

FAMILY RESOURCE AGENCY OF NORTH GEORGIA
Grant #04CH0529
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT UPDATE 2018-19

Section 1: Executive Summary – Overview

Based upon our surveys, statistical data and collaborations with our community partners, we have determined the following issues to be of the greatest need or have found them to be an on-going concern and have developed plans to address each point:

1. Data shows that there is a continuous need for affordable, quality infant care. This was also supported by the high rate of teen pregnancies and high school dropouts in the counties we serve.
2. Our families have many needs that we will continue to address. Those needs are education and training on employment skills, financial obstacles, language barriers, Mental Health, and Medical/Dental. The program Family Service Specialists (FSS) work closely with the families through Parent Cafes to ensure appropriate training and education are provided to help families achieve their goals. If the families need additional information, our Family Service Specialists make appropriate referrals and/or partner with other agencies to provide skill development and/or classes. Some of the trainings that we provide, but are not limited to are: Advocacy/Transition
 - Personal Growth
 - Mental Health
 - Medical/Dental
 - Parenting
3. We have also looked at how we are supporting HS/EHS National Goals and Objectives for the following areas:

School Readiness:

The Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, Parent Family Community Engagement Framework, Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS), and requirements and expectations of local schools were used to guide our program in curriculum implementation, ongoing assessment of children's progress, and preparation for school success. We have adopted the following as our definition for school readiness: School Readiness means that each child will enter school ready to learn based on early learning experiences received in Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K that best promotes each child's success in all areas of development as identified in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.

Parent Family Community Engagement:

Family goals are categorized into seven family outcomes: (1) Family Well Being; (2) Positive Parent Child Relationships; (3) Families as Lifelong Educators; (4) Families as Learners; (5) Family Engagement in Transitions; (6) Family Connections to Peers and Community; and (7) Families as Advocates and Leaders. Successful family outcomes support each child's school readiness and Family Service Specialists engage parents in ways that assist them in achieving their goals and outcomes. The program reviews the achievement of goals and outcomes 3 times per year (Fall, Winter, Spring) and focuses attention on those that need additional support.

Teaching Staff Education Mandates:

Supporting teaching staff in completing their degrees by the dates of the mandate will ensure that the program meets all education mandates.

Section 2: Service Area

Family Resource Agency of North Georgia is funded to provide Early Head Start, Head Start, and blended Pre-K/Head Start services to 941 children and families in the six northwest counties of Georgia. Currently, the program operates 82 classrooms in 26 centers located in 6 counties. The current 941 total funded enrollment slots are divided between three separate programs: Head Start (HS) with 453 slots, Blended Pre-K/HS with 80 slots, Early Head Start (EHS) with 312 slots, and CCP with 96 slots. Additionally, the slots are divided into the 6 counties by program as follows:

County	HS	Blended Pre-K/HS	EHS	CCP		County	HS	Blended Pre-K/HS	EHS	CCP
Catoosa	101	20	40	16		Murray	34	0	24	16
Chattooga	34	0	56	0		Walker	85	40	72	16
Dade	34	0	24	16		Whitfield	165	20	96	32

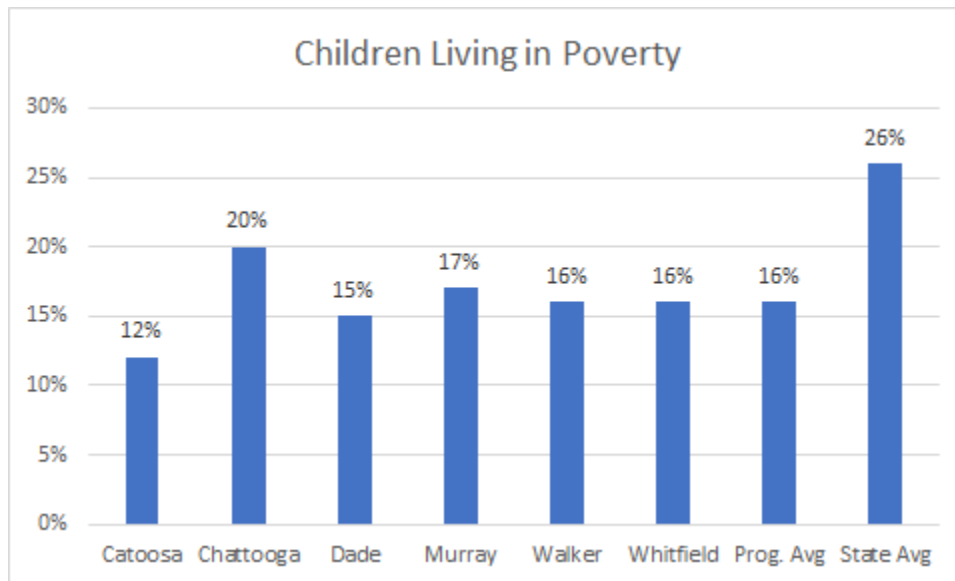
Section 3: Service Area General Demographic Data

