



SCFO

Sierra Cascade Family Opportunities
Early Childhood Development Programs



ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The 2025-2026 program year was one of change, growth, and resilience. After more than 30 years of dedicated service, Executive Director Brenda Poteete retired, marking the end of an extraordinary chapter for SCFO. While her retirement brought changes to our leadership team, the experience, commitment, and collaboration of our management staff ensured a smooth transition and positioned us for continued success.

Throughout the year, SCFO also navigated site changes in the Susanville area and leadership transitions at several centers. Amid these changes, the agency successfully completed three monitoring reviews within a six-month period, with each review confirming full compliance with all regulatory requirements. This achievement reflects the dedication, professionalism, and teamwork of our staff.

Our commitment to attracting, supporting, and retaining exceptional employees remains stronger than ever. We continue to invest in staff wellness and workplace culture because we know that when our employees thrive, so do the children and families we serve. Through one-time funding, we were also able to provide retention incentive stipends to recognize and support our valued staff.

Most importantly, despite every challenge, SCFO never lost sight of its mission. We continued to provide high-quality child development and family support services, ensuring that children and families received the care, education, and encouragement they deserve. To the families we served, thank you for your trust, flexibility, partnership, and confidence in us. It is a privilege to work alongside you as we help build a strong foundation for your children's future.

I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to every member of the SCFO team—from administration and managers to teachers, kitchen staff, and family support staff. Your compassion, dedication, and unwavering focus on children and families inspire the work we do every day. My sincere thanks also go to our Policy Council and Board of Directors for your guidance, leadership, and steadfast commitment to our mission.

The accomplishments highlighted throughout this report tell the story of an organization that continues to grow, adapt, and make a lasting difference in the lives of children and families. We invite you to explore these successes and celebrate the impact we have made together. As we look ahead to the 2026-2027 program year, we do so with optimism, purpose, and excitement for the opportunities that lie ahead.

Cindy Hogg, Executive Director

LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

As we close out our 2025-26 fiscal year, I would like to share with you an Op-Ed our Assembly Member co-wrote about the Head Start program, a program that she and her colleague were graduates from. The op-ed is dated Oct 15, 2025 and is taken from the Sacramento Bee.

Op-Ed: A bipartisan call: Congress must fund critical Head Start program.

What policy issue can a progressive Democrat representing Silicon Valley and a Republican representing the most conservative district in the far north of the state agree on in these hyper-partisan times?

With common experience as graduates from Head Start, we are working together to urge Congress to support children and families with enough funding to sustain this critical program.

Head Start is a federally funded early childhood education program that provides comprehensive services – including education, health, nutrition and family support – to low-income children (ages 0-5) and their families.

In the six decades since its founding, Head Start has served nearly 40 million children and their families.

Head Start enrolls more than 750,000 children across the country each year, including 80,345 in California. For the past three years, the federal budget has included approximately \$12.1 billion for the program. While this is a lot of money, it is a tiny fraction of the overall federal budget.

In this year's budget negotiations, the House of Representatives and President Donald Trump have proposed to flat-fund Head Start; the Senate has proposed a mere .6% increase, extending flat funding for the third year in a row. Given rising costs, this funding

level would equal a real-world cut that will limit Head Start programs from serving eligible children.

Our country can do better than this.

We know firsthand why Head Start is so essential: These services were indispensable to us and our families, providing access to healthy meals and supportive, educationally enriching environments that prepared us to start school ready to learn. Head Start allowed our struggling parents and guardians to maintain employment while we gained early math and reading skills and built confidence and resilience – skills that all children need to be successful in school and life.

Federal Head Start funding supports high-quality early learning and comprehensive family services that benefit children and families across California – like the families we grew up in. Head Start parent choice programs are foundational to our state’s early childhood education and family support infrastructure.

The evidence-based services provided by Head Start have been shown to strengthen parent-child relationships, improve child development outcomes, increase graduation rates, reduce instances of child maltreatment and support parents’ ability to maintain a job and achieve stability – all in a cost-effective manner.

Jobs associated with Head Start support community well-being and economic mobility. Program providers employ over 25,000 Californians and utilize thousands of contractors.

