

## HEAD START

MONTHLY REPORT AUGUST 2021



**From the Desk of the Head Start Program Director:** We are so happy to have our classrooms full of children again! There were many tears on those first couple of days, but now that they have gotten used to the routines, the children are having a great time learning, playing, and making new friends.

**Policy Council:** It is a Head Start Performance Standard that we have a group of parents, two from each of our centers, who serve on the Policy Council every year.

The Policy Council meets on the third Thursday of each month at 11:00 am via Zoom. The purpose of the council is to give parents the opportunity to participate in making decisions about staffing, budget, and parent engagement as we strive to improve our program. Parents are our clients and we want them to partner with us in our daily work. If you are interested in joining the Policy Council as the parent representative for your center, please let your Center Director or Family Advocate know. The election process takes place during the month of September.

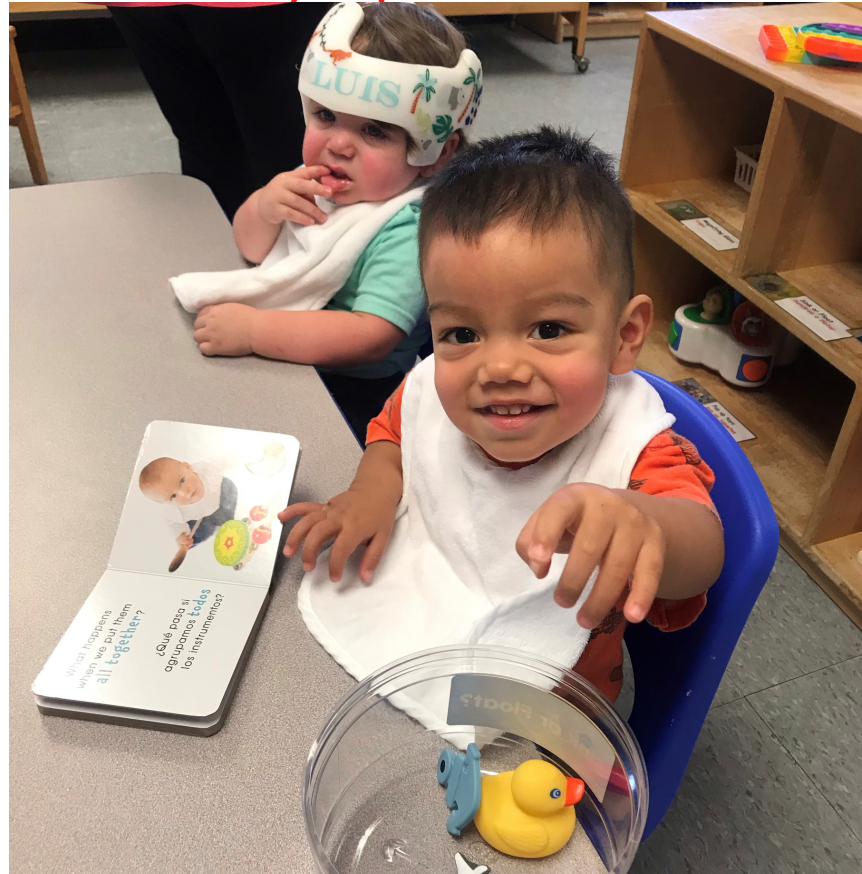
**COVID Prevention:** When a child or a staff member test positive for COVID, we are following CDC guidelines and closing down the classroom in an attempt to prevent COVID from spreading to others. Children who have no symptoms and test negative may return in 7 days. Children who have symptoms and/or test positive must quarantine for 10 days and be symptom free for at least 48 hours before they return. We will provide all of our families with a Fire Tablet so that they may participate in virtual learning during quarantine.



**EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS  
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— of Central Texas —

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Monthly Report AUGUST 2021



**Education Team:** During the month of August, the education team launched the annual training for this school year. The first week in August was spent welcoming and onboarding our new teaching staff, while the next two weeks were spent completing the various trainings the education team has worked on over the last few months to prepare and enrich our entire teaching staff. Initially our trainings were in person in various locations, but as time went on a need to move back to virtual training became the reality. In between trainings the education team was supporting the teaching staff as they prepared for the start of the school year with classroom set up, initial parent/teacher conferences, and finalizing documentation and other paperwork in time for the children's return. Our children returned on August 23rd with familiar COVID precautions back in place, but with excitement and enthusiasm for the new year ahead.



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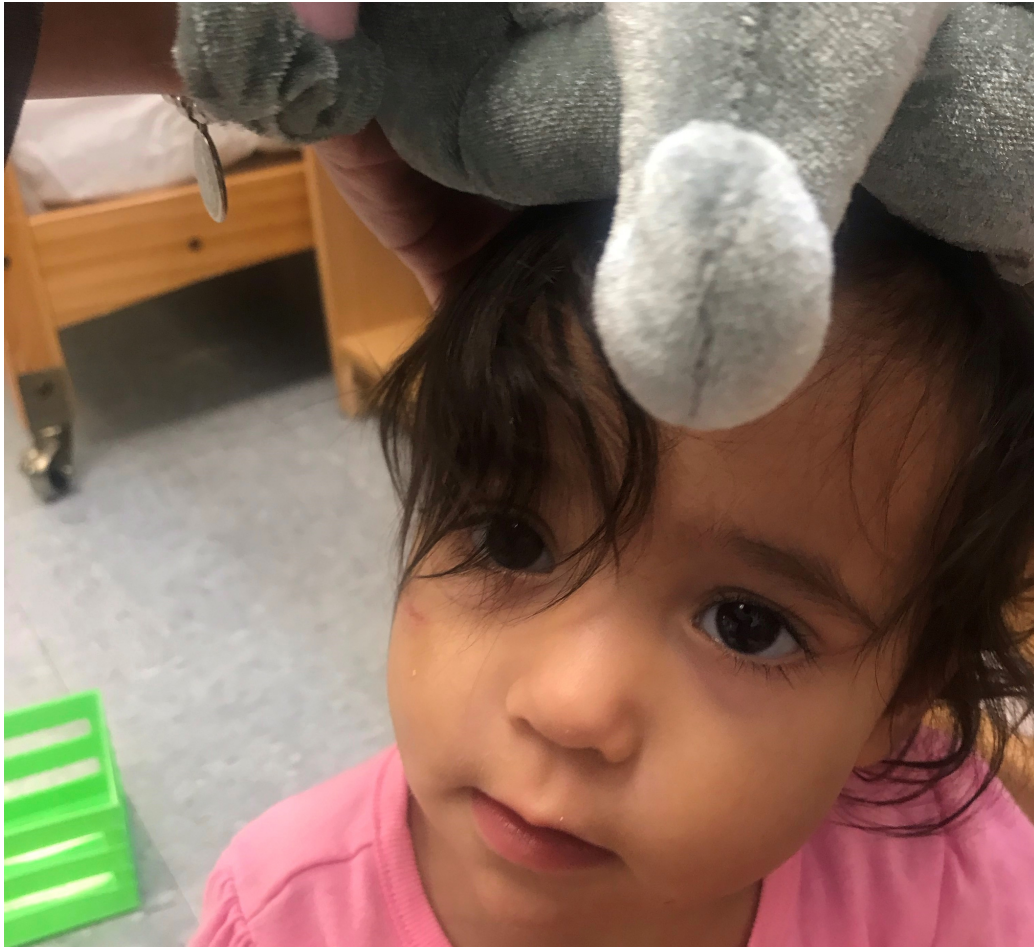
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**Professional Development:** During the first few weeks of August we were able to implement our annual training for staff that we have been working so hard on for the last several months. We had presenters from Frog Street, Hays Caldwell Women's Center, Corridor Primary Pediatrics, and Rachel Giannini . A few of our teacher leader cohort members also participated in our first ever Teacher Led Conference and it was very well received by staff! We can't wait to do it again next year. Our team has also started planning professional development for teachers during the upcoming school year.

