TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
Tennessee CAREs
Early Head Start Program

2024 - 2025 Annual Report

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TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences

Information is *designed to fulfill the requirements of the Head Start Act reports to the general public.*

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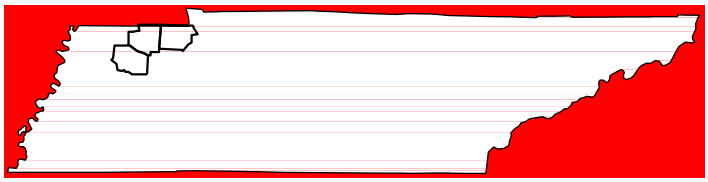
Tennessee Comprehensive Area Resource Efforts (TN-CAREs) Early Head Start is operated by the Tennessee State University Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences. The Center's mission is to design and conduct research and services that promote the educational, social, physical and psychological well-being of children and families; and interpret and disseminate research findings to improve public policies that impact educational and organizations and institutions in Tennessee and across the nation.

Tennessee State University Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences has a strong history and commitment to families and the community. The goals of Tennessee State University-Tennessee CAREs Early Head Start (TSU-TN CAREs EHS) Program are consistent with the mission and vision of the Center of Excellence. In addition, TSU-TN CAREs EHS is backed and supported by the expertise and commitment of the entire University. The following projects are examples of successful outreach and community partnerships that enhance the early childhood community along with the Early Head Start Program.

The TSU-TN CAREs EHS is a program focusing on prevention and early intervention with low-income families. Since 1995, this unique project has provided coordinated comprehensive, intensive, and continuous support services to enable families to attain self-sufficiency, while recognizing the integrity and unique needs of these families and children. Prior to becoming an Early Head Start program, TSU-TN CAREs EHS operated a Comprehensive Child Development Program (CCDP) in partnership with the local Head Start program. In which valuable research data was obtained and used to inform policy in the creation of Early Head Start.

The TSU-TN CAREs EHS Project is funded by the Office of Head Start under the direction of the Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The program's goals encompass successful health, economic and educational outcomes and long-term academic success for children. The goals of the program are consistent with the mission and vision of the Center by supporting the needs of children and their families.

TSU-TN CAREs EHS services Gibson, Henry and Weakley counties in Northwest Tennessee and is federally funded to serve an enrollment of 80 children. The service delivery options available to families are prenatal, and center-based.



The program consists of six center-based child care centers. The program is administratively located on the campus of TSU in Nashville, TN (Davidson County) within the Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences. The EHS Executive Director, Program Director, Assistant Director, Fiscal Manager, and Education Manager have offices at the Nashville location while the program's operations office is located in the Paris Housing Authority in Paris, TN. The Paris Operations Office houses the local management staff which includes the Administrative Assistant, ERSEA/Family and Community Partnership, Mental Health/ Disabilities, and Health/Nutrition content area managers.

Funding

Funding Sources	2024-2025 Funding Received	2025-2026 Projected Funding
ACF/Office of Head Start	2.726,649	$2,726,649
Child and Adult Care Food Program (U.S. Department of Agriculture)	$250,656	$129,890
Local Match	$681,662	$681,662

Budget

Budget Category	2024-2025 Funding Received	2025-2026 Projected Funding
Personnel	$1,421,346	$1,39,846
Fringe Benefits	$761,427	$664,489
Travel	$10,000	$10,000
Supplies	$136,151	$137,976
Contractual	$22,896	$40,600
Indirect	$222,724	$199,551
Other	$152,105	$234,187

Early Head Start Statistics

Number of children funded	80
Percentage of eligible children/ pregnant women served	86%
Number of children/pregnant women served throughout the year	111
Percentage of average monthly enrollment	98%
Percentage of children who are up-to-date on a schedule of age appropriate preventive and primary health care	97%
Number of children up-to-date on immunizations or have received all immunizations possible at this time.	108
Number of children receiving TennCare	106
Number of children with private health insurance	2
Percentage of children served who had a disability	32%
Percentage of children with disability who received special services	100%
Number of families served	99
Percentage of single-parent families	90%
Percentage of single-parent families in which the parent is not working	33%
Percentage of families without a high school education	1%
Percentage of family's participation in family goal planning	92%

Most Recent Federal Program Review

The Program had a FA2 Federal Monitoring Review the week of June 5, 2023 and there were no findings.

