



ALABAMA COUNCIL ON HUMAN RELATIONS, INC.
Annual Report for March 2018-February 2019

FROM THE CEO

The years seem to move ever more quickly and March 2018 – February 2019 was no exception. The highlights below are chronological. I think the most interesting information in this report is actually in the sections staff wrote about families and children.

As part of our 2017 Early Head Start/Head Start grant, we requested to drop some HS children and convert some to EHS. During this period, we sent additional information and had some phone conferences with the Regional Office. If approved we would drop 80 HS children (54 of whom were part of the Lee County partnership classes that now partner with their Pre-K classes instead of our Head Start classes. Many of the rest of children dropped were to reduce class size from 18 (maximum allowable if predominately 4 years old) to 17 (predominately three years old) because Pre-K is serving more four year old children.

We planned to add 2 EHS classrooms (16 children) and rework space in our Darden Center to accommodate the classrooms. However, when staff completed the full Community Needs Assessment in the fall of 2018 in preparation for writing the Five-Year E/HS grant, we realized that many families who live with low incomes are moving to the eastern side of both Lee and Russell counties because the cost of living is less. After a goal was set in the 5-year grant, staff began searching for space and considering options to serve those children/families closer to where they live.

Our Early Head Start home visitors needed more space. They shared space at Darden on the Hill with the Sunshine Shop, where those who need items can come to choose from goods donated to us. Fortunately, our new King Center, though in Auburn, is near Opelika and so is well located. Last year emergency services moved to King Center for efficiency in appointment scheduling.

This year the Sunshine shop moved into the old emergency services building on the hill. The space is a little smaller than the previous space, but works well. As part of rethinking the Sunshine Shop and our mission, our In-Kind Manager, asked to change from automatically opening the shop to E/HS families one week a month to opening by appointment to persons referred with needs from Early/Head Start, but also others in the community.

The referral system is part of our new effort to assure that we are serving persons in most need first. So far, this change has been well received. It allows staff to focus on assisting persons with specific needs and even searching for items to meet their needs. During this period through the Sunshine Shop staff helped an elderly woman who had been homeless stock much of her new apartment, a homeless man in need of clothing, E/HS mothers who needed appropriate clothing for job search and new jobs. When we have an overabundance of donations, the shop will be open for a few days to all E/HS families and any others referred. As of this writing, staff has done this once. Staff advertised the week the shop was open through notices in the centers, text messages to parents and word of mouth.

There have been other changes. As previously mentioned, we no longer have the Lee County School partnership serving pre-school children with special needs alongside typically developing children (partnered with their new Pre-K classes instead of HS); contract with AU Psychological Services (students needed clinically oriented internships); and in-kind from Boykin Center (we moved from a building we did not own and could not make safe and secure for our children to one we do, can and have). Staff has worked out an excellent partnership East Alabama Mental Health (EAMH) that has been an asset to children, staff and parents. However, because EAMH receives much of their funding from federal sources, most of their services beyond what we pay for cannot be used to match E/HS funds.

During the same period, our in-kind obligation increased due to two COLAs and additional funding for some of our children to attend an additional 220 hours/year. That means that we have approximately \$600,000 additional to obtain through a variety smaller donations, which greatly increases the paperwork and time to document it in ChildPlus. At this point, we need a little over \$1,700,000 documented in allowable donated goods and volunteer time every single year, which is a challenge. Our In-Kind Manager is working on some new ideas, and is educating all staff to be sure they document all in-kind properly.

In addition, under the CSBG National Performance Indicators (NPIs) donations that are not allowable as in-kind under Head Start (such as the household goods and clothing that help people) should be counted for the ROMA (Results Oriented Management Accountability) report. To do so staff must enter those items and the persons helped in ChildPlus and mark them non-allowable. In other words, in-kind is a huge job.

Among other challenges, Early/Head Start standards say 10% of children in the program (58) MUST have a disability & IEP/IFSP through the public schools or the Part-C provider. It was no problem when we had the Lee County partnership classrooms, since nearly 50% of each classroom was made up of children who had severe disabilities. Of the children we are currently serving, if we could count the 10 with EAMH, we would be at 49 children (8%). Since the Community Assessment shows that only about 5% of the population under five years old in our area has a disability that seems excellent, but it is short of the target of 10% which is a concern.

The Boys/Girls Club partnered with us to provide a Feed the Children event held on the grounds of our Frankie B. King Center on October 6. We had only a few weeks' notice, so the event was an adventure in planning, logistics, creative thinking and compromise. For example, Feed the Children uses a voucher system. The 800 vouchers for of food and household items were divided among a variety of agencies whose staff offered them to families with children. There was a system so families did not get vouchers from more than one agency. We had to move a training event for parents and staff to our Darden Center, plan space for community partners to set up to let families know of opportunities in the community, and more. The to-do list seemed endless but it was well worth the effort.

October 6, 2018 turned out to be a beautiful day. Community agencies that had representatives present to hand out literature and do education included the Boys/Girls Club, Restoration Church (gave away school supplies), a local gym (bottles of water, low cost memberships & coupons), a group assisting persons with autism and our own LIFE Program. Students from Southern Union

provided health checks. Pharmavite gave awesome books to children and a generous supply of vitamins for each child to the mothers along with nutrition education. They also provided about 100 volunteers to unload, direct traffic, help families load boxes, provide events for children including a bubble machine, and more. At the end of the event Pharmavite volunteers helped our staff clean up. The grounds were left with no sign there had been tents and tables for several aisles of community partners and that hundreds of people had been on the grounds. Overall, we count this as a major success and a great way to help members of the community while allowing parents and children to learn and have fun at the same time.

