Starfish to ensure three primary outcomes: Healthy Families, Successful Students, and Empowered Families.

## Healthy Families

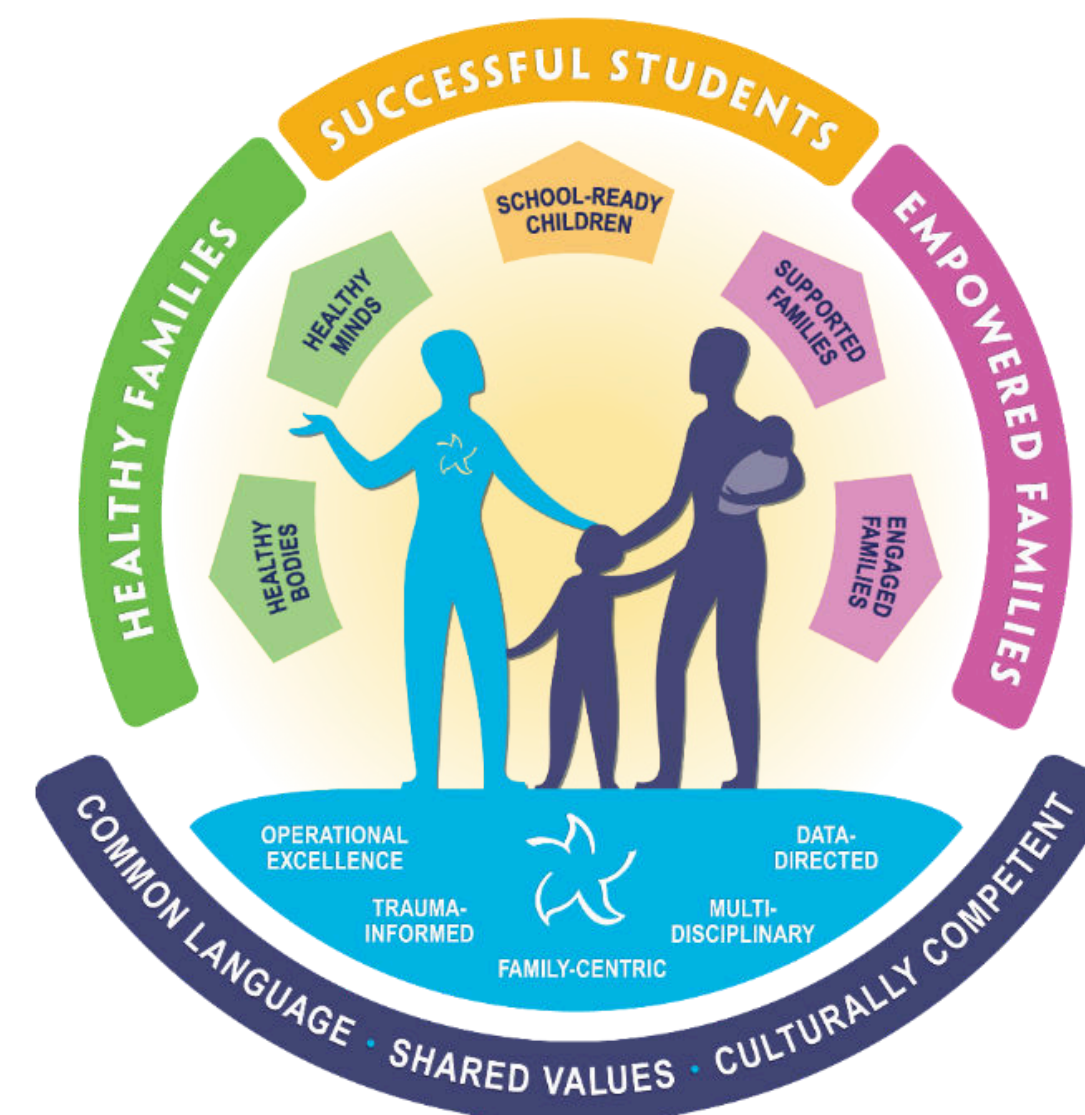
Families are supported so their physical and mental health needs are holistically addressed.

## Successful Students

Academic and social success are achieved through high quality early childhood education and addressing behavioral health needs.

## Empowered Families

Families actively partner with us to identify and achieve goals; parents and children always have a voice at Starfish.