As working families face rising child care costs and economic instability, Head Start is essential workforce infrastructure in California. Access to reliable early education and child care allows parents to work or pursue training. California’s working families already face a shortage of such options. The current lack of child care access costs California an estimated \$17 billion in lost productivity and economic output annually. Cuts to Head Start would exacerbate this loss.

The positive impacts of Head Start are deeply aligned with our shared bipartisan goals of advancing opportunity and economic resilience. We're alarmed by the April closure of half of the regional offices supporting Head Start providers, including the office serving California, as part of the recent abrupt reduction in the federal workforce. This closure delayed required Head Start program renewals and left California's Head Start programs without reliable points of contact to address funding delays. As a result, thousands of workers in Head Start programs across California received pink slips.

This anemic federal funding proposed for Head Start raises serious concerns about the future of early learning for millions of children across the country. Lack of funding could lead to the disruption of necessary comprehensive services for learning that are often unavailable elsewhere, such as developmental screenings, mental health care and family case management.

We are proud bipartisan champions of Head Start as a vital part of California and our nation's early learning and care system. We recently joined with nearly 100 of our colleagues, both Democrats and Republicans, to urge leaders in both parties to protect federal investments in Head Start. To keep up with inflation, a mere 3.2% increase would allow Head Start to maintain its capacity to serve children and families.

By fully funding this critical early education program they will ensure that Head Start can continue to make a profoundly positive impact on young children and families in California, especially those who start furthest from opportunity.

Assemblymember Patrick Ahrens is a Democrat representing California Assembly District 26. Assemblymember Heather Hadwick is a Republican representing California Assembly District 1.

ABOUT US

It is Sierra Cascade Family Opportunities' (SCFO) goal to create a strong foundation for young children that is rich with experience and opportunity based on a child's individual need. This foundation is built in an environment that establishes trust and security for both the child and their parents and focuses on the skills and strengths of each child within a group setting. In our centers we utilize the High Scope approach and the Second Step social and emotional development curriculum. We believe that children should be involved actively with hands on materials and carrying out projects of their own choosing. The adults working with the children see themselves as facilitators or partners. Our approach encompasses all aspects of child development and involves teachers and parents in supporting and extending children's emotional, intellectual, social, and physical skills and abilities. This means learning is a process in which children discover, explore and create through direct experience with people, objects, events, and ideas. Head Start and Early Head Start are fully inclusive programs. All children are able to take advantage of the Head Start and Early Head Start environment, including children with mild to severe disabilities. In our learning environments, different areas of the classroom are age specific and designated for different activities, for example water play, reading, sand play, art, writing, dramatic play, etc. Children are able to access all facilities independently and take some responsibility for use of these areas. Children are provided with tools and opportunities to make real, meaningful decisions.

VISION

Our agency vision is that all children and families will achieve success throughout school and life.

MISSION

The mission of Sierra Cascade Family Opportunities, Inc., (SCFO) is to operate quality early child development programs which provide comprehensive opportunities for children and families that encourage growth, support positive relationships and foster health and well-being.

PROGRAM GOALS

The 2025-2026 program year was the second year of Sierra Cascade Family Opportunities (SCFO) current grant cycle. Based on Community Assessment, Self-Assessment and ongoing monitoring data, SCFO established three Program Goals to focus on during the five-year grant cycle related to staff wellness; children with challenging behaviors; and adapting program services to meet community needs.



Program Goal 1

SCFO will have a culture strongly invested in personal wellness and exemplary workplace skills where all staff thrive while providing quality services to children and families.

Program Goal 2

SCFO will have strategies and innovative partnerships so that all staff and parents can passionately and successfully support children who have challenging behaviors.

Program Goal 3

SCFO will adapt our services to meet the changing needs of the community while maintaining quality programs.

PROGRESS ON PROGRAM GOALS

Program Goal #1

During the year 2025-2026 program year, SCFO continued to strengthen the Culture of Wellness within our agency. Efforts include supporting our well-established Wellness team in sending out monthly wellness enrichment and team building opportunities to all sites, sending out the staff wellness survey to identify areas of interest/need for wellness resources, the management team reviews the goal weekly to explore additional wellness resources.