We almost made it to our traditional December SEACAA Management training and planning retreat in Ft. Walton, but nearer to time to travel had too many staff with health problems or who had family members with health problems to do so. This has been a challenging year for some of our staff, but somehow, all have managed to keep key work going and other staff have assisted, as needed. We held the training at our Frankie B. King Center, which, according to the person doing the training, is an excellent facility for training.

There was a bonus for staying in Auburn for SEACAA training for a second year. We were able again to include the five staff we added last year who are part of our succession plan. Each of them had indicated they wanted to continue to attend this training. We were able to include four additional staff, two from Head Start/Early Head Start and two whose positions are primarily housing counseling and emergency assistance. The training topic this year was “Project Management,” presented by James Hale.

Given the enthusiasm of the participants, instead of using the pre-planned topics for groups to work with to learn the steps in project management, the trainer encouraged each of four groups to choose a topic. One group chose to figure out how to get the Edelman Center gym painted and repaired at a low cost. One chose to work out a way to get the needed display system for our classroom Conscious Discipline materials that children need to be able to access built at a reasonable cost. Another group chose to take on review and revision of our on-line media including the website, the Facebook page, the YouTube channel, and consideration of other social media that can be used for communication such as Twitter and Snapchat. The fourth group chose to ways to provide healthier meals for CAP-LC meetings. Members of the four groups have chosen to continue to work on these projects using the skills learned in the training to make these project a reality.

We are very pleased that during this year, Tabitha Perry earned status as a certified ROMA Implementer. She and another staff member are working toward becoming certified ROMA Trainers. On day three of the week of training/planning Tabitha Perry provided the first of two ROMA (Results Oriented Management and Accountability) trainings under Sandra Aldridge’s supervision as a ROMA Trainer. Staff completed day two of the training in January. The ROMA training had two purposes: 1) meet the requirement that management staff receive annual ROMA training and 2) meet part of the requirements for two staff who needed to do training supervised by a ROMA Trainer.

During the remainder of planning time in December and two days in January, the group reviewed/revised the Strategic Plan and the Risk Management plan to review our progress and to

better align both with ROMA requirements, began work on the master calendar and reviewed/revised forms related to enrollment and some other areas.

The group also discussed at length two of the goals in the Early/Head Start five-year plan that was submitted in November. One of those goals is to find a location toward the eastern area of our counties for at least four classrooms and plan how we can run and staff it within budget. The other goal and objectives discussed relate to violence, trauma and helping children build resilience. Staff viewed a video and began discussions of what we can do as an agency in this community.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Alabama Council on Human Relations, Inc. is a private non-profit organization, funded exclusively for, educational and eleemosynary (charitable) purposes that partners with persons and agencies in the community, on behalf of the low-income population. The goal of ACHR is to serve those persons with low incomes and the promotion and implementation of programs that improve economic conditions, education and racial relationships for all people, resulting in increased self-sufficiency and overall improvement in their quality of life.

AGENCY DESCRIPTION

ACHR, incorporated in Montgomery in 1954, has provided Head Start (HS) services in Lee County since 1965 and in much of Russell County since 1992. ACHR has provided Early Head Start in both counties since 1998. In addition to HS and EHS, ACHR administers other programs, including the Alabama Coalition Against Hunger (ACAH), the Child and Adult Care Food Program (serving daycare homes in multiple counties), housing counseling (also multiple counties), VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance), and LIHEAP (Low Income Heating Assistance Program), which offers energy counseling and assistance with payment of energy bills. ACHR also offers low-income housing at 11 housing complexes in seven counties, and is a Community Housing Development Organization. ACHR is the designated Community Services Block Grant program provider for Lee County.

ACHR's Early Head Start (EHS) program, which started in 1998, is an essential part of the agency's overall program. It is widely recognized that the years from conception to age three are vital to growth and development. Staff in both the EHS classroom program and in the EHS Home visit program provide EHS families with suggestions enrich their child's development and to ensure a support system for both the child and primary caregiver.



ACHR has three centers offering services to children, two in Lee County and one in rural Russell County. Darden Center in Opelika is the largest center, with 11 HS classrooms and five EHS classrooms, as well as a school-aged class serving 18-20 school-aged children (mostly siblings of HS/EHS children or former HS children) who come to the center for before and/or after school and for summer care.

The Darden campus includes Darden on the Hill. That area houses the Sunshine Shop where staff accept, store and display donated goods for easy access by HS/EHS families. There is office space

for EHS home visitors and a socialization area for the 64 home-based infants, toddlers and pregnant women/teens served by the home visitors in Lee County. The Frankie B. King Center houses the ACHR Main Office that provides space for administrative, fiscal, secretarial, and other agency support functions and eight Head Start classrooms serving children and families in Auburn and Eastern Lee County. There are offices for services including energy assistance, housing counseling and weatherization for Lee County. The Marian Wright Edelman Center, located in Hurtsboro in rural Russell County, houses three HS and three EHS classrooms, as well as offices and socialization space for home visitors for 24 EHS infants, children and/or pregnant women.