Population Demographics -2017

Descriptor	Catoosa	Chattooga	Dade	Murray	Walker	Whitfield	Totals/Avg.
Persons	66,550	24,770	16,285	39,782	68,939	104,658	320,984
% Females	52% or 34,327	48.8% or 12,087	51.1% or 8,321	50.8% or 20,209	50.7% or 34,952	50.2% or 52,538	50.5% or 160,289
% Males	48% or 32,223	51.2% or 12,683	48.9% or 7,964	49.2% or 19,573	49.3% or 33,987	49.8% or 52,120	49.5% or 157,284
Households	24,719	9,253	6,089	14,176	25,564	35,384	114,212
Per Capita Income	\$25,643	\$17,716	\$23,184	\$19,084	\$22,564	\$22,262	\$21,742
% One Parent families	22.1%	31.3%	24.5%	24.5%	30.8%	27.3%	26.7%
% Poverty Index	12.0%	20.2%	15.2%	17.2%	15.6%	16.5%	11.60%
Approx. # children 0 to 5 yr. old	5.5% 3,660	5.8% 1,437	5% 814	6.3% 2,506	5.6% 3,860	6.7% 7,012	34.9% 19,289
Approx. # of children at ea. age band (4,3, etc.)	732	287	163	501	772	1,402	3,857
Approx. #of children in poverty at each age band	88 or 12%	58 or 20%	25 or 15%	86 or 17%	120 or 16%	231 or 16%	608 or 16%
Approx. # GA Pre-K slots (4 yr. olds)	22 classes: 484	12 classes: 264	6 classes: 132	18 classes: 396	22 classes: 484	44 classes: 968	124 classes: Capacity: 2,728 2,534
Actual enrollment:	471	234	141	322	466	900	
Approx. # of "at risk" served by Head Start	209 43.8%	118 49.8%	80 60.6%	218 66.9%	219 49.6%	528 56.3%	1,372 54.5%

Population Centers: The service counties are peppered with small towns and villages. Dalton, within Whitfield County has a 2017 population of 33,748, and the combined Rossville-Fort Oglethorpe areas of Catoosa and Walker counties have a 2017 estimated population of 13,815. The largest population centers in the remaining counties are: Trenton in Dade County with 2,233; Summerville in Chattooga County with 4,303; and Chatsworth in Murray County with a population of 4,300. The population statistics reported above are from the U.S. Census website 2018. We are aware that our area is also home to many undocumented children and families who may live in the more metropolitan areas. The counties boast a total population of 320,984 and the population appears to not be growing as rapidly as in the past.

Children Living in Poverty: The Georgia state average of children living in poverty based on information from the 2018 data from Georgia Kids Count is 26%. All of our counties are slightly below this average. Our program-wide average for the six counties we serve is 16%. We served 32 homeless children in 2018-2019.



Racial and Ethnic Composition:

Race	Racial Make-up of County-wide Population						Service Area Average	PIR Data 2017-2018		
	Catoosa	Chattooga	Dade	Murray	Walker	Whitfield		HS	EHS	CCP
Asian	1.4%	.6%	1%	.6%	.6%	1.6%	.97%	1%	0%	0%
Bi-racial	1.8%	1.9%	1.3%	1.3%	1.6%	1.7%	1.6%	8%	13%	5%
Black	2.9%	10.1%	1.3%	1.3%	4.3%	4.3%	4.03%	7%	8%	3%
Caucasian	93.3%	86.7%	95.7%	95.6%	93%	90.8%	92.52%	84%	79%	92%
Other- including Native American	.5%	.7%	.7%	1.3%	.5%	1.6%	.88%	0%	0%	0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

