

Rutland County Head Start



Community Care Network
Rutland Community Programs
thriving community, empowered lives.



ANNUAL REPORT TO THE PUBLIC 2023

Pursuant to the Improving *Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007*, Head Start grantees must make available to the public an annual report that discloses certain information. The following is the 2022-2023 program year report for Rutland Community Programs, Inc. (Rutland County Head Start).



2023 OFFICE OF HEAD START FEDERAL REVIEW

Rutland County Head Start underwent a Focus Area One Monitoring Visit in April 2023. Findings (April 2023) cited no area of non-compliance or suggestions for improvement. One comment included in the report indicated:

“Rutland Community Programs’ intentional strategies supported the recruitment and retention of qualified education staff. Human resources data indicated the recipient struggled to hire and retain teaching staff who met Head Start education requirements. Results from a subsequent wage comparability study led the recipient to raise the teacher wage scale. The recipient also provided classroom staff with additional training and coaching to decrease burnout and support longevity. These efforts helped the recipient maintain a qualified workforce that supported children’s school readiness.”

FUNDING

The federal grant period for Rutland County Head Start is January 1 through December 31, although the program year runs September through May. For calendar year 2023, Rutland Community Programs was awarded \$1,914,330 in Head Start grant funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This award includes a (5.62%) cost of living adjustment (COLA) for staff, and Quality Improvement funds (\$131,929).

2023 Budget

(Does not include COLA and Quality Improvement increases)

Personnel		\$1,087,937
Fringe Benefits		\$364,546
Travel	Staff Out-Of-Town Travel	\$1,500
Supplies	Office Supplies	\$40,369
Supplies	Child and Family Services Supplies	\$14,285
Supplies	Food Services Supplies	\$6,790
Contractual	Health / Disabilities Services	\$7,800
Contractual	Other Contracts	\$16,186
Contractual	Other Contracts	\$0
Other	Rent	\$118,874
Other	Utilities, Telephone	\$19,620
Other	Building and Child Liability Insurance	\$1,500
Other	Building Maintenance / Repair and Other Occupancy	\$25,833
Other	Local Travel	\$300
Other	Nutrition Services	\$3,000
Other	Substitutes (if not paid benefits)	\$18,900
Other	Parent Services	\$1,200
Other	Accounting and Legal Services	\$12,000
Other	Publications / Advertising / Printing	\$12,000
Other	Training or Staff Development	\$0
Other	Other	\$11,935

Budget Expenses January 1, 2023-December 31, 2023



CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVED

Total number of children and families served

For the 2022-2023 program year, Rutland County Head Start served 50 families and 55 children (cumulative-includes families and children who left the program during the year). Federal funded child enrollment is 117.

Enrollment

Family structure: Of the families that were enrolled, 71% were two-parent families and 29% were single-parent families. There were 2 foster children enrolled in 2022-2023.

Income levels: At the time of registration, 13 children were from families with incomes below 100% of the federal poverty level and 24 were the recipients of public assistance- TANF (Reach-up) or SSI. Eight (8) children were categorically eligible as homeless and two (2) children were categorically eligible as being in foster care. 4 children were enrolled with an income of between 100-130% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG). 4 children were enrolled as over- income enrollees, above the 130% of the FPG's.

Homelessness: There were 10 families that experiences homelessness during the enrollment year, with 11 children at some point during the program year; 7 families acquired housing during the 2022-2023 program year?

Percentage of enrolled children that received medical and dental exams

At the end of the 2022-2023 program year, 98% of children had an ongoing source of continuous, accessible health care. 80% of children were up to date on a schedule of age-appropriate preventive and primary health care according to Vermont's EPSDT schedule for well childcare; of these, 31% were diagnosed with a chronic condition requiring medical treatment. Ninety six percent (96%) of children were determined by a health care professional to be up to date on all immunizations appropriate for their age or met Vermont guidelines for an exemption from immunizations). Four percent (4%) of children were determined by a health care professional to have received all immunizations possible at this time, but who have not received all immunizations appropriate for their age. At the end of the program year, 65% of children had continuous, accessible dental care. One child was diagnosed as needing dental treatment and had an appointment scheduled after the end of the program year. In Rutland City the only pediatric dentist retired during the program year. Due to the global health pandemic dental offices were booking appointments out due to them being shut down for patient care. Our program tooth tutor, a dental hygienist provided fluoride treatment to 10% of children with parent permission.

Information about family engagement activities

Families are provided with a variety of opportunities to be involved in their child's preschool experience. Parents participate in a minimum of two teacher home visits, two parent/teacher conferences and three family services visits. Parents are provided with volunteer opportunities in

the classroom, on field trips, on projects at home, and participate in staff hiring interviews. Parent Committee meetings are held at each site. The meetings provide parents with opportunities to give input into their classroom curriculum, plan field trips and to participate in parent trainings. Parents participate in a shared governance approach for the program through Policy Council meetings.

