MISSION STATEMENT

The Community Action Agency’s Children’s Program’s is committed to providing a foundation to support each child’s journey as a lifetime learner. The uniqueness of each child is honored by consciously and intentionally implementing best-practice curriculums, systems, strategies, and techniques to support all phases of the child’s development. The program’s highest priority is to partner with families and local agencies to achieve mutual goals by building relationship based on teamwork, positive communication and respect.
SITES
The Community Action Agency’s Children’s Programs provides a free program for children and families at 20 sites in Jackson and Hillsdale Counties. The main site in Jackson, Lincoln School, has six double-session Head Start classrooms, one double session Great Start Readiness Program classroom, one school day Great Start Readiness Program & Head Start classroom, and one full day Early Head Start classroom.

Our sites are located within 12 school districts between the counties, as well as, four community partners.

ENROLLMENT
The Community Action Agency’s Children’s Programs, is both Federally funded and State funded to serve 169 pregnant women and children ages 0-3 in Home Based Services, 16 children ages 0-3 in a Center Based Program, and 806 children ages 3-5 in a Center Based Program.

As some enrollees leave the program during the school year and are replaced by others, during the 2012-2013 school year we served a total of 23 pregnant women, 278 Early Head Start children, and 861 Head Start and Great Start Readiness Program children. The average monthly enrollment was 100%.

While Head Start programs are permitted to include 10% of the families indicated as over-income, less than 7% of the families served by Community Action Agency’s Children’s Programs this year were over-income. 4% of total enrolled families experienced homelessness during the enrollment year and 3% of were able to acquire housing with the help of the program.

More than 89% of the children served during the 2012-2013 year were Non-Hispanic or Non-Latino origin in background. More than 97% of the children in the program came from families who spoke English at home.

In addition, over 14% of the children in the program had special needs and received special services.
HEALTH

Community Action Agency’s Children’s Programs places a strong emphasis on the overall health and well-being of the children served. Families are assisted in locating free medical and dental care for their children. The program ensures that families receive assistance in enrolling for medical insurance. In addition, the program partners with physicians, dentists, and local universities and colleges who provide free or low-cost services for our children. Because of these efforts 97% of all children and pregnant women served during the 2012-2013 school year received medical and dental exams.

In order to promote good health in the classroom, all meals and snacks are planned by a registered dietician and meet the nutrition standards established by CACFP. The program recently switched from white bread to whole wheat bread, from whole milk to 1% milk, and reduced the sugar and fat in meals served to children.

During breakfast, lunch, and snack times, children learn about various foods and beverages that are healthy. Activities teach children the value of healthy eating and exercise.
**PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Parents are children’s first and most important teachers. To assist parents in taking an active role in their children’s education, both now and in the future, the program emphasizes parent involvement. We teach parents about the stages of child development and what they can do to nurture development at each stage. Head Start and Early Head Start parents are encouraged to work with their children at home and to volunteer in the program.

The following are a sample of the parent involvement activities held during the 2012-2013 school year:

- *Meet & Greet*
- *Family Focus*
- *Center Committees*
- *Policy Council*
- *Health Advisory Council*
- *Parent Workshops*
- *Parent Volunteers*
- *Parent/Teacher Conferences*
- *Home Visits*
- *Playgroup (Early Head Start)*
- *SCHLinks*

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**PREPARING CHILDREN FOR KINDERGARTEN**

Preschoolers are learning all the time. They learn best through being active and having hands-on experiences. Community Action Agency’s Children’s Programs uses The First Three Years as its curriculum for pregnant women and for the Home Based Program. The Creative Curriculum is used in Early Head Start, Head Start, and Great Start Readiness Program to prepare children for kindergarten in the four important areas: Social/Emotional Development, Physical Development, Cognitive Development and Language Development.

**Social/Emotional Development**

Children in the program gain self-confidence and become more independent. The develop self-control, can sit and listen to a story for short periods of time, learn to follow rules and routines, become able to follow oral directions, make friends, cooperate with other children and discover what it means to be a part of a group. The children also learn to care for their personal needs. By the end of the school year, they can independently use the bathroom, put their coats on and take them off, serve themselves and eat with silverware unassisted, and put their toys away. According to kindergarten teachers, all of the above are skills necessary to succeed in school.

**Physical**

Program children learn to control their bodies. Their large muscles develop as they participate in such activities as balancing, running, jumping, throwing and catching. The small muscles in their hands develop as they button coats, string beads, cut and write.

**Cognitive**

Children in the program develop their thinking skills. Through such activities as sorting, classifying, comparing, counting and making patterns, they develop the ability to solve problems and think logically. Their imaginations and creativity are stimulated through working with crayons, paint, clay, and other media.