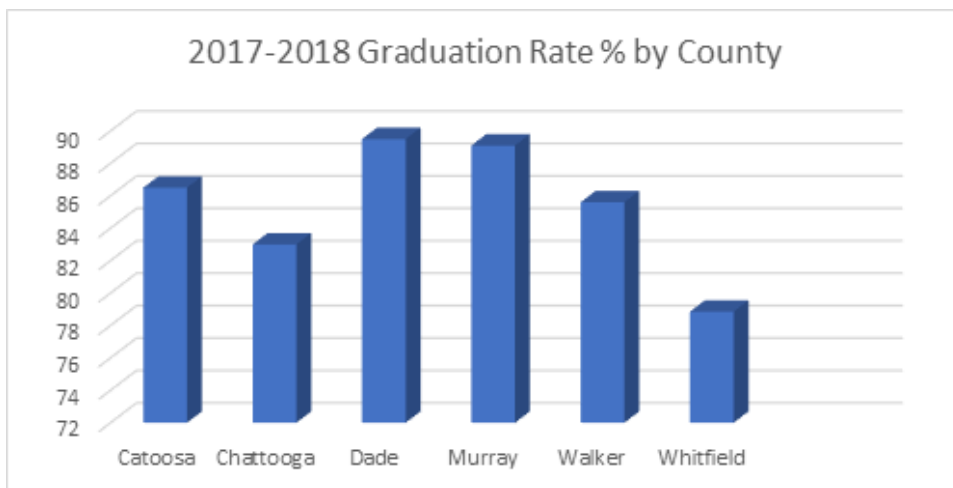
	Ethnicity						Service Area Average	PIR Data 2017-2018		
	Catoosa	Chattooga	Dade	Murray	Walker	Whitfield		HS	EHS	CCP
Hispanic/Latino	3%	4%	2%	15%	2%	42%	11%	18%	27%	12%
Non-Hispanic/Latino	97%	96%	98.0%	85%	98%	58%	89%	82%	73%	88%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Languages: English is the dominant language for most of the service region, with a high concentration of a Spanish-speaking population located in Whitfield County. The public schools in Whitfield indicate that as many as 42% of school age children are of Hispanic/Latino origin.

Education: Georgia’s 2018 public high school graduation rate increased for the sixth consecutive year, rising from 80.6 percent in 2017 to 81.6 percent in 2018. The rate has risen a total of 12 percent since 2012, when the graduation rate was 69.7%.

“Georgia’s graduation rate continues to rise because our public-school students have access to more opportunities than ever before,” State Superintendent Richard Woods says. “From Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education to dual enrollment to the fine arts, there is an unprecedented emphasis on supporting the whole child and making sure every single student understands the relevance of what they’re learning. I’m confident we’ll continue to see these gains as long as we’re still expanding opportunities that keep students invested in their education.”

A graph below shows the 2017-2018 graduation rates by county as follows: Catoosa 86.5%, Chattooga 83%, Dade 89.5, Murray 89 %, Walker 85.6%, and Whitfield 78.8%. All city-based high schools have been averaged into the overall county average. This average was obtained by combining total number of students enrolled divided into the total number of students graduating and not by averaging the percentages of the schools.



Data was obtained from the Georgia Department of Education, 2018 Graduation Rate Report by county and state.

Our own Early Head Start programs are working with the local schools to prioritize enrollment opportunities for pregnant students which enable them to have quality childcare and other services while they complete their education. This includes having centers located on high school campuses.

For educational services available, Dalton State College in Dalton (Whitfield County) provides educational opportunities for attaining an associate degree and bachelor's degree in limited fields as well as vocational/technical certificates. Georgia Northwestern Technical College, located in Rock Spring (Walker County), Ringgold (Catoosa County), and Dalton (Whitfield and Murray Counties) provides vocational and technical certificate programs. Covenant College on Lookout Mountain, GA provides educational opportunities for attaining associate and bachelor's degrees in various fields.

Unemployment: Current annual 2018 unemployment rates vary from 3.0% - 4.4% in the six-county area we serve, with an average unemployment rate of 3.53%. The current unemployment rate for Georgia is 4.1%. The following are unemployment rates by county: Catoosa (3.0%), Chattooga (3.3%), Dade (3.1%), Murray (4.4%), Walker (3.4%) and Whitfield (4.0%).