During the 2022-2023 school year families/caregivers volunteered in the school as library assistants and classroom assistants. Parent meetings, home visits, parent/teacher conferences were conducted via zoom, telephone, and in person depending on caregiver's preference (some COVID-19 practices were preferred by caregivers). Policy Council and trainings were all held remotely through zoom during the first part of 2022-2023 and resumed in person in the Spring of 2023. At the end of the 2023 school year, families joined staff and children at the playground for ice cream event for the end of year celebration. Close to 90% of families attended.

PROGRAM QUALITY RATINGS

Rutland County Head Start was awarded, and maintained, 5 STARS (the highest level) by the Vermont Child Development Division through its SStep Ahead Recognition System, Vermont's quality recognition system for childcare, preschool, and after-school programs.

EARLY LEARNING AND KINDERGARTEN READINESS

Curriculum

Rutland County Head Start uses The Creative Curriculum as its focal curriculum. The Creative Curriculum addresses goals in the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Outcomes Framework and serves as a guide for staff in the provision of materials and activities to support children's goals. The Creative Curriculum for Preschool meets all the standards put forth for effective early childhood curricula by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education.

School Readiness Goals

Rutland County Head Start's School Readiness Goals were developed by a team of Lead Teachers and Administrators, with input from parents. The following resources were referenced in this development: Vermont Head Start Association School Readiness Goals; Vermont Early Learning Standards; Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Outcomes Framework; Curriculum for Preschool; and Teaching Strategies GOLD. Family Engagement goals were also been incorporated into the School Readiness Goals.

Parent survey data, along with the low percentage of children meeting social / emotional expectations for kindergarten readiness underscores the need for behavioral and mental health support at the universal and focused/ individualized level. Parents' highest priorities for their children's readiness for school were related to emotional regulation, self-control, and listening. The

aggregate TSG data showed that only 45% of RCHS children met the expectation for school readiness and only 42% met the expectations for solving social problems. 64% of children are receiving either mental health or special education support services.

Rutland County Head Start School Readiness Goals

- Children will increase their language in meaningful experiences that require them to effectively express their ideas and feelings, listen, and understand others. Children will understand basic concepts about books, or other media, the alphabet, and letter-sound relationships. (Language and Literacy)
- Children will develop mathematical thinking skills to logically solve problems and make connections in the world around them. Children will expand their curiosity and motivation to learn by asking questions, making observations and building on natural experiences. (Cognition)
- Children will develop a sense of wonder, a willingness to participate, persist in their efforts, and have the ability to connect past learning to new situations. (Approaches to Learning)
- Children will develop early health habits to support physical well –being, use of their bodies, muscle control, appropriate nutrition, exercise, hygiene, and safety practices. (Perceptual, Motor, Physical Development)
- Children will develop their skills necessary to foster secure attachments with adults, maintain healthy relationships, regulate behavior and emotions, and develop a healthy concept of personal identity. Children will participate fully in learning experiences and form positive relationships with teachers and peers. (Social Emotional Development)

How RCHS Measures School Readiness

Rutland County Head Start utilizes Teaching Strategies GOLD Online Assessment Tool to track progress of all enrolled children. The TSG Assessment system is an evidence-based, authentic tool. Rutland County Head Start teachers input data, and make preliminary evaluations of student progress continuously based on observations and classroom instruction. Each child’s abilities are assessed in accordance with a developmental progression in six areas of early childhood development:

- Social Emotional
- Physical
- Language
- Cognitive
- Literacy
- Mathematics

Special Note on this Report's Data Context

Rutland County Head Start is in a rebuilding year. Like many Head Start Programs across the nation, RCHS is recovering from the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Workforce Crisis. Further, the program underwent structure and management changes. For this reason, the educational management team decided to use the current year data as a baseline in order to increase fidelity. The Education Team did not feel it imperative to compare this school year data to previous years due to the concern for lack of fidelity in staff reporting. The team will analyze school readiness goals and strategic goals next summer to better meet the need around literacy and STEAM (not researched) dimensions. Additionally, RCHS's data reporting system is in the process of improvement. The program has hired an ERSEA/Data Coordinator who is working to improve our data systems.

Enrollment and Demographics

Rutland County Head Start is at 36% its funded enrollment level. 38 children were assessed at the fall checkpoint. There are currently 36 children enrolled and another 10 are anticipated to begin in a 3rd classroom at Meadow Street Program in Rutland, Vermont. By February 1, it is anticipated that Rutland County Head Start's enrollment will be 46 children. Table 4, presents the number of children disaggregated by age, gender, and specialized support services. Twenty-one children will transition to Kindergarten in Fall 2023. Most of the children transitioning to Kindergarten currently receive either special education or mental health services.