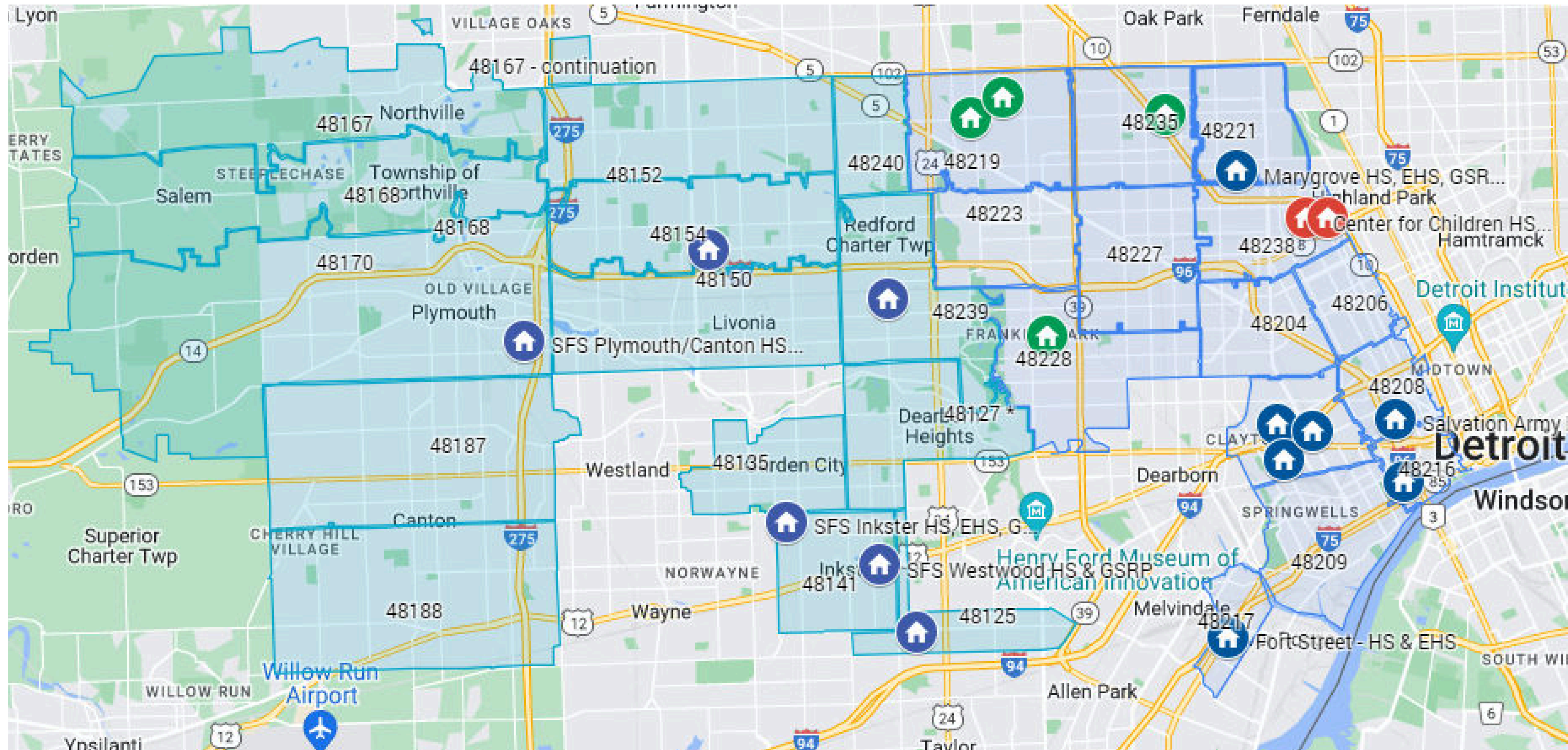
# COMMUNITY





# PROGRAM LOCATIONS

Starfish Family Services, along with Subrecipients Development Centers and Focus HOPE, provided Head Start & Early Head Start services at nineteen locations in the city of Detroit and Western Wayne County through the 05CH011335 Birth to Five grant.



 Starfish Family Services  Focus: HOPE  Development Centers



# ELIGIBILITY TYPE & INCOME LEVEL

In keeping with federal eligibility regulations and Head Start Performance Standards, the majority of the families served by Starfish Family Services and its subrecipient agencies are below the federal poverty line, which ensures that families have access to high-quality educational and social services regardless of their income.

Eligibility Type 2023-2024	
Eligibility Type	Birth to Five 05CH011335
Below Income	674
Public Assistance	740
Allowable Over Income	57
Over Income	150
Homeless	78
Foster Children	34
Total	1638