In addition to these centers, there are some auxiliary facilities, such as a garage to service agency buses and other vehicles.

HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START

NUMBERS FUNDED/SERVED

As we have stated, our grant year runs from March to February. Now that we have both EHS and the HS duration grant and run classes well over 200 days, our school year runs from July to June. It is a challenge to reconcile those two periods. We have based the data in this section on the HS reporting system for school year July 2017 to June 2018.

The ACHR-CDP was funded to serve 424 Head Start (HS) and 152 Early Head Start (EHS) children in 2017-18. The Head Start program served 424 HS children (ages 3-5 years) during the early part of the year, and 369 HS children after the partnership with LCS ended in May. EHS center-based classrooms served 64 infants and toddlers (ages 4 weeks to three years) who were the children of parents working or in school and another 88 children and/or mothers-to-be were served in a home-based setting. Home Visitors visited each home-based parent and child once a week and, together with the parent, provided the full array of EHS services. In addition, mothers and children who were in the home visit program were invited and encouraged to come for a “socialization” visit once every two weeks. The parents had small group meetings and learned from each other, outside speakers and other community resources; the toddlers began to learn to play with other children. ACHR provided transportation to these events to those who needed it.

During school year 2017-18, due to the normal drops and adds, HS served 421 preschoolers in 382 families. Twenty-four children were in the program fewer than 45 days and others not much beyond that. In spite of our best efforts to foster good attendance, attendance was right at 85.45%. A big wave of flu hit our program in the winter months. Children cannot learn when they are not present, so we will continue to focus this coming year on encouraging parents to send their children regularly. According to the community needs assessment, among the various programs available, including Pre-K, most of the need for preschool services was met in rural Russell County and approximately 70% of the need was met in Lee County.

During the same period, EHS served 31 pregnant women and 193 infants and toddlers in 171 families. No infants/toddlers were in the program fewer than 45 days. Attendance was 91%. According to the community needs assessment the number of infants and toddlers served was

approximately 65% of the need in rural Russell County but only about 20% of the need in Lee County.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Medical/Dental

During the last school year all of the children who were enrolled more than 45 days received medical screenings and, if needed, follow-up; 95% of children (including those enrolled fewer than 45 days) were up-to date on receiving age-appropriate preventive care at the end of the year; 448 HS-aged children (86% of all those enrolled at any time) and some of the older EHS children received dental exams and preventative care. Last year, Dr. George Liles, a pediatric dentist in Auburn, worked with our children but was unable to come to the center to do dental exams. Many of our children had already been seen in his office. We have a staff member who is a speech/language pathologist and can and did do dental screenings to meet the 45-day requirement. Dr. Liles saw many of those children later at his office and provided treatment for the children who needed it. Most of the children truly love him. For several years, children at the smaller centers have been provided dental services by two dentists in Tuskegee unless their parents prefer to take them to another dentist.



Staff successfully encouraged many HS parents to take their children for follow up appointments for dental treatment and some took their children for dental exams. Staff will continue in this effort, which more firmly establishes an ongoing “dental home” for the children and is part of each parent’s role as a life-long educator of their children. Because of the combined efforts of the dentists, the children’s parents and our staff, 100% of the children who needed dental treatment received it.

Preparing Children for School

For more than 40 years, the ACHR-CDP has used the HighScope Curriculum in its efforts to have children ready for school. This approach takes each child at his/her level and works to build knowledge and skills using the child’s interests and strengths. All learning areas required by Office of Head Start as outlined in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework Ages 0-5 (HSELOF), including Social Emotional Development, Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development, Approaches to Learning, Cognition, and Language and Literacy are embedded in children’s everyday activities. This research-based curriculum approach is developmentally appropriate and is tailored for children ages birth through five years.



In addition to regular activities at the center, resource visitors come to classrooms to enrich children's experiences. Parents, professionals, and community helpers are among those who volunteer their time to make presentations and share experiences with the preschool children. Classroom staff members take children on field trips to visit businesses/community resources such as police and fire departments, museums, farms/stables and other sites around our area and Auburn University. It is amazing what pre-school children can learn from these visits and field trips and how much fun they can have in the process. Teachers talk with the children before the visit, during the visit, and after the visit to stretch children's knowledge and vocabulary.

We encourage parents to do much the same thing with their own children as part of our school readiness parent program called RAGS (Reading, Activities and Growth for Success). Teachers send home RAGS activity sheets with suggestions of ways parents can help their child to grow in a particular focus that supports some of the classroom activities that week.

The activity sheets can help parents change a routine visit to the grocery store from an event that is frustrating for parent and child into a learning "adventure" that helps increase vocabulary, sentence length, ability to follow directions, or to increase math skills or self-regulation. The same child who was bored and crying can be enlisted to help find a can of green peas for dinner and the box with the big "K" on it for breakfast. We suggest that when parents have their child with them at the store, that they take a few moments to say things like: "The peas are in a can with a *green* label. Can you find it?" "Look one shelf *higher*." "Good find! Please put it *in* the cart." Of course, as a child gets better at this game, we encourage parents to make the skills progressively more challenging. ("Please put the can *in* the cart *beside* the corn and beans. Now we have *three* cans.") Repeated over a several visits, these "adventures" make a difference in a child's skills including those needed for school readiness.