Program Goal #2

SCFO continues to support teachers and families in meeting the needs of children with challenging behaviors through ongoing training, education, and family conferences. These collaborative efforts ensure that staff and families work together with consistent strategies and shared goals, supporting the agency's Program Goal #2.

During this program year, several successes were achieved. The Mental Health and Disabilities Manager conducted DECA training for teaching staff to strengthen their understanding of social-emotional development and assessment. In addition, plans are in place to share the 2025-2026 Behavioral Observation Report data with teaching staff at the beginning of the 2026-2027 program year to help guide classroom practices and individualized supports.

The Management Team also reviews children receiving behavioral support during weekly meetings, discusses upcoming family conferences, and follows up on conferences that have already taken place. These ongoing discussions allow the team to coordinate services, evaluate progress, and ensure consistent support for children, families, and teaching staff.

Program Goal #3

SCFO has also made multiple attempts to adapt our services to meet the changing needs of the communities we serve. SCFO has not been successful in securing additional Early Head Start funding to serve more infants and Toddlers. These efforts will continue.

The SCFO management team held multiple planning sessions to prepare for a reorganization within our current facilities. The goal of these moves was to improve staffing alignment across the Lassen County locations where SCFO maintains leased facilities. The classroom relocations resulted in a more cohesive program structure by consolidating full-year classrooms at two locations and placing all part-year classrooms together at a single site. This new arrangement is expected to improve operational efficiency, strengthen staff collaboration, and better align resources with program needs.

SCFO PROGRAM INFORMATION



10 Child Development Centers

SCFO operates 7 Head Start/State Preschool classrooms, 3 Stand Alone State Preschool Classrooms, and 3 Early Head Start classrooms.



175 Children

SCFO is funded to serve 191 children and their families. In the 2025-2026 program year, a cumulative total of 201 children were served.



67 Staff Members

In the 2025-2026 program year, SCFO had a total of 67 staff members. 42% of the staff members are former or current parents in the program.



3 Counties

SCFO provides services in Lassen, Modoc and Plumas counties.



10,840 Square Miles

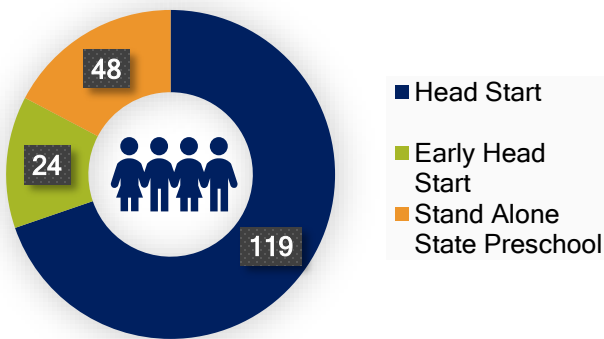
The SCFO service area covers a large geographical area in rural northeastern California communities. The three counties span a 10,840 square mile area that borders the State of Nevada on the east and the State of Oregon to the north. The area is very rural with small pockets of population interspersed throughout the vast geography.

ENROLLMENT

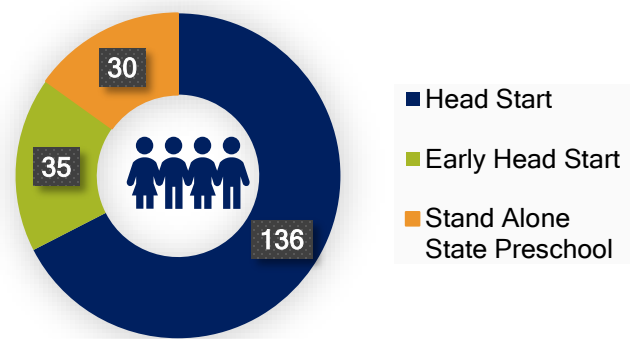
SCFO Enrollment

Sierra Cascade Family Opportunities enrolled a total of 201 children in the 2025-2026 program year between the Head Start, Early Head Start and State Preschool programs.