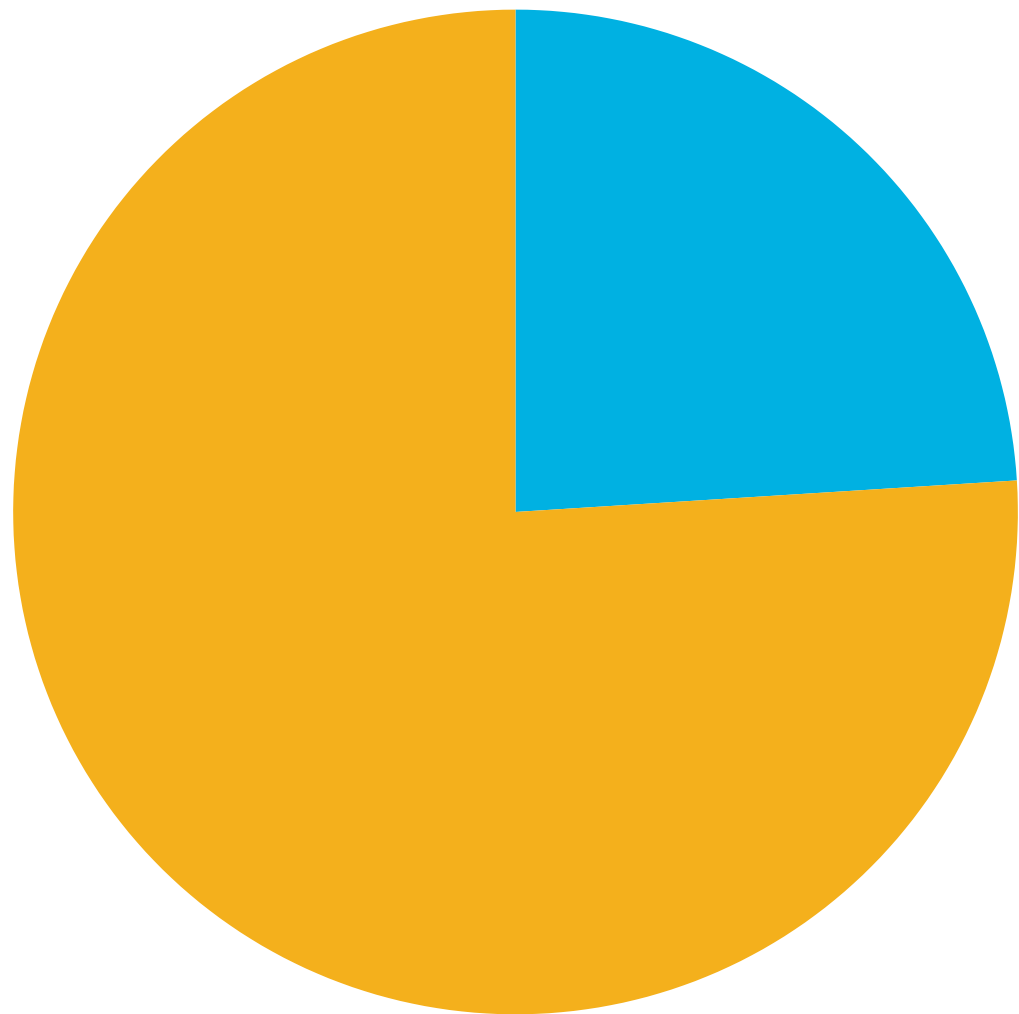


# COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

## Ethnicity & Race

The communities we serve are diverse in ethnicity, race, and language. In total, 24% of our children are of a Hispanic or Latino/a/x ethnic background. We find similar variation for the race of our children and families; overall 56% of the children we serve are Black or African American, 24 % are White, and 9% are Bi-Racial/Multi-Racial.

● Hispanic/Latino    ● Non-Hispanic/Non- Latino



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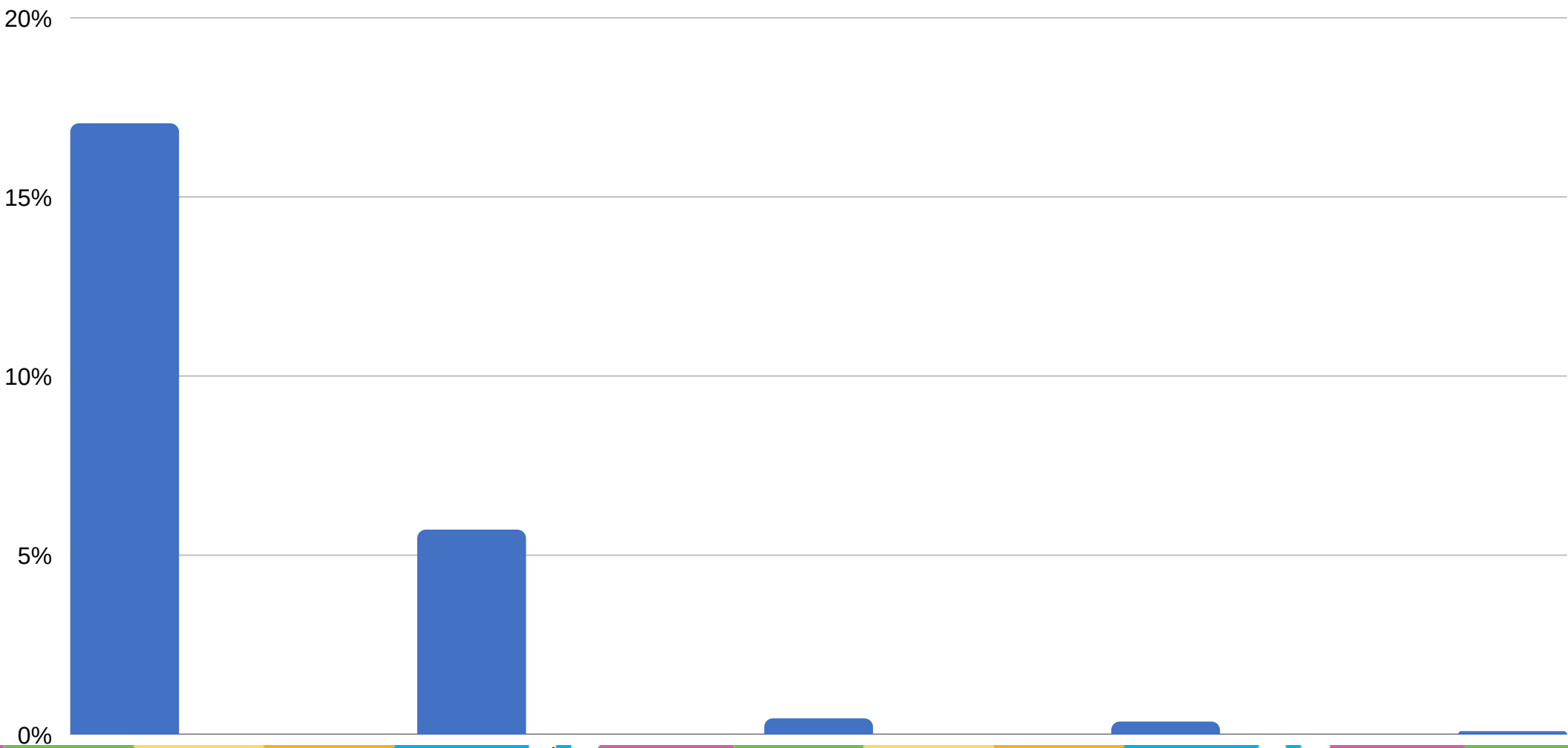


# COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

## Language

Most of our children and families primarily speak English at home (76%), however, the remaining include those who speak Spanish as well as Middle Eastern, European/Slavic or African languages. Compared to the 2022–2023 school year, 2023–2024 enrollment increased among Spanish-speaking families concentrated in the Detroit service area and among Middle Eastern and South Asian language speakers —primarily Arabic—concentrated in the Western Wayne Service Area.

In total, 24% of our families speak languages other than English, with Detroit serving **Spanish-speaking** families, and Western Wayne serving **Arabic-speaking** families.



During the 2023-2024 school year, 323 children (29%) served were **Dual Language Learners.**





# PROGRAM ENROLLMENT

## EARLY HEAD START

Month/Year	Actual Enrollment	Percent Enrolled
September 2023	359	70% 514
October 2023	383	75%
November 2023	383	75%
December 2023	387	75%
January 2024	403	78%
February 2024	410	80%
March 2024	413	80%
April 2024	425	83%
May 2024	423	82%
June 2024	414	81%
July 2024	404	79%
August 2024	406	90%

## HEAD START

Month/Year	Actual Enrollment	Percent Enrolled
September 2023	634	71% 895
October 2023	677	76%
November 2023	676	76%
December 2023	669	75%
January 2024	720	80%
February 2024	750	84%
March 2024	758	85%
April 2024	790	88%
May 2024	786	88%
June 2024	758	85%
July 2024	53	106%
August 2024	33	66%



# EMPOWERED FAMILIES







# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- During the 23-24 program year, **90%** of our families received at least one family service during the year.
- The table shows the type of support provided across the program year.

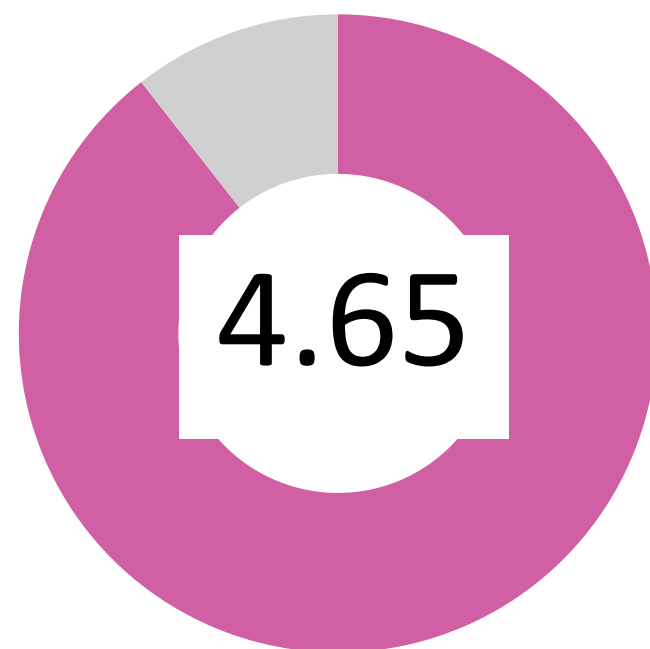
Family Services Received in 23/24 SY	Number of Families
Emergency/Crisis Intervention	514
Housing Assistance	42
Asset Building	34
Mental Health Services	101
Substance Misuse Prevention	18
Substance Misuse Treatment	10
English as a Second Language	30
Adult Education/Job Training	51
Research-based Parenting Curriculum	214
Family Involvement in Screening & Assessment	640
Supporting Transitions	369
Education on Preventive Medical & Oral Health	232
Education on Health & Developmental Consequences of Tobacco Use	35
Education on Nutrition	203
Education on Postpartum Care	33
Marriage/Relationship Education	24
Assistance to Families of Incarcerated Individuals	12
Total Number of Families	913



# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

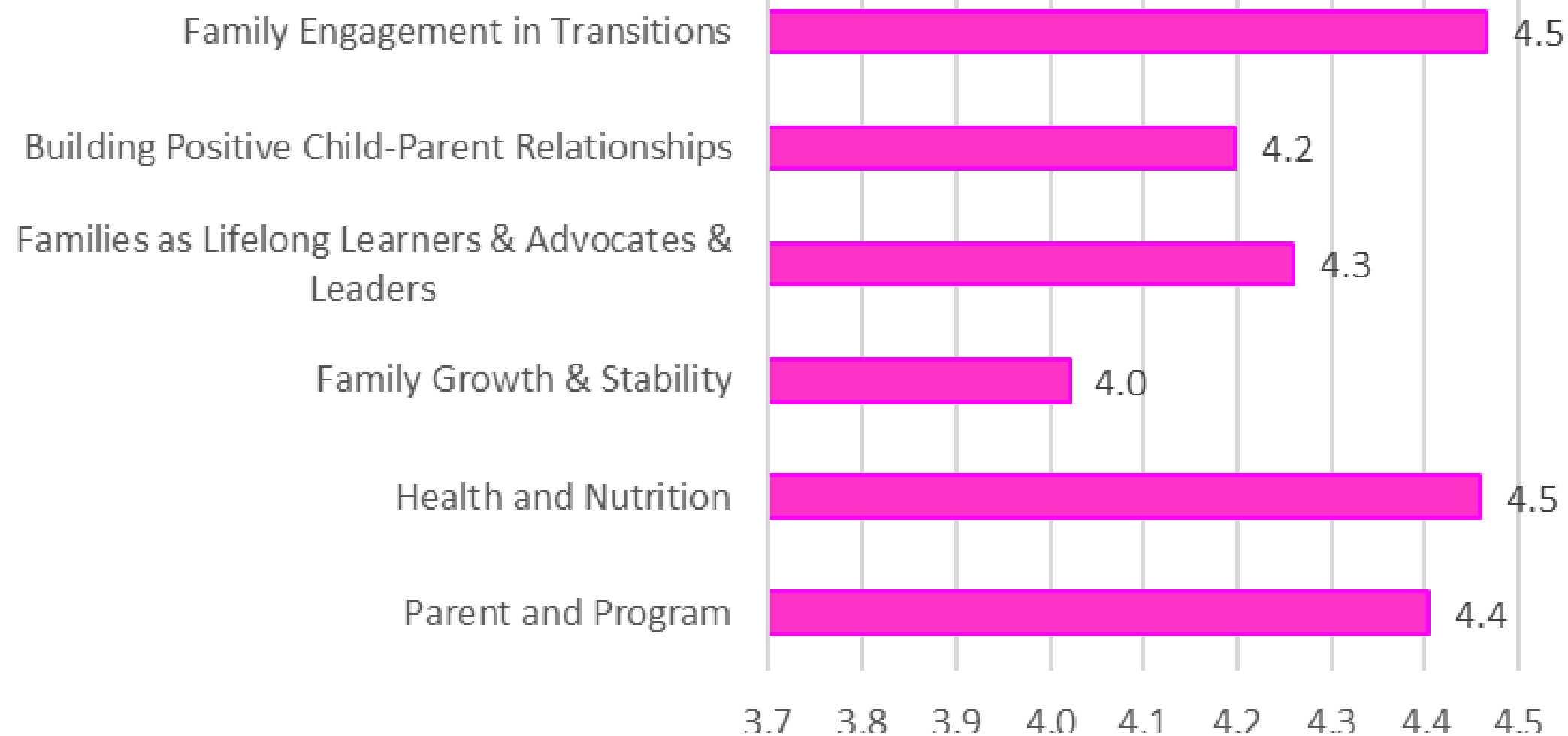
Starfish Family Services and its Subrecipient agencies foster an environment that supports family connections and active engagement. Family Service Workers and Family Service Guides developed supportive relationships with parents, provided families with critical resources in their communities, and assisted families and caregivers with establishing and achieving goals for themselves and their families.

Parent Gauge is a family engagement assessment tool provided through National Head Start Association (NHSA) designed specifically for Head Start and Early Head Start programs and in alignment with the Office of Head Start's Parent Family Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework. Family Service Workers, Family Service Guides and Home Visitors interview families to identify each family's strengths, needs and perception of our program. 1,655 interviews took place throughout the 2023-2024 program year.



On an agreement scale of 1 to 5, families highly agreed that programming met their family's needs.