Teachers make frequent observations of children and place them into each child's Child Observation Record to track each child's progress towards school readiness goals and to know when to help a child stretch for the next level. In addition, classroom staff focus on children's social skills and self-regulation in an effort to have the children ready to fit into a kindergarten classroom. As described when discussing our partners, we are pleased to be partnering with Children's and Family Services, a department in East Alabama Mental Health in this effort. Additionally, during the past several years ACHR has been training staff to implement the Conscious Discipline approach within our classrooms and spreading the approach to home visitors. The program has provided staff new ways to improve classroom management and assist children in developing self-regulation and other skills that help them to be connected, cooperative, and helpful members of a classroom family.

ACHR-CDP SCHOOL READINESS REPORT for PROGRAM YEAR 2018-2019

ACHR CDP's school readiness goals were developed using Office of Head Start (OHS) requirements, the HSELOF, curriculum guidelines, alignments with state standards for four-year-olds/Alabama Early Learning Guidelines, local school expectations, and staff and parent input. School readiness goals are statements that articulate knowledge and skills needed by infants/toddlers prior to preschool and for preschool children prior to entering kindergarten. These goals address social and emotional development, language and literacy, perceptual, motor, and

physical development, approaches to learning, and cognitive development including general knowledge, mathematics, and science.

At ACHR, progress towards school readiness goals is measured through the HighScope Child Observation Record (COR) known as the *COR Advantage* assessment tool, and through teacher skill tracking logs, photographs, and data collection such as samples of children's work.

The COR Advantage is a seamless birth-through-kindergarten assessment tool. Categories and items on the COR align with state standards, Common Core standards and the HSELOF. Head Start and Early Head Start teachers as well home visitors use this tool. Because the tool is seamless, it allows for scoring all children, whether typically developing, with special needs, or exceptional.



Classroom staff and home visitors collect data on an ongoing basis to determine how well children are progressing across the required OHS five essential domains: perceptual, motor, and physical development, Social and Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning, Language and Literacy, and Cognition and General Knowledge including mathematics and science. To the extent possible, staff assess dual language learners in the child's home language across all domains by communicating with parents/translators, and assessing the children's increasing proficiency in learning English.

Teaching staff/home visitors gather and monitor the continuous progress of each child through means such as anecdotal notes, skill logs, portfolios, writing and art samples, formal observations by other professionals, parental input through family contacts and joint goal setting, service provider reports, photographs, videos, and Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) progress reports. Children show gains in the COR Advantage by moving to the next skill level of each objective. Possible scores for each objective are the same, ranging from 0-7.



Assessment data is used to develop lesson plans and activities for all children and individualized instruction and activities for each child throughout the year. ACHR has set scoring goals for child outcomes for 1-year-olds, 2-year-olds, and 3-year-olds in EHS, and for three and four-year-olds in HS.

Staff aggregate the data by program option and program level three times per year – approximately November, March, and June. At each point, the education leadership team studies the child outcome averages across domains for the total program to identify any school readiness areas where children

are not progressing as expected. Next, the team looks at the distribution of scores to examine the variability of children's progress. Subgroups of children (e.g., grouped by age, gender, home language, IEP status) are compared for disparities so that if any exist the program can work to help these children in ways that may result in furthering their school readiness.

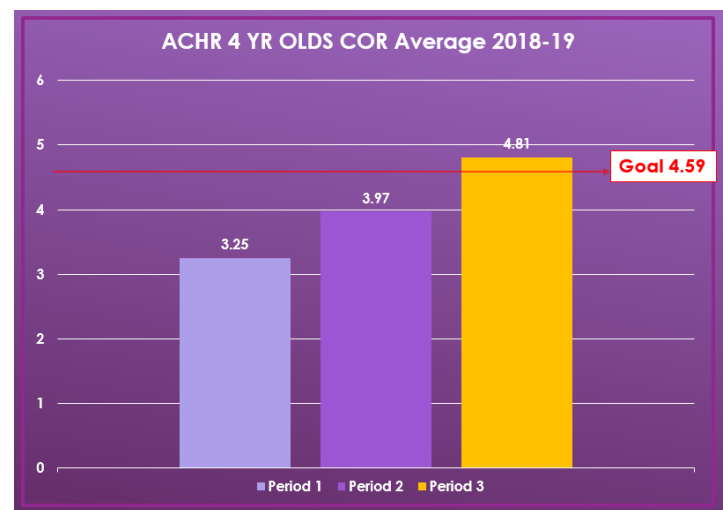
At the midpoint analysis, progress towards school readiness goals is assessed and reported to teaching staff, program administration, the school readiness advisory committee, parent policy council/parents and the ACHR board. Time is used to assist teachers/home visitors in understanding their data and how they can maximize children's progress moving forward. The school readiness advisory committee meets to discuss the program's progress towards school readiness goals and to advise the program on school readiness issues from many perspectives.

Education team members assist teaching teams in analyzing this classroom data using classroom level COR reports and other indicators. The teaching teams use the analysis to refine their planning process for each child and groups of children, and as a guide to set professional goals. COR reports are also used as part of the process for determining staff's group and individual professional development needs.