Aggregated Data (all ages)

Aggregated data showed most of the children in the RCHS program met expectations in Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development. (Mean 66% across 5 TSG Indicators (range 50%-82%). Social and Emotional Development data also revealed some gains in development across all children. The mean percentage of children meeting expectations was 58% (range 42%-84%) Eighty-four percent (84%) of the RCHS children met or exceeded the expectation for following limits and expectations from adults. Seventy-one percent (71%) met or exceeded the TSG indicator for interacting with peers.

Children's Language skills, as a whole, ranged from only 21% in using print concepts to a 66% of children meeting the TSG indicators for comprehending language. As a school readiness indicator, the majority indicators of aggregated data (all ages) was less than 40% Meeting or Exceeding Wildly Held Expectations. Chart 1 summarizes the aggregated data for all children's data for school readiness, illustrating that in 3 out of 5 goals all RCHS children are below 50%.

Teaching Standards Gold Snapshots: Disaggregated Data

Table 3 provides data disaggregated by age and shows that at RCHS most 5-year-olds as of Fall 2022 were not meeting any of the school readiness goals in any of the developmental domains. Three years old data showed slightly higher percentages of children meeting or exceeding school readiness goals.

**Table 1: Ages of Children in RCHS and Special Support Services
(Enrollment 36 / 117 HS Slots - 36% Enrollment)**

		IEPS	MH	%
Five-Year-Olds	12	5	2	6%
Three-Year-Olds	15	1	5	33%
Four-Year-Olds	9	2	4	66%
Total	36	8 (23%)	11 (31%)	(54%)
Children Transitioning to Kindergarten				21

Table 2: 2022-2023 School Readiness Goals (All Head Start)

	RCHS School Readiness Goals (developed 09/2021)	Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework	Teaching Strategies GOLD Indicators	Meeting & Exceeding Widely Held Expectations		
				Fall	Winter	Spring
L a n g u a g e & L i t e r a c y	Children will increase their language in meaningful experiences that require them to effectively express their ideas and feelings, listen, and understand others. Children will understand basic concepts about books, or other media, the alphabet, and letter-sound relationships.	<u>Goal P-LC 1:</u> Child attends to communication and language from others	8a. Comprehends Language	66%	71%	79%
		<u>Goal P-LIT 2:</u> Child demonstrates an understanding of how print is used (functions of print) and the rules that govern how print works (conventions of print).	16a. Identifies and names letters	37%	71%	78%
			16b. Uses letter-sound knowledge	39%	72%	76%
			17a. Uses and appreciates books	29%	72%	84%
		<u>Goal P-LIT 3:</u> Child identifies letters of the alphabet and produces correct sounds associated with letters.	17b. Uses print concepts	21%	60%	71%

C o n t i n t i o n	<p>Children will develop mathematical thinking skills to logically solve problems and make connections in the world around them. Children will expand their curiosity and motivation to learn by asking questions, making observations and building on natural experiences.</p>	<p><u>GOAL P-SCI 4:</u> Child asks a question, gathers information, and make predications.</p>	<p>24. Uses scientific inquiry</p>	<p>21%</p>	<p>17%</p>	<p>27%</p>
A p p r o a c h e s t o L e a r n i n g	<p>Children will develop a sense of wonder, a willingness to participate persist in their efforts, and have the ability to connect past learning to new situations.</p>	<p><u>GOAL P ATL 1:</u> Child manages emotions with increased independence. <u>GOAL P ATL 7:</u> Child persists in tasks. <u>GOAL P ATL 11:</u> Child shows interest in and curiosity about the world around them.</p>	<p>1a. Manages feelings</p>	<p>45%</p>	<p>72%</p>	<p>86%</p>
			<p>11b. Persists</p>	<p>37%</p>	<p>55%</p>	<p>82%</p>
			<p>11d. Shows curiosity and motivation</p>	<p>55%</p>	<p>83%</p>	<p>97%</p>
P e r c e p t u a l, M	<p>Children will develop early health habits to support physical well –being, use of their bodies, muscle control, appropriate nutrition, exercise, hygiene, and safety practices.</p>	<p><u>GOAL P PMP 1:</u> Child demonstrates control, strengths, and coordination of large muscles. <u>GOAL P PMP3:</u> Child demonstrates increasing control, strength, and</p>	<p>1c. Takes care of own needs appropriately</p>	<p>61%</p>	<p>59%</p>	<p>94%</p>
			<p>4. Demonstrates traveling skills</p>	<p>82%</p>	<p>96%</p>	<p>100%</p>
			<p>5. Demonstrates balancing skills</p>	<p>50%</p>	<p>82%</p>	<p>96%</p>