Annual Audit

Tennessee State University-Tennessee CAREs Early Head Start had no audit findings in the last audit. To view more details, go to:

http://www.comptroller1.state.tn.us/repository/SA/cu10065.pdf

Developmentally Appropriate Practice that Lead to School Readiness

TSU-TN CAREs EHS focuses on prevention and early intervention with families. The goals encompass comprehensive health, economic and educational outcomes, and long-term academic success for children and families. Starting with the expectant family in the prenatal phase and ending when the child is three years of age, Tennessee CAREs ensures appropriate continuity of care, and continuous support for school success. Current research affirms that the first three years of life has a direct correlation to school readiness, although Early Head Start children do not transition directly into Kindergarten, we recognize that preparing children for success in school remains our overall goal whether we are serving infants, toddlers or pregnant mothers.

In order to establish school readiness goals for this age group that are inclusive of the domains of language and literacy, cognition and general knowledge, physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, and approaches toward learning we have relied on a variety of sources. Partners for a Healthy Baby is the curriculum used for expectant families, the prenatal depression screen is conducted every 2 months during pregnancy. In addition, a postpartum screen is conducted once within six weeks after the baby is born. The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos is used in center-based and home-based options. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire – 3 (ASQ-3) is a researched based, valid and reliable tool used for developmental screenings of the infants and toddlers. Assessment is the formal and informal, on-going process to determine the strengths and needs of each child. The Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment Tool is used for all children in the program.

2024-2025 School Readiness Improvement

School Readiness Goals	% Growth during Program Year*
Approaches to Learning	**19%**
Social and Emotional Development	**30%**
Language and Literacy	**28%**
Cognition / General Knowledge	**12%**
Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development	**26%**

*Percentage of growth demonstrated by children based on data from three documented assessments conducted during the 2024-2025 program year.

Tennessee CAREs Early Head Start School Readiness Goals

Goals are aligned with The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, The Creative Curriculum, and the Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards. Goals are tracked utilizing Teaching Strategies Gold Online Assessment System.

1. Approaches to Learning

a) Children will demonstrate interest, curiosity, and eagerness in exploring the world around them.
b) Children will learn and use words to describe what they are thinking and doing.

2. Social & Emotional Development

a) Children will develop and engage in positive relationships and interactions with adults.
b) Children will begin to develop and demonstrate control over some of their feelings and behaviors (self-regulation).

3. Language & Literacy

a) Children will understand and begin to use oral language for conversation and communication.
b) Children will hear and distinguish the sounds and rhythms of language.

4. Cognition

a) Children will begin to develop and demonstrate the ability to remember and connect new and known experiences and information.
b) Children will learn and begin to use math concepts during daily routines and experiences.

5. Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development

a) Children will develop control of large muscles for movement, navigation, and balance.
b) Children will develop control of small muscles for manipulation and exploration.

Parent and Community Engagement Activities

Families are an integral part of the program in an ongoing way. TSU-TN CAREs EHS believes that parents are the first and most important teacher of the child. During the program year, families were offered many ways to engage at their child's centers. Parent were given the opportunity to participate on the parent committee and policy council. The center staff and parents coordinated center activities such as fall festivals, Week of the Young Child (WYOC) activities, etc. Parents were also invited to attend and participate in monthly parent meetings. Additionally, parents were provided with monthly home activity calendars to promote parents as children's first teachers and encourage learning in their home environment.

Community involvement was evident in the Policy Council, Governing Board, and Health and Education Advisory Committee meetings. The program continued to encouraged parents to sign up and participate in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library early literacy project. Also, community partners such as police and fire departments were invited to speak at family engagement activities to provide resources such as properly installing car seats, fire safety, etc. The program continued its partnership with the local libraries and invited librarians to come in an read to the children.

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