After the last aggregation/analysis period is completed, the results for the program year are discussed by the school readiness advisory committee and shared with stakeholders and families. The results are also a part of the program's annual self-assessment process. The ACHR education and administrative teams use the results to plan for continued program operations, possible program improvements, professional development needs, and possible purchases of resources to support specific school readiness goals for the upcoming program year.

School Readiness Results for Head Start 2018-2019: 4-5 YR Olds

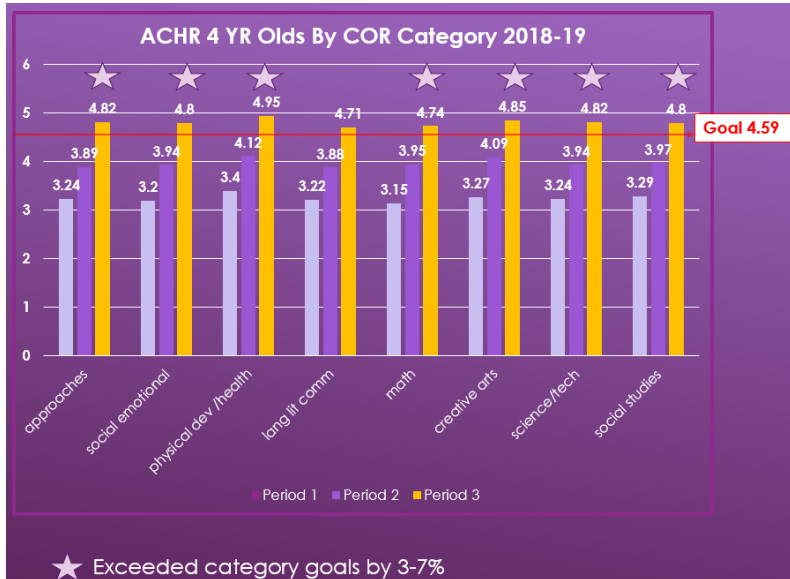
- The average beginning COR score for all typically developing 4-5 yr. old children was 3.25
- The mid-point COR scores had moved up, indicating growth. Overall, the ACHR score for 4-5 yr. olds went from 3.25 to 3.97.
- At the end of the school year, the COR scores had moved up even more. The average score for all ACHR 4-yr old children was 4.81, indicating that, on average, HS children had exceeded ACHR's school readiness goal of 4.59.
- Between September and May, ACHR 4-5 yr. old children's overall developmental score levels increased 48%



As per HS philosophy, *we take children from where they are and help them to move forward toward our school readiness goals.* Our data show that we are doing that.

ACHR's goal for children going on to kindergarten is an average of a 4.59. In 2018-2019 program year, these children attained an average 4.81 or 4.8% above the goal.

Head Start School Readiness Achievement: 4-5 year olds by COR Advantage Categories



HS exceeded its school readiness goal of 4.59 in all eight COR Advantage Categories by achieving an average of 4.81 with only the category *Language literacy and communication* falling slightly below its category goal (98% reached, 4.74/4.86) and all other categories exceeding their individual goals by between 3-7%.

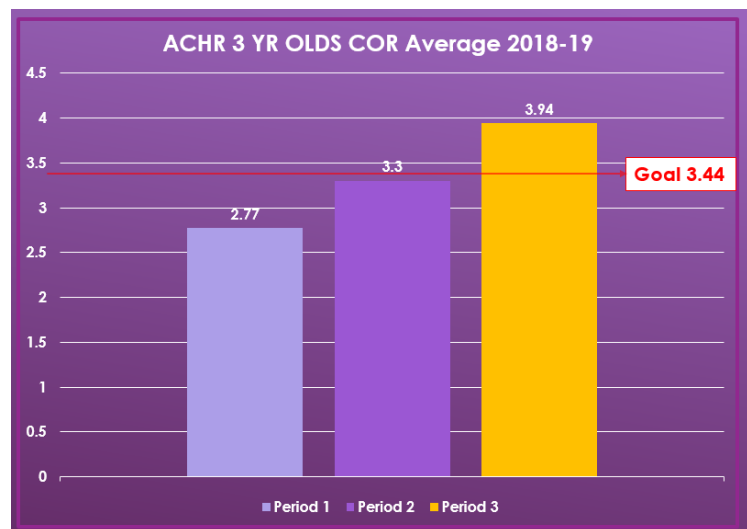
4-5 yr. old children's COR Advantage category scores indicated gains in all categories at each collection point. Categories

include:

- Approaches to learning
- Social/Emotional Development,
- Physical Development and Health
- Language/Literacy/Communication
- Mathematics
- Creative Arts
- Science and Technology
- Social Studies