## PFCE Aligned Parent Gauge Domains







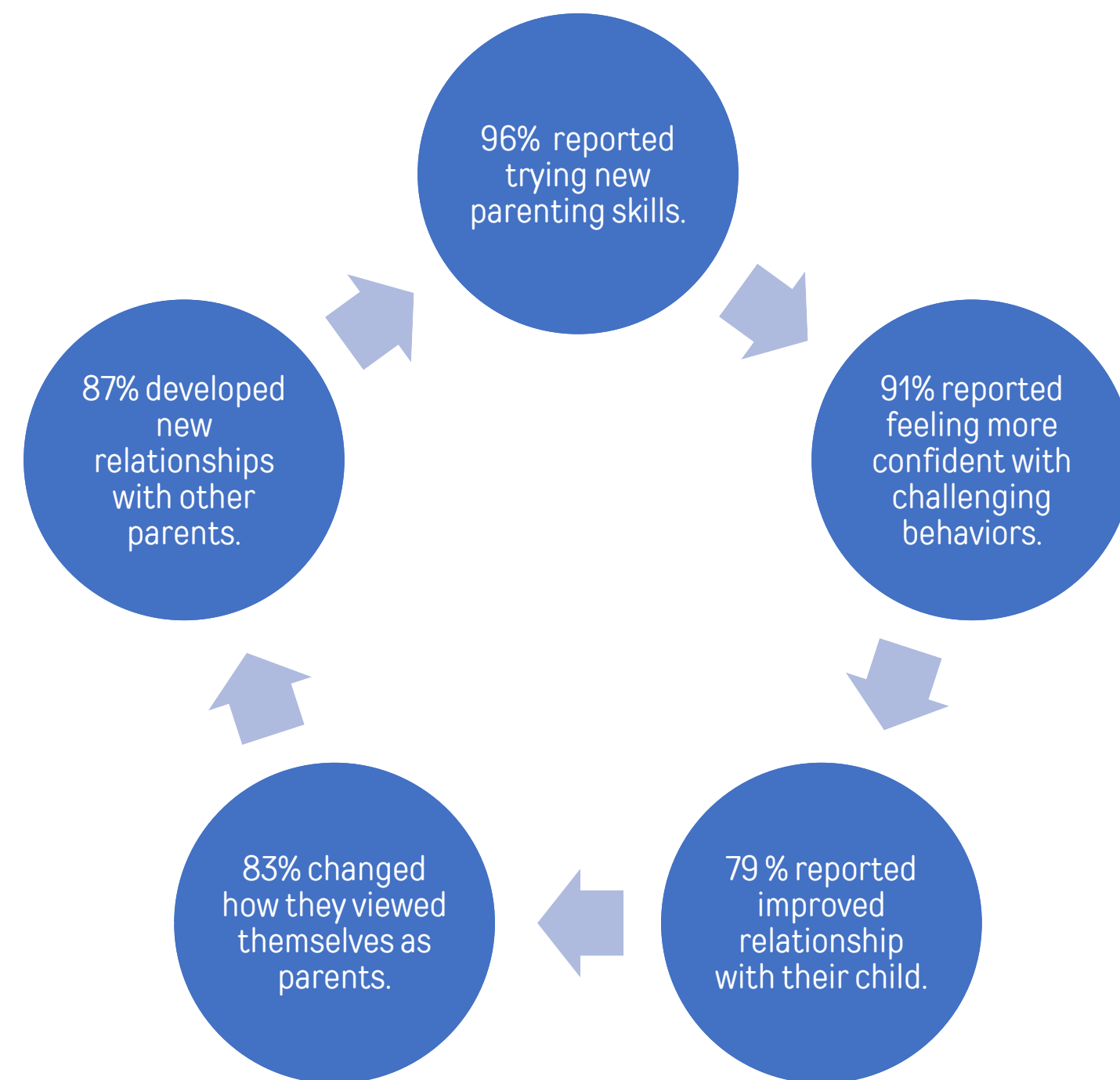
# PARENTCORPS PARENT TRAINING

*ParentCorps Parenting Program is a weekly facilitated group consisting of 12 sessions, where caregivers share ideas and experiences, reflect and learn about parenting strategies and child development in a supportive, family-centered environment.*

*During the 2023-2024 school year, 6 of our Detroit sites launched Parenting Program this school year, with 5 of those sites completing the full program.*

*75 caregivers attended at least 1 session of the program.*

*The program was offered in the morning based on caregiver preference.*







# HEALTHY FAMILIES







# HEALTH INDICATORS

Our Early Childhood Education program recognizes the crucial link between health outcomes and a child’s overall development. Starfish and partner agencies consistently coordinate health, nutrition, and oral health services to meet the needs of pregnant participants and children birth to five. Our dedicated Family Advocates (FA) gather and manage essential health information to tailor resources and support to meet the unique needs of each family.

Health Services Specialists and Family Advocates partner with parents or caregivers to ensure families understand the importance of achieving an up-to-date health status for their children including continuous care and timely follow-up.

By end of 2023-2024 school year, the majority of the children and families enrolled in our Head Start Program had secured Health Insurance and established Medical and Dental Homes. The percentage of children with current immunizations ranged from **93.4% (EHS) to 95.9% (HS)**. More than **90%** of children with chronic health conditions received appropriate treatment.