Funded Enrollment



Total Enrollment



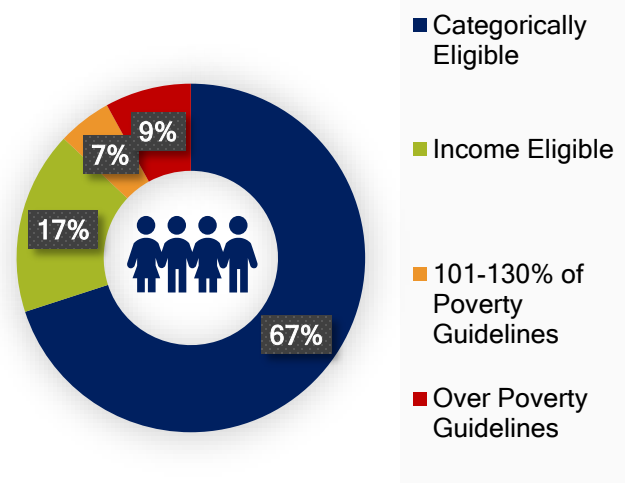
Average Monthly Enrollment

Head Start: **95%**

Early Head Start: **100%**

Stand Alone State Preschool: **45%**

Eligible HS & EHS Families Served

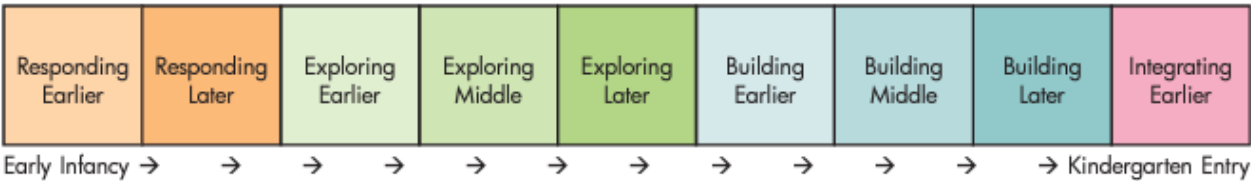


CHILD OUTCOMES

Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)

SCFO implements the Desired Results Development Profile (DRDP) which is an observation-based assessment system. Educators observe children as they engage in everyday routines, experiences and interactions. Two times per year for preschool children and three times per year for infants and toddlers, educators review the collected evidence and make ratings of children’s progress for each DRDP measure along a continuum of developmental levels. Educators use this to plan for the individualization of each child’s continued learning and development.

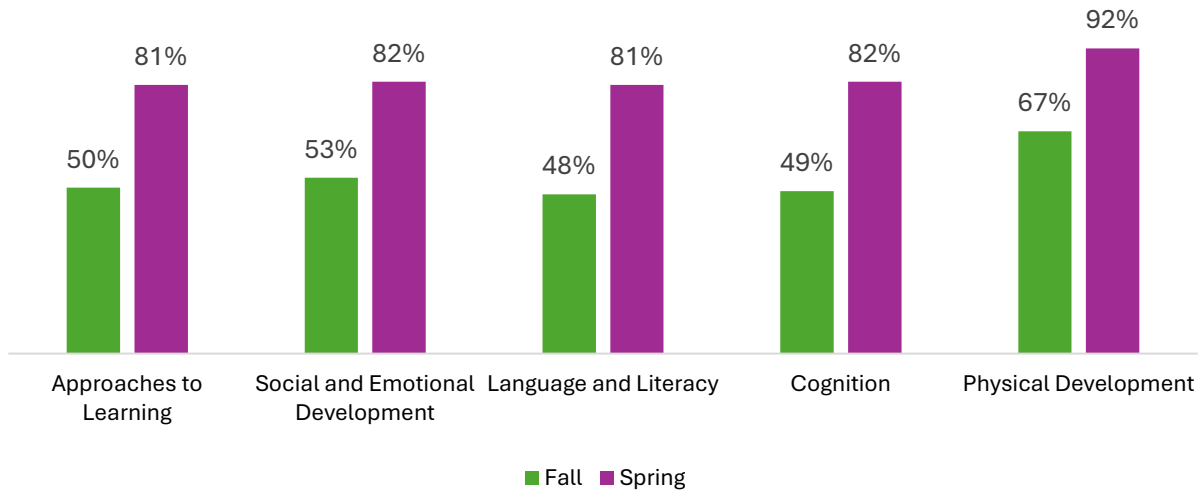
Below is a chart of the nine developmental levels of the DRDP starting with the levels associated with young infants and progressing through the levels associated with greater Kindergarten readiness.