School Readiness Results for Head Start 2018-2019: 3 Year Olds

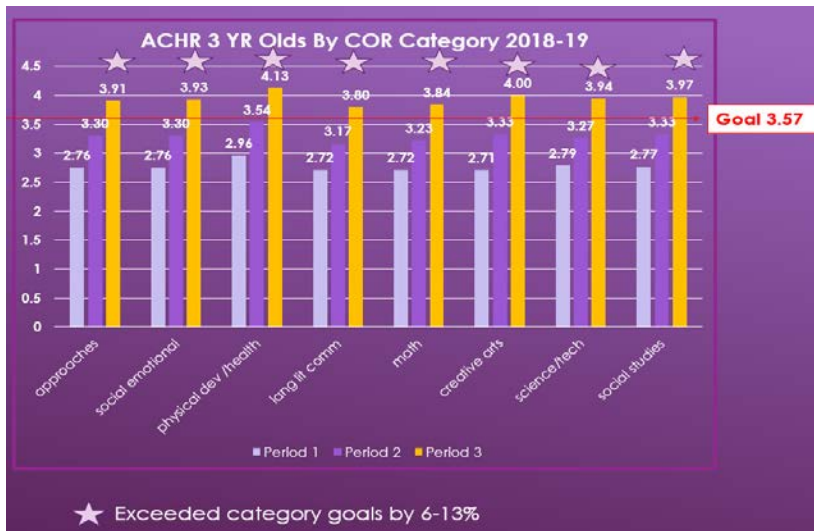
- The average beginning COR score for all typically developing 3-4 yr. old children was 2.77
- The mid-point COR scores had moved up, indicating growth. Overall, the ACHR score for 3-4 yr. olds went from 2.77 to 3.3
- At the end of the school year, the COR scores had moved up even more. The average score for all ACHR 3-yr old children was 3.94, indicating that, on average, HS children had exceeded ACHR's school readiness goal of 3.57.



- Between September and May, ACHR 3 yr. old children’s overall developmental score levels increased 42%

ACHR’s goal for the three-year-old group is an average of a 3.57. In 2018-2019 program year, these children attained an average 3.94 or 10% above the goal.

Head Start School Readiness Achievement: 3 year olds by COR Advantage Categories



HS exceeded its school readiness goal in all eight COR Advantage Categories by achieving an average of 3.94 and categories exceeding their individual goals by between 6-13%.

3-year-old children’s COR Advantage category scores indicated gains in all categories at each collection point.

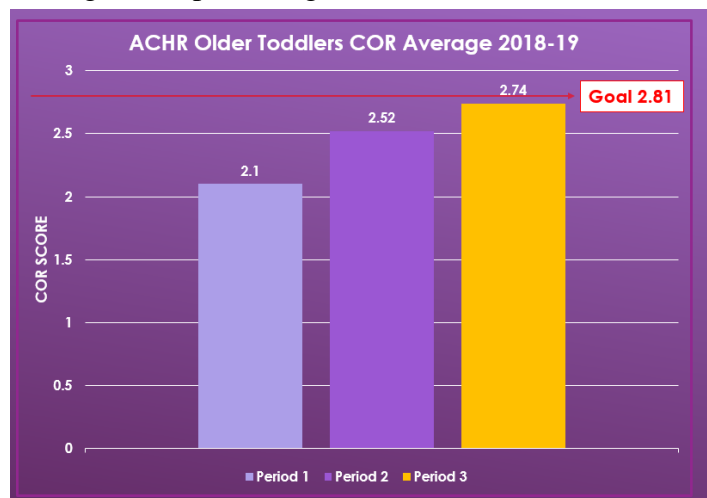
- Portfolios of 3 year olds children’s work samples and photos from across the year were completed and given to parents at the last parent-teacher conference.
- Two developmental summary reports from ongoing assessment were created and shared with parents in HS. This included a mid-year and end- of-year report using COR Advantage information and software.

School Readiness Results for Early Head Start 2018-19: Older Toddlers

The process used for gathering, analyzing, and using developmental growth data in EHS is the same as that used in HS. The COR Advantage is the primary tool for tracking ongoing infant-toddler growth and development. The principal goal is for children to be progressing steadily and to be ready to transition into preschool after turning three years old.

Children in EHS showed steady growth in 2018-2019. Below is a sample of the older toddler group and their progress during the periods of 2018-2019.

- The average beginning COR score for all typically developing older toddlers was 2.1.



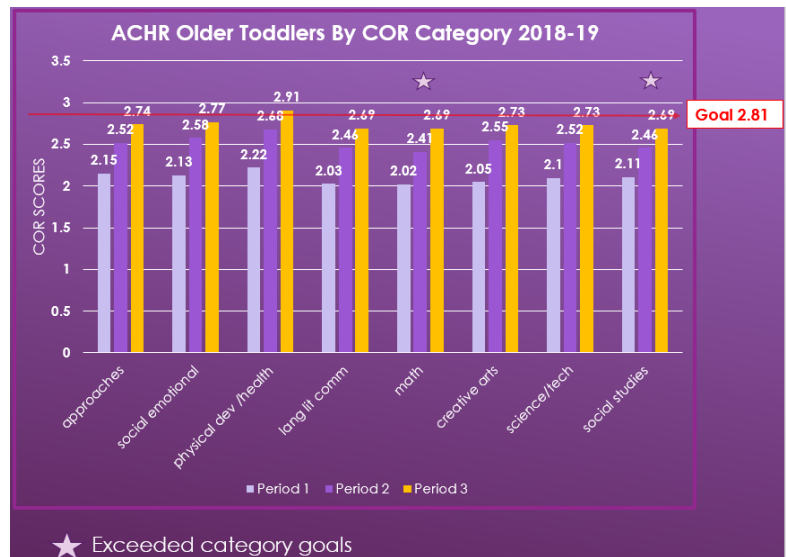
- The mid-point COR scores had moved up, indicating growth. Overall, the ACHR score went from 2.11 to 2.52. Then in the third and last period scores moved up to 2.74
- Between June of 2018 and May 2019 ACHR older toddlers overall developmental score levels increased 30%

ACHR's goal for older toddlers who will go on to HS or preschool is an average of a 2.82. In 2018-2019 program year, these children attained an average 2.81 or 97% of the goal.