Teen Pregnancy: The combined teen pregnancy rate of 16% for our service area is higher than the state average of 14%, according to the Georgia Kid's Count Data Center 2017. According to the National Center for Health Statistics Georgia's National Teen Pregnancy Rating was 17th in 2017. Georgia is making a state-wide effort to address this concern through County Collaborative Councils and other local level planning groups wherein all stakeholders work together to design programs to help reduce teen pregnancies. We served 17 prenatal moms.

The chart below includes data from Georgia Kids Count Fact Sheet 2017. As shown below, the number of teen pregnancies is above the state average in all counties we serve.

Profile Criteria	STATE RATE	CATOOSA	CHATTOOGA	DADE	MURRAY	WALKER	WHITFIELD
Teen Pregnancies, ages 15-17 (rate per 1,000) 2017	14%	13.3%	16.9%	15.3%	22.8%	13.1%	16.3%
Teen mothers giving birth to another child before age 20 (ages 15-19) 2017	16.5%	11.6%	25%	15%	11.4%	20%	17.6%

*LNE (low number event) indicates that there were 4 or fewer events on which rates would be based.

Section 4: Head Start Eligible Families and Children Demographic Data

Head Start 2017-2018 PIR Data:

Percent of Children by Parents' Work Status	# Families 303	Average
2 Parent Families in which both parents work	93	31%
2 Parent Families in which only one (1) parent works	176	58%
2 Parent Families in which neither parent works (unemployed, retired, disabled)	34	11%
Percent of Children by Parent's Work Status	# Families 355	Average
1 Parent Families in which the parent works	215	61%
1 Parent Families in which the parent does not work	140	39%
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES ENROLLED IN HEAD START	658	100.00%

Early Head Start 2017-2018 PIR Data:

Percent of Children by Parents' Work Status	# Families 142	Average
2 Parent Families in which both parents work	36	25%
2 Parent Families in which only one (1) parent works	83	58%
2 Parent Families in which neither parent is working (unemployed, retired, disabled)	23	16%
Percent of Children by Parent's Work Status	# Families 208	Average
1 Parent Families in which the parent is employed	103	50%
1 Parent Families in which the parent is not working	105	50%
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES ENROLLED IN EARLY HEAD START	350	100%

CCP 2017-2018 PIR Data:

Percent of Children by Parents' Work Status	# Families	Average
	43	
2 Parent Families in which both parents work	20	47%
2 Parent Families in which only one (1) parent works	21	49%
2 Parent Families in which neither parent is working (unemployed, retired, disabled)	2	0.04%
Percent of Children by Parent's Work Status	# Families	Average
	54	
1 Parent Families in which the parent is employed	39	72%
1 Parent Families in which the parent is not working	15	28%
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES ENROLLED IN EARLY HEAD START	97	100%

Employment/Unemployment: The recovering economy had moderate impact on the percentage of adults working in this service region as indicated by the PIR 2017-2018 data and represented in the table above. The percentage of Head Start two-parent families in which both parents work is 31%; two-parent families in which one parent works is 58%. In Early Head Start two-parent families in which both parents work is 25%; two-parent families in which one parent works is 58%. CCP two parent families in which two parents work is 47%; two-parent families in which one parent works is 49%. This report also indicates that in HS 11% of the two-parent families have neither parent working and in EHS 16% of two-parent families have neither parent working. In these cases, the parents/guardians are unemployed, retired, or disabled. In CCP, there are 0.04% two-parent families which have neither parent working.

For single-parent families, the 2017-2018 PIR report indicates that 61% of the Head Start single-parents are employed and 50% of the EHS single-parents are employed. In CCP single-parent families, 72% report that the parent is employed. For the EHS population, many parents are single teens who may still be attending high school. Our data indicates 33% of the single parents in EHS are in job training or attending school. Since our last Community Assessment update in 2016-2017, Head Start two-parent family unemployment has increased from 10% to 11%; Head Start one-parent family unemployment has decreased by 4%; Early Head Start two-parent family unemployment has increased by 5%; Early Head Start one-parent family unemployment has decreased by 4%.

Family Living Situations: As seen on the previous charts, the majority of our Head Start children live in a one-parent family. In Early Head Start and CCP families, the majority of our children live in one-parent families.