Preschool DRDP Data

The graph below shows growth in children from the Fall 2025 rating period to the Spring 2026 rating period. The graph shows the growth children made in the areas assessed by the DRDP from when they first enrolled in an SCFO classroom to their second assessment completed in the Spring. On the higher developmental end of the spectrum.

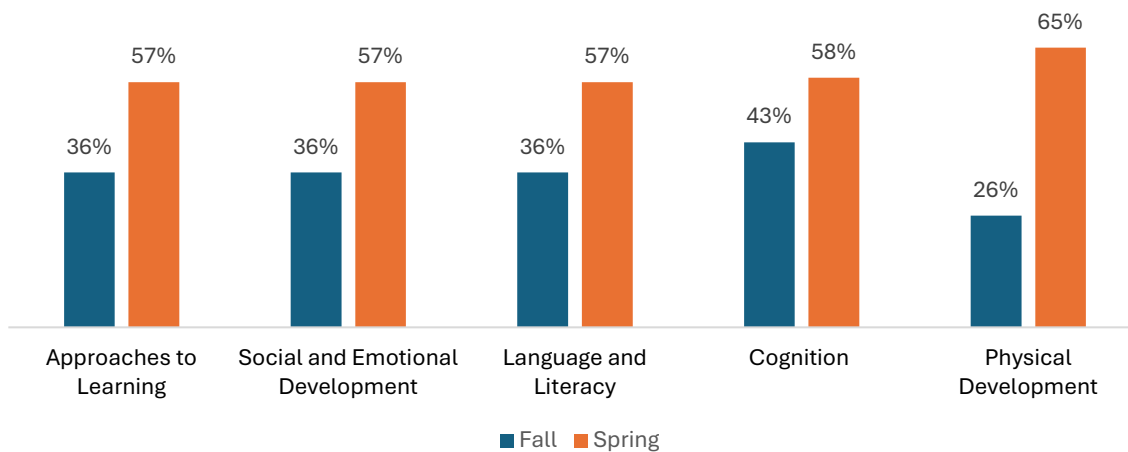
DRDP Preschool Ratings of Building Middle or Later



Infant & Toddler DRDP Data

The graph below shows growth in infants and toddlers from the Fall 2024 rating period to the Spring 2025 rating period. It represents the percentage of children who were rated at the Exploring Later level or later for the different developmental domains.

DRDP Infant/Toddler Ratings of Exploring Later or Later



HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION SERVICES

Curriculum and Individualized Planning

SCFO has used the High Scope curriculum as the program's main curriculum for many years. The comprehensive curriculum provides all ages of children hands on learning opportunities that support developmental milestones and positive outcomes through consistent daily routines, key developmental indicators, and supportive relationships and interactions with peers and adults.

High Scope is inclusive of all learning levels and styles and allows for individualization to happen at multiple levels including child goals, classroom and program goals as well as teacher professional development.

The curriculum allows parents and educators to work together in creating activities that are based on each child's individual level of development, interest, and cultural competencies as well as supports both California and Head Start Learning Frameworks.