Early Head Start School Readiness Achievement by COR Advantage Categories:

EHS Older Toddlers 2018-19 exceeded the School Readiness goal for 2 of 8 COR categories by between 3.5-8%. The other 6 categories were 91-99% to goal with *Approaches to learning* being the lowest at 91% to goal (2.69/2.93).

The COR Advantage category scores for Older Toddlers indicated gains in all categories at each collection point.



PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Parents are very important to us - and to their children's readiness for school. Parents elected by other parents to serve on the Policy Council give input to our program in many ways. During the 2018-2019 year, parents were invited to quarterly parent meetings, had at least four opportunities to visit with their child's teacher during home and center visits, and were invited to meetings on special topics.

Staff makes a special effort to work with the fathers (or "father-figures" such as uncles, grandfathers, etc.). Most months we offer a Reading with Dads event. The children's fathers or other special men in their lives are invited to the centers sometimes to have breakfast and always to learn something about child development or literacy and then read or do activities with their children in the classrooms. During 2017-2018, about 300 HS and/or EHS children's fathers or father figures came to one or more special events at



the centers. In addition to attending the special father activities, some came to other parent activities, such as the Family Fun Day.

ACHR PROGRAMS OTHER THAN HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START



ACHR is the designated Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) provider in Lee County. CSBG funds assist, extend and strengthen a variety of programs and make it possible for the agency to provide services that otherwise could not be provided.

CSBG assists with funding for many programs, including housing counseling and the gardening projects described below.

ACHR's LIFE (Learning Information about Food and Exercise) began in 2014 through CSBG funds, because of a 10% up-tick in self-reported obesity by clients completing our community assessment survey. The program was planned and implemented to help participants living with low income improve their overall health and maintain or decrease their weight. Our Registered Dietician provides weigh-ins and individualized diet counseling (including for a variety of health concerns, such as diabetes). Some participants check-in by phone, others in person. As a certified fitness instructor, she also offers low-impact aerobic exercise program at Darden, Edelman and King Centers.

Other programs ACHR administers designed to assist families living with low incomes in Lee County and, in some cases, in other areas of Alabama, include:

- **Alabama Coalition Against Hunger (ACAH)**, with a current emphasis on community gardens in Lee and Russell Counties. One of the gardens in Lee County is a collaboration with several churches and with youth involvement.
- **Child & Adult Care Food Program**, which provides training and reimbursement for qualified meals to approximately 30 day care home providers serving approximately 225 children in four counties
- **Housing Counseling** (Department of Housing and Urban Development-certified Housing Counseling Agency) to residents with problems with mortgages, tenant/landlord relations, etc.
- **Certified Community Housing Development Organization** has built 12 low-income housing complexes in eight counties. The grand opening for Shiloh, a project for seniors in Opelika was held in November 2017. Shiloh is our fifth complex in the Lee County area.
- **Weatherization** - assesses and then contracts to weatherize homes (including mobile homes) for home owners who qualify;
- **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program** participant; ACHR staff and volunteers were received intensive training and served 93 families.



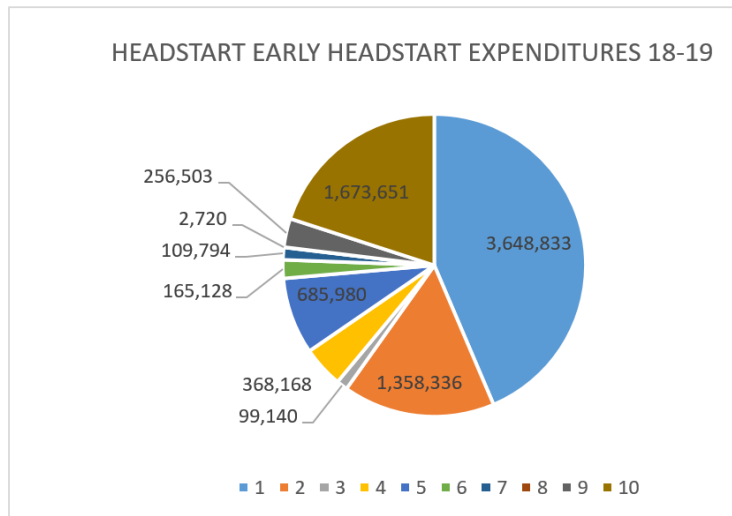
- **Energy counseling and assistance with energy bills** through LIHEAP, and the Alabama Charitable Trust. In this fiscal year, 3447 families received assistance through regular LIHEAP, LIHEAP crisis, and the Alabama Charitable Trust.
- **S.T.E.P.S. (Systems to Empower Parents and Students)** is a relatively new, youth focused effort, in partnership with other community groups. The goal is to encourage young people to stay in school, work to become eligible, and attend college. In October 2017, the second Scholarship Seminar and information session to the community was held. The Seminar focused on assisting students in thinking about life after high school. Twenty-five students and parents attended the seminar. Information provided included scholarship opportunities, planning for college and other life decisions. The S.T.E.P.S. Chairperson has worked one-on-one with students who requested help.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION/FUNDING 2018-2019

Head Start/Early Head Start

The Alabama Council on Human Relations, Inc. received funding from Health and Human Services in the amount of \$6,694,603 to fund its Head Start and Early Head Start programs. That included the supplemental funding for the Head Start children who were able to be in the program additional das. Because Head Start/Early Head Start programs are required to have a 20% match, we must find “match” or “in-kind,” which can be goods or services donated that of benefit to the program within the community in the amount of \$1,673,650. The pie chart shows the percentages of funds spent in key areas for the HS/EHS programs.