At the end of the 2023-2024 program year, the following number of participants were up-to-date on these health indicators:

Head Start	Up-to-Date
Medical Home	635 (99%)
Dental Home	564 (88%)
Health Insurance	643 (99%)
Immunizations	622 (99%)
Schedule of Preventive & Primary Care	408 (64%)
Dental Exams	375 (59%)
Treatment for Chronic Conditions	81 (80%)

Early Head Start	Up-to-Date
Medical Home	321 (100%)
Dental Home	251 (78%)
Health Insurance	317 (98%)
Immunizations	291 (91%)
Schedule of Preventive & Primary Care	67 (21%)
Treatment for Chronic Conditions	33 (87%)





# SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS







# SCHOOL READINESS GOALS

Starfish Family Services established five school readiness goals – one for each domain of early learning as identified by the Office of Head Start. The goals align with the Creative Curriculum, the Michigan Standards of Early Learning, and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.

## Approaches to Learning Goal:

- Children will develop critical thinking and executive function skills.

## Social Emotional Development Goal:

- Children will learn to identify and regulate their feelings and will develop a growing appreciation for others.

## Language & Literacy Goal:

- Children will signal their need, learn from the words and symbols that surround them and connect with others to exchange ideas, feelings, and friendship.

## Cognition Goal:

- Children will engage in the scientific process to understand the what, how, and why of the natural physical world.

## Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development Goal:

- Children will practice their emerging motor skills, learn what their bodies are capable of, and master personal care skills.







# CHILD OUTCOMES

Child outcomes data was collected using Creative Curriculum assessment platform SmartTeach. The smartTeach assessment tool follows widely held expectations for children from birth through third grade and allows for a whole-child approach assessment.

SmartTeach is research-based, validated and shown to be effective by extensive independent research. Color-coded progressions guide teachers towards selecting and adapting activities that support each child development and learning. It includes 36 objectives (38 for English Language Acquisition) covering 9 developmental learning domains. SmartTeach aligns with early learning guidelines in each state, Head start Performance Standards and ELOF.

Teaching staff collected data through anecdotal observations of children and assessed based on widely held expectations which are color coded by age development. Red birth to 1 year, Orange 1 to 2 years, Yellow 2 to 3 years and Green/Blue for preschool 3-4 years. The purple color band is for kindergarten level. Child outcomes data was reviewed for all groups, including children with special needs and Dual Language Learners. Outcomes for School Readiness Goals were based on children who were enrolled 100% of the time for the data collection period Checkpoint 2-(November-March 2023-2024) and Checkpoint 3 (March-May 2024).



## Kindergarten Readiness:

Creative Curriculum views children as Kindergarten ready when the blue and purple colored band meets without overlap of each progression.

Children in each age group achieved the highest in the area identified **GREEN** and lowest in **Pink**.

### Infants: Birth-1 yr



#### highest scoring item(s)

- Social & Emotional
  - *Establishes and Sustains Positive Relationships-With Adults*
- Language & Communication domain.
  - *Listens to and Understands Increasingly Complex Language-Comprehends Language*

#### lowest scoring item(s)

- Perceptual, Motor, & Physical Development.
  - *Demonstrates Fine Motor Strength and Coordination-Uses Writing & Drawing Tools*

### Toddlers: 1-2 yrs



#### Highest scoring item(s)

- Perceptual, Motor, & Physical Development
  - *Demonstrates Traveling Skills*
- Social & Emotional
  - *Regulates Own Emotions and Behaviors-Takes Care of Own Needs Appropriately*

#### lowest scoring item(s)

- Language & Communication.
  - *Uses Language to Express Thoughts and Needs-Uses Conventional Grammar*

### Two's: 2-3 yrs



#### Highest scoring item(s)

- Perceptual, Motor, & Physical Development
  - *Demonstrates Traveling Skills*
- Social & Emotional
  - *Regulates Own Emotions and Behaviors-Takes Care of Own Needs Appropriately*

#### lowest scoring item(s)

- Social & Emotional
  - *Establishes and Sustains Positive Relationships-Interacts with Peers*

Children in each age group achieved the highest in the area identified **GREEN** and lowest in **Pink**.

Preschool—3:



**Highest scoring item(s)**

- **Language & Communication**
  - *Demonstrates Writing Skills-Writes Name*
- **Perceptual, Motor & Physical Development.**
  - *Demonstrates Fine Motor Strength and Coordination-Uses Fingers & Hands*

**Lowest scoring item(s)**

- **Language & Communication**
  - *Demonstrates Phonological Awareness, Phonics Skills & Word Recognition-Notices & Discriminates Alliteration*
- **Cognition.**
  - *Uses Scientific Inquiry Skills-Emerging*

Preschool—4: :



**Highest scoring item(s)**

- **Language & Communication**
  - *Demonstrates Writing Skills-Writes Name*
- **Perceptual, Motor, & Physical Development.**
  - *Demonstrates Gross-Motor Manipulation Skills*

**Lowest scoring item(s)**

- **Language & Communication**
  - *Demonstrates Phonological Awareness, Phonics Skills, and Word Recognition-Notices & Discriminates Alliteration*
- **Cognition.**
  - *Uses Scientific Inquiry Skills-Emerging*