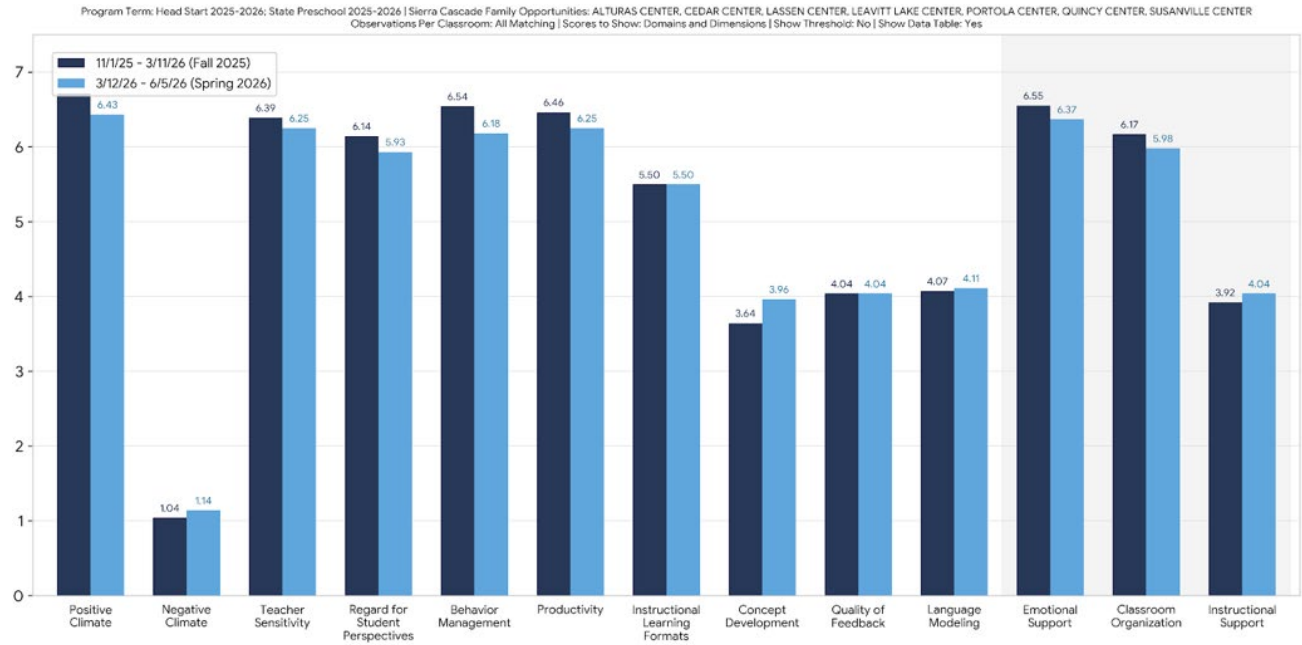
SCFO CLASS Scores

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is an observational tool that assesses quality interactions in center-based classrooms. SCFO trains classroom staff on the tool and supports lead teachers in becoming certified observers to ensure that each classroom environment offers quality interactions and learning environments though both intentional and spontaneous opportunities. Each SCFO classroom has a minimum of one CLASS observation completed by a certified observer. SCFO strives to meet at a minimum the national expectation of preschool classroom scores in each of the three Domains;6-6-3.

In the 2025-2026 program year SCFO performed two rounds of CLASS observations per classroom. The graph below represents the SCFO's average scores for the FALL and Spring observation and scores are right at or above the national standard expectation.

Class will Continue to be a professional development focus for SCFO to ensure that the programs, classrooms and teachers are at the highest level of quality possible.

5630 - Pre-K CLASS® Average Score Charts



HEALTH OUTCOMES

SCFO Health Services

SCFO has a high emphasis on health since children must be healthy and well-nourished to learn and develop. All enrolled children receive physical and dental exams along with health screenings that include hearing, vision, nutrition and lead. Staff work with families to ensure follow-up services are received for any needs that are identified and that treatment is completed. SCFO provides a variety of nutrition services to families including nutrition screenings and referrals, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, Farm to Fork and a high-quality food program. For infants and toddlers, health screenings and evaluations are done frequently to ensure ideal development for each child.



99%

PERCENTAGE OF
CHILDREN WITH A
MEDICAL HOME

99%

PERCENTAGE OF
CHILDREN WITH
HEALTH
INSURANCE

81%

PERCENTAGE OF
CHILDREN UP TO
DATE ON WELL
CHILD CHECKS

93%

PERCENTAGE OF
CHILDREN WITH
UP TO DATE ON
IMMUNIZATIONS



97%

PERCENTAGE OF
CHILDREN WITH A
DENTAL HOME

92%

PERCENTAGE OF
CHILDREN THAT
RECEIVED DENTAL
EXAMS



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

Parent Involvement

SCFO offers many opportunities for parent involvement. In 2025-2026 program year, SCFO parents contributed volunteer hours by being involved in program leadership, extending curriculum at home and much more.