**Language**

Language development is a priority in the program. Children learn to use words to communicate with others, rather than pointing or using their hands. We encourage children to listen to and participate in conversations, expanding in their vocabularies.
OUTCOMES
To ensure that we are preparing children for kindergarten, we assess them three times per program year using Teaching Strategies Gold online software. The assessment, which establishes expected ranges for each area assessed, focuses on social and emotional development, physical development, language development, cognitive development, literacy and math.

---------------------------------- EARLY HEAD START ----------------------------------

Social-Emotional Development – Children were assessed in the following areas: forming healthy and secure relationships; recognizing, expressing, and managing; adjusting to transitions; self-confidence. Overall, the findings support the improvement and gains children made throughout the year, only 2-6% of children were found not meeting the expectations.

Physical Well-Being and Motor Development – Children were assessed in the following areas: gross muscle and fine motor. Data is consistent with previous year gains; only 3-4% of children were found not meeting the expectations.

Approaches to Learning – Children were assessed in the following areas: initiative and curiosity; persistence in task and attentiveness; cooperation; creative arts. Overall, the findings support the improvement and gains children made throughout the year, ranging between 1-5% of children who were found not meeting the expectations by the end of the year.

---------------------------------- HEAD START & GREAT START READINESS PROGRAM ----------------------------------

Social-Emotional Development – Children were assessed in the following areas: forming healthy and secure relationships; recognizing, expressing, and managing; adjusting to transitions; self-confidence. One concern noted is the indicator of “forms healthy and secure relationships”. Data supports an increase in both the Fall and Spring collection compared to the previous school year.

Physical Well-Being and Motor Development – Children were assessed in the following areas: gross muscle and fine motor. Concerns from data in the growth and health indicator, show increase of children over 85 percentile or under 5 percentile, so growth and development is not age appropriate or in line with peers. Further, 30 children are less than the 5th percentile, but even more concerning, 160 children are at or above 95th percentile for the child’s age or sex. However, children in these categories are being monitored and some are working intensely with the dietician.

Language & Literacy Development – Children were assessed in the following areas: early literacy skills, language, listening, and written. One concern noted is the indicator of “listening”. Data supports an increase in both the Fall and Spring collection compared to the previous school year.

Cognitive & General Knowledge – Children were assessed in the following areas: analyzing problems and developing solutions; mathematical skills; living things and the natural environment; family and community roles and respecting differences among people. Overall, the findings support the improvement and gains children made throughout the year.

Approaches to Learning – Children were assessed in the following areas: initiative and curiosity; persistence in task
and attentiveness; cooperation; creative arts. Overall, the findings support the improvement and gains children made throughout the year, ranging between 2-8% of children were found not meeting the expectations by the end of the year.
RESULTS OF THE MOST RECENT REVIEW BY THE FINANCIAL AUDIT

In January 2013, our auditors, Rehmann Robson, found “…the financial statements referred to present fairly, in all materials respects, the financial position of Community Action Agency as of September 30, 2012, and the change in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United Stated of America.”

SELF ASSESSMENT RESULTS

The annual self-assessment for Community Action Agency’s Children’s Programs was held from January 16 through February 19, 2013. The guideline for the self-assessment process was the Office of Head Start 2013 Monitoring Tool. Teams consisting of staff, Board Members, Policy Council Members, parents and community members reviewed documents, files, systems, procedures and interviewed parents as well as staff. Classroom and bus ride observations were also conducted as part of the self-assessment process. Teams were led by a management or administrative staff member who was assigned the responsibility for reporting any findings and writing quality improvement plans.

The program was found to be compliant in all areas; our strengths far outweigh our areas needing improvement. Our program is supported with a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate.

FUNDING

The Community Action Agency’s Children’s Programs is funded by both State and Federal funds. Below are the sources and amounts of our funding for the 2012-2013 fiscal year.

Federal Funds
Dept. of Health & Human Services
  Head Start $5,592,448  61%
  Early Head Start $2,059,690  23%
USDA $368,324  4%
TOTAL $8,020,462  88%

Non-Federal Funds
Mi. Dept. Of Ed.
  GSRP $1,116,808  12%
TOTAL
TOTAL FEDERAL & NON FEDERAL FUNDS $9,137,270  100%

Non-Federal Share
  Head Start $1,398,112
  Early Head Start $514,923
TOTAL $1,913,035

EXPENDITURES

For the Fiscal Year 2012-2013, 87% of the Community Action Agency’s Children Programs total expenditures were for program, training, and family support. The remaining 13% was for administration.

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