# RECENT REVIEW BY THE ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (ACF)







# SPECIAL MONITORING REVIEWS BY ACF

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- In September of 2023, the Administration for Children and Families conducted a monitoring review of Starfish Family Services Early Education Programs in response to a child health and safety incident at one of our locations. Starfish received a deficiency for this incident, which was the second deficiency in a 5-year grant period across our platform of providers, resulting in what will be re-competition status for the next 5-year grant period.
- Starfish Family Services appealed this finding based on a deficiency being a "systemic issue" and rejects that there is a systemic issue that has caused the child health and safety incident.
  - Starfish Family Services Policies and Work Rules support health and safety of the children we serve.
  - Starfish Family Services Policies also ensure the Health, Well Being, and Safety of our employees.
  - Starfish Family Services employees receive a minimum of 15 training hours per program year on child health and safety.
  - Starfish Family Services immediately and appropriately responded to the incident in accordance with our policies.
- We take the safety of the children in our care very seriously and appreciate the trust that our families place in us. In response to this incident, Starfish conducted a root cause analysis with assistance from our program, human resources, and parent leadership. As a result, we retrained all early childhood education employees in person at our annual conference on child transitions in the classroom and the Physiology and Development of Young Children, which was provided by a local pediatrician. Employees were also given pre and post tests to track understanding and knowledge gained. We will continue to monitor and train on ongoing positive childcare techniques, redirection, and classroom safety.



# Special Monitoring Reviews by ACF

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In November of 2023 Starfish was placed into the **full enrollment initiative** to ensure that we meet or exceed full enrollment by the next school year (24/25). We Held a root cause analysis meeting and developed a plan of action through a continuous quality improvement process that will remain ongoing. This was done with the support of our Board of Directors and our Parent Policy Council that included the following actions:

1. Easier access to services via web, phone system, and process re-design
2. Improved communication between Starfish team and families
3. Focus on employee recruitment and job fairs
4. Improvements in teacher retention efforts
5. Re-design of marketing materials and plan
6. Plan for the internal professional development of employees and possible teaching internships.

We hope to see improvements by the next school year that will reduce barriers and access to care and we hope to see not only every seat filled with children, but every teaching position filled in the new year. The pandemic has created a nationwide teacher shortage, and we will continue to work with community and state partners to make an impact on the shortage.





# CLASS Results 2023-2024

Starfish Family Services completes a baseline and end of year observation cycle of CLASS outside of formal Review years. Observations were conducted in preschool center-based classrooms using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®). The CLASS® tool looks at three domains and ten dimensions of teacher-child interactions and measures those observed interactions on a seven-point scale. Starfish received the following scores for the 2023-2024 Program Year.

Domain	2022-2023	2023-2024	Quality Threshold	Competitive Threshold
Emotional Support	6.10	6.14	6	5
Classroom Organization	5.74	5.51	6	5
Instructional Support	2.76	3.18	3	2.3

Dimensions (2023-2024)					
Positive Climate	6.24	Behavior Management	5.7	Concept Development	3.19
Negative Climate	1.04	Productivity	5.63	Quality of Feedback	3.28
Teacher Sensitivity	5.78	Instructional Learning Format	5.19	Language Modeling	3.07
Regard for Student Perspective	5.57				

This year's CLASS® scores placed the program above both the competitive thresholds set by the Office of Head Start for all three domains as well as the quality thresholds.





# BUDGETS & FINANCIALS







# GRANT AWARDS

Detroit Birth to Five Carryover 2024		FY 2023-2024
US Department of Health & Human Services		\$7,743
In Kind		\$0
Total Detroit Birth to Five Funding		\$7,743
Consolidated Birth to Five 2024		FY 2023-2024
US Department of Health & Human Services		\$28,215,521
In Kind		\$1,518,339
Total Consolidated Birth to Five Funding		\$29,733,860



# REVENUE

Starfish ended the fiscal year 2024 with no decrease in total revenue and support over the previous year. Our focus continues to be our programs with 87.4% of expenditures supporting program costs.

Revenue and Other Support	Amount
Federal Funders	\$28,863,053
State Funders	\$12,935,080
Contributions & Grants	\$34,460,426
Third-Party Fee for Service	\$557,223
Investment Income	\$822,212
Other Income	\$0
Total Revenue and Other Support	\$48,637,994





# ASSETS & AGENCY EXPENSES

Assets	Amount
Current Assets	\$10,473,920
Long-Term Assets	\$8,852,192
Property and Equipment	\$4,371,174
Total Assets	\$23,697,286
Liabilities and Net Assets	Amount
Current Liabilities	\$4,837,578
Long-Term Liabilities	\$6,903,836
Net Assets	Amount
Without Donor Restrictions	\$7,860,781
With Donor Restrictions	\$844,503
Total Net Assets	\$8,705,284
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>\$20,446,698</b>

Agency Expenses	Amount
Programs: Families with Young Children	\$31,889,713
Programs: Parents and Families	\$38,942
Counseling Services	\$13,045,479
Management and General	\$5,501,150
Development and Special Events	\$964,066
Total Expenses	\$51,439,350



**AUDITOR'S REPORT IS LOCATED  
SEPARATELY ON THE STARFISH WEBSITE**  
*We will begin to publish our annual report  
separately due to the time delay for the  
Auditor's reports.*