Family Goal Setting

SCFO's Family Partnership Process includes supporting families to set and achieve goals that promote positive family outcomes. Staff work with families to utilize their strengths and skills to accomplish their goals.

SCFO families
contributed 24,009
volunteer hours

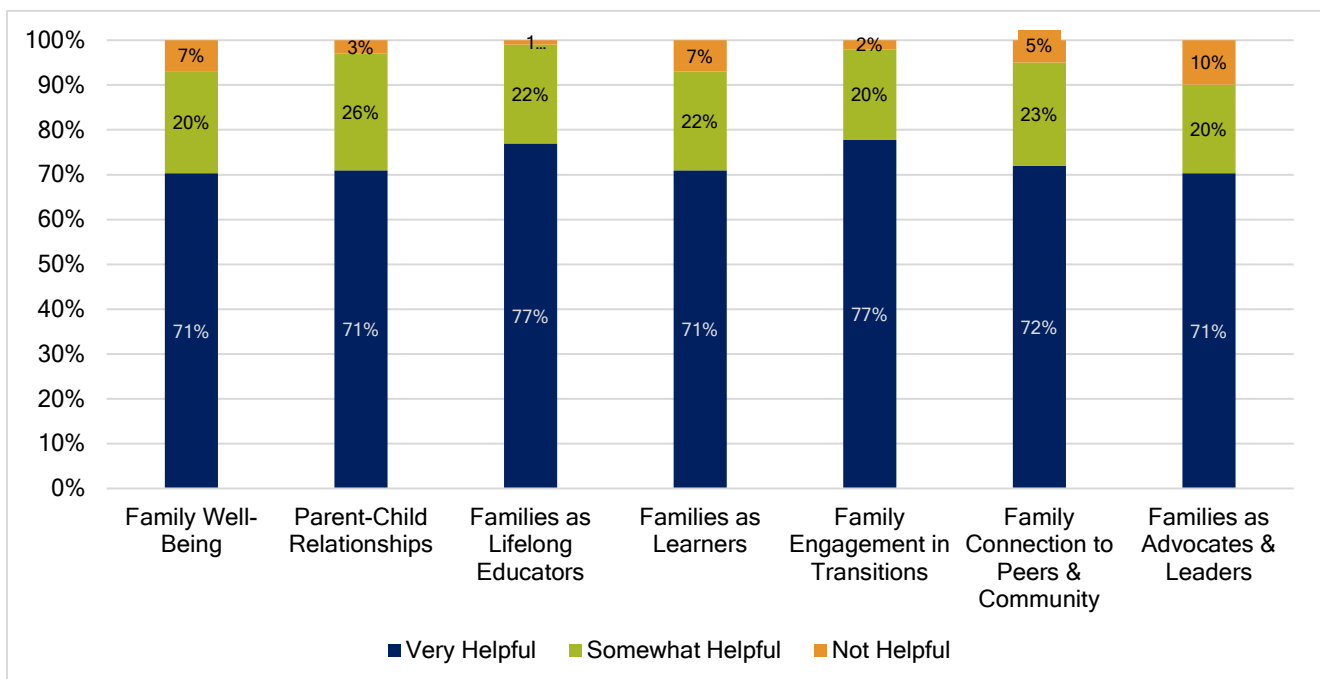


85% of families
completed their Family
Goals

Family Engagement Outcomes

All of SCFO's family partnership services promote positive family engagement outcomes. Results of the 2025-2026 Family Outcomes Survey, completed by parents enrolled in SCFO programs, demonstrated that the program was helpful to parents in all outcome areas. Overall, 95% of families responded that the program was "Very Helpful" for their child and 86% of families responded that the program was "Very Helpful" for their families.