Section 5: Early Childhood Education Resources versus Early Childhood Education Needs

ESTIMATE OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN	CATOOSA	CHATTOOGA	DADE	MURRAY	WALKER	WHITFIELD
# of 0 to 5-year olds	3,660	1,437	814	2,506	3,860	7,012
Times poverty rate	12%	20.2%	15.2%	17.2%	15.6%	16.5%
# in poverty	439	290	124	431	602	1157
Divided by # age groups	5	5	5	5	5	5
# eligible by age group	88	58	25	86	120	231
X # of age groups served	2	2	2	2	2	2
# 3 & 4 yr. old's eligible for HS	176	116	50	172	240	462
Times # of age groups served	3	3	3	3	3	3
# 0-3 yr. old's eligible for EHS	264	174	75	258	360	693

Using the most current figures for the approximate number of eligible children by age group, we served 47% of the three and four-year old's, and 31% of the eligible infants and toddlers in the service region. This data shows the extreme need for more infant/toddler slots.

Children with Disabilities:

The program has made a strong commitment to children with special needs. We have far exceeded the requirement to have at least 10% of our enrollment with a diagnosis at some point during the year, by having this number the first day and every day. During the 2017-2018 year, we had a yearly total of 700 enrolled in Head Start, and 94 (or 13%) with a diagnosis. In Early Head Start, we had a yearly total of 400, and 59 (or 14%) with a diagnosis. In our CCP classes, we had a yearly total of 113, and 18 (or 16%) with a diagnosis. The program-wide total of enrolled children with a diagnosis was 14%. Our recruitment efforts and inclusive classrooms are outstanding for welcoming and providing services for children.

The state of Georgia also develops a plan for services to undiagnosed children aged 3 years old and older potentially needing a diagnosis. This is labeled "Response to Intervention" and they determine if a child is disabled or just needing enrichment through those interventions, evaluations and services.

Section 6: Other Needs

Needs Expressed by the families and Head Start Staff:

Participating Families:

This past year we used Survey Monkey to gather information from families about our program. We have 941 children and received 796 responses. The families are given the opportunity to express opinions in a variety of areas that help to improve the services we provide. In the 2018-2019 school year, the majority of the surveys indicated the services we provide are excellent and, in many areas were satisfactory. The highest score for an area needing improvement was “What is the program’s reputation in the community?” Even though it was the highest, only 3.02% indicated this was an issue.

The main results were:

- Our goal is to provide a safe and learning filled classroom environment with staff who are concerned about each child. Tell us how well you think we did on accomplishing that goal – 99% scored this as excellent or satisfactory.
- Regarding the process for enrolling your child in this program, how would you rate your experience – 98% scored this as excellent or satisfactory
- How satisfied are you with your overall experience with this program – 99% scored this as excellent or satisfactory
- Additional comments: extended hours and center calendars aligned with public school calendars.

Program Staff: Our Family Service Specialists (FSS) work with our families throughout the year. As they develop Family Partnership Agreements and assist parents in meeting their personal and family goals, and make referrals for other needed services, they can gain a good perspective of the needs of our families and communities. In addition, the Center Managers (CMs) and Center Supervisors (CSs) often build strong relationships. Therefore, we requested information from the FSS, Center Managers, and Center Supervisors in a variety of areas.

The main results were:

- Transportation
- Early Head Start Services
- Full Day services

Section 7: Analysis

The information gathered from this assessment has been used for several purposes:

- To focus on and make decisions regarding services that Head Start and Early Head Start can and should deliver.
- Determine whether and where services for Head Start or Early Head Start should be located and the model options that would best serve the needs of our families.
- Define gaps in services for the communities, helping us to identify issues that can be addressed in other groups such as the County Collaborative Councils.

The process has allowed us to step back and re-examine our purpose and goals to insure they are in the best interest of the children and families we are designed to serve. Our conclusions are as follows:

1. Head Start families have many needs that the program will continue to address. Those needs are education, employment skills, setting and achieving goals, and quality childcare so the parents/guardians can attend school or work.

The program will continue to work closely with families to make appropriate referrals and to partner with other agencies either to provide employment skills and education or to determine appropriate referral sources for skill development and classes. The program will continue to work diligently with families to assist them in assessment of their family strengths to facilitate attainment of the goals they have set. In order to be available to assist families appropriately, the program will continue to employ enough Family Service staff to work closely with families.