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Monthly Report AUGUST 2021



**Mental Health and Disabilities:** We have been busy working on getting things ready for the new school year. We have partnered with Family Service Association Early Childhood Wellbeing to offer Mental Health Consultation to our Head Start Program. Annual Training was conducted in-person and virtually. Staff have been preparing for Parent Teacher Conferences and preparing rooms for the start of an amazing school year. Our new employees had focused training specifically for new teachers in Conscious Discipline, Second Step, and Frog Street. We are excited for this school year as we prepare for all our children with special needs. As we start the year off, we are spending time attending ARD meetings and ensuring we are working on the goals set out in each child's IEP/IFSP.



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— of Central Texas —

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Monthly Report AUGUST 2021



**Health:** During the month of August staff were provided with professional training on Health Topics required by child care licensing. The training was provided by Dr. Julie Fisher from Corridor Primary Care Clinic.

The Health Coordinator, Administrative Assistant and Center Directors also began the process of screening children for vision and hearing. This is an ongoing project that needs to be completed within the first 45 days of children entering into our Head Start Program.

**ERSEA & Transitions:** We currently have 453 children enrolled with another 28 children in accepted status which means they have been selected and are completing the enrollment process. We did see children drop as we started back up due to COVID-19 concerns amid the rising number of cases in which children are more commonly getting the virus. We will continue to select and fill those vacancies. Attendance is lower than our target goal of 90% however as we see more COVID-19 cases for children testing positive and having to quarantine, our attendance will continue to be negatively impacted.

**Our current enrollment for the 21-22 school year is as follows:**

**EHS 162 out of 171 (9 slots still available)**

**HS 313 out of 362 (49 slots still available)**



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**Head Start Operations & Safety:** HVAC and Mold Remediation is currently taking place at Hemphill CDC building B. There have been several HVAC, and plumbing issues at the centers that have been addressed during the past 30 days. State inspections were completed for all agency vehicles. Our Operations Specialist checked agency vehicles to ensure car seats and first aid kits aren't in working order and up to date. Repairs are scheduled to begin at Henry Bush CDC due to water damage in one of the classrooms and an office. The Operations Coordinator and Operations Specialist will begin to conduct monitoring visits using the safety checklist for the 2021-2022 school year.



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**Nutrition:** Community Action has started off the school year with a menu that features new items such as Apple Spiced Pancakes, Quinoa & Turkey Bowl, and Sweet & Sour Meatballs. The Nutrition Team has been working hard to feed children in the classrooms as well as the children who have had to participate in virtual services. The Program Nutritionist and the two Nutrition Specialist have started their first round of Monitoring Reviews for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP Monitoring Reviews are required by the Texas Department of Agriculture and they help to ensure Community Action is in compliance with the CACFP standards.

### **Head Start Office Manager:**

Welcome back children and families! We thank you for your continuous support during these challenging times! We have been hard at work providing our classrooms with essential needs as they get back into their daily routines. This past week each classroom received an Air Purifier to help keep our children and staff safe. We will continue making deliveries and providing support where needed.



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Monthly Report AUGUST 2021



**Family Services:** Family Advocates are working with families to schedule their first home visit. These are intended to actually occur in the homes of the families, but due to COVID, we are scheduling them via Zoom, outdoors, or at the center. During this visit, the Family Advocates will conduct the Family Needs Assessment and the Family Partnership Agreement. This will help us to identify what kind of support each family needs and help us to develop a family goal. We also working hard on recruiting our new Policy Council members for every center. This month we will be conducting an Agency Wide Parent Meeting for the first time ever on Tuesday September 7th at 1:00pm. Each center will also have their own parent meeting to elect and approve the Policy Council Representatives for their center. This year we want to focus more on Family Engagement and strengthen parent participation in the program. Student Family Reviews continue happening at every center for our new families to make sure we understand and are meeting their needs.