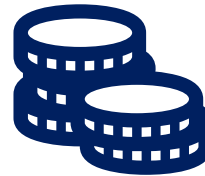
Program Helpfulness by Outcome Area, 2025-2026



FINANCIALS

SCFO Public Funds Received FY 2024-2025	
Head Start	\$3,119,248
Early Head Start	\$1,169,524
State Preschool	\$1,349,471
Child Care Food Program	\$139,031
In-Kind	\$921,579
Other Grants	\$44,458
Total	\$6,743,311

The SCFO Fiscal Department provides monthly financial reporting to the Policy Council and Board of Directors. In planning and performing the most recent audit in of Sierra Cascade Family Opportunities, the CPA firm of Vasin, Heyn and Company did not identify any deficiencies, weaknesses or non-compliances and determined the financial statements were free of material misstatement.



SCFO Budget & Expenditures FY 2024-2025		
	Proposed Expenditures	Final Expenditures
Personnel	\$2,285,144	\$2,310,811
Fringe Benefits	\$597,150	\$610,100
Classroom Supplies	\$9,800	\$50,740
Facilities/ Construction	\$399,437	\$329,105
Other Operating	\$2,346,712	\$2,521,246
In-Kind	\$921,579	\$921,579
Total	\$6,559,822	\$6,743,311

SCFO LEADERSHIP

Board of Directors	Policy Council	Management Team
Mike Butler President, Advocacy	Melanie Landry Chairperson, Janesville Center	Cindy Hogg Executive Director
Jennifer McQuarrie Attorney	Hannah Crow Vice Chairperson, Susanville Center	Christina Silva Financial Administrative Officer
Doug Prouty Judge	Kelly Hunter Board Representative Portola Center	Nicolette Swain Data & QI Director
Richard Belstock Financial Management	Marie Burmark Alturas Center	Katie Windle ERSEA Manager
Tina Venable Public Health Nurse	Jennifer Petrowski Cedar Center	Jennifer McCulley Education Services Manager
Laura Greer Child Development	Shantel Chavez Sanchez Greenville Center	Maria Altamirano Education Services Manager
Nicole Hinton Child Development	Autumn Smith Lassen Center	Andrea Huggins Health Services Manager
	Evelyne Stalter Leavitt Lake Center	Jessica Stading Family Engagement Manager
	Racheal Hernandez Quincy Center	Gina Wood Human Resources Manager

SCFO SITE LOCATIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES		
CENTRAL OFFICE 424 N. Mill Creek Rd Quincy, CA 95971 P: 530-283-1242 F: 530-283-1024	SUSANVILLE ADMINISTRATION OFFICE 38 N. Lassen St Susanville, CA 96130 P: 530-601-2114 F: 530-253-1043	
CENTER BASED PROGRAMS		
ALTURAS CENTER 802 N. East, Ste. C Alturas, CA 96101 P: 530-233-4134 F: 530-233-7707	CEDAR CENTER 450 Cedar St Susanville, CA P: 530-257-8220	LEAVITT LAKE CENTER 710-400 Willow Susanville, CA 96130 P: 530-257-7530 F: 530-257-9035
PORTOLA CENTER P.O. Box 1701 895 West Street Building #25 Portola, CA 96122 P: 530-832-1029 F: 530-832-4030	QUINCY CENTER 175 N. Mill Creek Rd Quincy, CA 95971 P: 530-283-0592 F: 530-283-3053	SUSANVILLE CENTER 195 Russell Ave Susanville, CA 96130 P: 530-257-2343 F: 530-251-5901
LASSEN CENTER 65 N Union St Susanville, CA 96130 P: 530-251-4050 F: 530-257-8227	CHESTER CENTER 158 Aspen St. Room 4 Chester, CA 96020 P: 530-258-3194 Ext: 1251 F: 530-258-3195	GREENVILLE CENTER 225 Grand St. Room 1 Greenville, CA 95947 P: 530-284-7195 Ext: 2711 F: 530-284-6720
JANESVILLE CENTER 709-435 Pine St Janesville, CA 96114 P: 530-601-2114 F: 530-253-1043		
Website: www.headstart4u.org Facebook: Sierra Cascade Family Opportunities Phone: 1-800-404-1242		



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