Additionally, in order to provide services to our Spanish-speaking families, we will continue to give priority in our hiring practices for bilingual staff. Hiring bilingual staff ensures that children's developmental screenings and assessments are completed in their native language. Families also have assistance as necessary in their dealings with other agencies and service providers in the counties. Bilingual classroom staff aid the children in their transition to English-speaking environments without eliminating the children's native language.

2. In some of the counties, data indicates close to 100% of the eligible children being served through HS and/or Pre-K. There is no need to expand Head Start services in these areas. However, additional services are needed for to pregnant women, infants, and toddlers.

In addition, childcare costs for services for very young children are astronomical and out of financial reach of many of our families. We must continue to work with the public schools, collaborative councils and other community partners to determine available funding sources and programs designed to assist the very young. We will continue to work collaboratively with the Pre-K providers to insure services first to the four-year-old population and have the priority of Head Start to be serving three-year old's and those four-year old's who cannot get services elsewhere.

3. With the high school drop-out rates still being higher than the state average in our area, it makes it difficult to find new teaching staff who can meet the educational mandates for Head Start and Early Head Start. Therefore, we will continue to work closely with the local colleges to advertise openings through the ECE departments as well as participate in job fairs and other similar events as possible. In addition, we will continue to support current staff in obtaining required credentials.

In conclusion, Head Start and Early Head Start continues to provide needed services in the communities. We will continue to secure funding and make programmatic changes as necessary to keep abreast of community needs. We will also continue to work diligently with other community resources in our efforts to provide high quality services to children and families.

Supporting HS/EHS National Goals and Objectives:

School Readiness:

The Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, Parent Family Community Engagement Framework, Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) and the requirements and expectations of the schools were used to guide our program in curriculum implementation, ongoing assessment of children's progress and preparation for school success. We have adopted the following as our definition for school readiness: School Readiness means that each child will enter school ready to learn based on early learning experiences received in Head Star/EHS/Pre-K that best promotes each child's success in all areas of development as identified in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.

Parent Family Community Engagement:

Family goals are categorized into seven family outcomes: (1) Family Well Being; (2) Positive Parent Child Relationships; (3) Families as Lifelong Educators; (4) Families as Learners; (5) Family Engagement in Transitions; (6) Family Connections to Peers and Community; and (7) Families as Advocates and Leaders. Successful family outcomes support each child's school readiness, and Family Service Specialists engage parents in ways that assist them in achieving their goals and outcomes. The program reviews the achievement of goals and outcomes at the end of each school year and focuses attention on those that need additional support. Ready Rosie Parent Curriculum was implemented to increase parent engagement/child outcomes.

Teaching Staff Education Mandates:

Supporting teaching staff in completing their degrees by the dates of the mandate will ensure that the program meets the education mandates.

Issues for next year:

1. Chattooga EHS/HS will be relocated to a new building due to the age of the current building and on-going facilities issues.
2. We will continue to work to decrease our teacher turnover rate.
3. We are facing ongoing issues with Criminal Records Checks (CRCs) for employees who have lived out of state in the last five years. The Agency is bearing the burden of cost for all these additional out-of-state checks, which are all unique to the state and cannot be done through a central background check system. The system within DECAL for porting CRCs (especially for subs) is creating an administrative burden trying to keep all staff ported and with the proper clearance. While DECAL is currently paying the costs for these checks, should the Agency be required to again pay for these, it would be a significant increase in cost to comply with regulations. As it is, the process is time-consuming and forms and instructions for various states regularly go out of date which requires research and sometimes repeat efforts to complete paperwork.
4. Our families have many needs that we will continue to address. Those needs are education and training in employment skills, financial obstacles, language barriers, Mental Health, and Medical/Dental. The program Family Service Specialists (FSS) work closely with the families through parent meetings to ensure appropriate training and education are provided to help families achieve their goals. If the families need additional information, our FSS will make appropriate referrals and/or partner with other agencies to provide the skill development and/or classes. Some of the trainings that we provide, but not limited to are:
 - a. Advocacy/Transition
 - b. Personal Growth
 - c. Mental Health
 - d. Medical/Dental
 - e. Parenting
5. There is a continued need for infant/toddler care in our area. In order to meet these needs, we will continue to evaluate the need for Head Start slots where Pre-K is prominent and convert slots to EHS as we are able.

ISSUES FOR NEXT 2-5 YEARS:

All the issues listed above have the potential for continuing into the next 2-5 years. We will continue to look for ways to improve these areas based upon success and/or failure of plans we have in place.