1	3,648,833	SALARIES
2	1,358,336	FRINGE
3	99,140	T&TA
4	368,168	OCCUPANCY
5	685,980	INDIRECT
6	165,128	ADMINISTRATIVE
7	109,794	SUPPLIES
8	2,720	CONTRACTUAL
9	256,503	TRANSPORTATION
10	1,673,651	INKIND/VOLUNTEERS
	8368253	



FUNDING FOR OTHER PROGRAMS

Funds in the amount of \$431,782 were awarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide meals for children. The Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP), serving family day care homes in four counties received \$281,696. The City of Opelika provided \$20,000 to assist with extended day/year care for children of working parents. In combination with funding through the state voucher program and parent fees on a sliding scale, the City of

Opelika funding allowed us to provide before and/or after school and summer care for approximately 100 children of mothers who were working or in school. We also received \$204,221 in funding from the Department of Health and Human Services to fund a program for this current year to operate an extended summer program for children ages 3-5.

Beyond that, we have LIHEAP funds of \$1,288,184 (most of which provides heating and cooling assistance directly to clients), Alabama Charitable Trust Funds of \$30,087 which were used to assist clients who were not eligible for LIHEAP funding or who needed additional assistance, and CSBG funding of \$403,711 (which supplements various programs as well as providing direct services). Last year, we received \$6,751 in General Funds from the State of Alabama and weatherization funds of \$86,462 received this year.

At this writing, we expect our budget and expenditure in all grant areas for the coming year to be similar to that in the past year.

AUDIT RESULTS

The independent audit done by an outside Certified Public Accountant on ACHR programs for the 2018-19 year resulted in no audit findings. The most recent Head Start/Early Head Start review was favorable allowing us to remain eligible for the five-year designation. In addition, various programs including Child and Adult Care Feeding Program, LIHEAP (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program), and Weatherization were audited during this year and although there were a few things to respond to, there were no significant findings.

IN-KIND -- DONORS AND BENEFACTORS



Federal requirements state that HS/EHS programs must match the federal grant funds on an 80-20 basis. That means that “in-kind” (donations of time, goods and funds) is essential to the continuation of the federal funding that allows ACHR to provide children and families living with low incomes Head Start/Early Head Start services. Sometimes, we have had to push and struggle to find enough in-kind for a fiscal year. With tighter federal restrictions on what can count toward the in-kind requirement, ACHR staff have to continually look for new sources and ensure proper documentation.

During the past year, many generous individuals and companies donated goods (everything from toys to dryers) that have helped the program in various ways.

Just as important is the value of the help provided by our many volunteers. Last year, more than 800 volunteers contributed their time.

We are proud to say that we have good community partners who provide a variety of goods and services to our program. This year we continued a partnership with Auburn University's Department of Kinesiology. The department provided a motor skills program for Head Start children at our Darden Center. This project continued helped children gain large motor skills and increase activity levels. It provided teaching staff with a deeper knowledge of how children's specific motor skills can increase with adult assistance and opportunity. The project involved university professors, doctoral students, graduate students, under graduates, and creative materials.

Others partners included AU Early Childhood Education students who volunteered time in HS/EHS classrooms, the AU Nursing Department, who shared health and safety information with HS children and SUSCC nursing students who helped do heights and weights of children in spring 2018. The Auburn University cheerleaders provided a mini-pep rally (we are a sports-oriented area so the children love it) and AU women's basketball participated in give back day, helping King Center with heavy work, organizing materials, and a providing mini "Tiger Walk" with children (also a BIG sports item). Many individual volunteers came to assist in other ways including helping us organize the Sunshine Shop, which provided donated goods at no cost to Head Start/Early Head Start families. Families who had emergencies, such as those recovering from fires or storm damage, also sometimes received goods.

One of our most committed community partners, Jean-Dean RIF, celebrated 29 years of service to children's literacy. The local Kiwanis clubs raised funds, bought children's books, and volunteered in our HS/EHS classrooms three times per year as readers - for 28 years! Soon after we started Early Head Start, they began to provide toddler books and parenting/pregnancy books to our pregnant moms – and still do. We were able to offer these same books to pregnant teens at local high schools during workshops provided by our Home-based Educator.



This year, staff placed great importance on School Readiness and on Family Partnerships. As a result, we had more parents participating in RAGS (Reading, Activities and Growth for Success) and participating more often. That meant more parent volunteer time toward in-kind. More important, it meant that more parents did activities with their children to support classroom learning and enhance the child's abilities. Those things should lead to stronger families and improved school readiness.

We cannot name them all, but do want to offer our sincere thanks to the many, many volunteers who have given of their time and talents this year to help our children, their families and our program. It is no exaggeration to say that without their help, not only would our program not be the quality it is, we would not have a program.