o t o r, P h y s i c a l D e v e l o p m e n t		<p>coordination of small muscles.</p> <p><u>GOAL P PMP 4:</u> Child demonstrates personal hygiene and self-care skills.</p> <p><u>GOAL P PMP 5:</u> Child develops knowledge and skills that help promote nutritious food choices and eating habits.</p> <p><u>GOAL P PMP 6:</u> Child demonstrates knowledge of personal safety practices and routines.</p>	7a. Uses fingers and hands	63%	78%	96%
			7b. Uses writing and drawing tools	66%	89%	97%
S o c i a l E m o t i o n a l D e v e l o p m e n t	<p>Children will develop their skills necessary to foster secure attachments with adults, maintain healthy relationships, regulate behavior and emotions, and develop a healthy concept of personal identity.</p> <p>Children will participate fully in learning experiences and form positive relationships with teachers and peers.</p>	<p><u>GOAL P SE1:</u> Child engages in and maintains positive relationships and interactions with adults.</p> <p><u>GOAL P SE2:</u> Child engages in prosocial and cooperative behavior with adults.</p> <p><u>GOAL P SE3:</u> Child engages in and maintains positive interactions and relationships with other children.</p> <p><u>GOAL P SE4:</u> Child engages in cooperative play with other children.</p> <p><u>GOAL P SE5:</u> Child uses basic problem-solving skills to resolve conflicts with other children.</p>	1b. Follows limits and expectations	71%	81%	87%
			2a. Forms relationships with adults	50%	71%	85%
			2b. Responds to emotional cues	55%	68%	77%
			2c. Interacts with peers	84%	78%	80%
			2d. Makes friends	42%	49%	64%
			3a. Balances needs and rights of self and others	63%	75%	88%
			3b. Solves social problems	42%	53%	64%

* It is hypothesized that there are children that were unable to be rated in several objectives, justifying the significant drop in percentages from Fall to Winter.

Graph 1: Mean Percentage of All Children Meeting RCHS School Readiness Goals

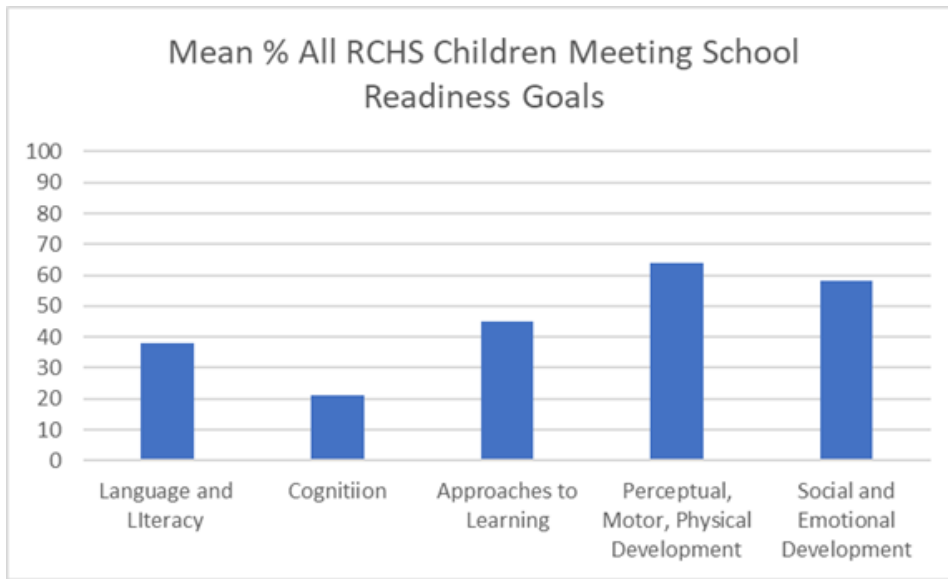


Table 3: TSG Snapshots: Percentage Ages 4 and 5 (transitioning to kindergarten) Below, Meeting, Exceeding School Readiness Goals*

Percent RCHS Children Transitioning To Kindergarten (4-5 yo)			
	Below	Meeting	Exceeding
Social Emotional	76	23	0
Physical	52	47	0
Language	71	28	0
Cognitive	61	31	0
Literacy	100	0	0
Math	100	0	0
Percent RCHS Children (3-4 Year Olds)			
	Below	Meeting	Exceeding
Social Emotional	20	70	10
Physical	40	40	20
Language	70	30	0
Cognitive	55	44	0
Literacy	100	0	0
Math	77	22	0

Note: Table 3 does not include data from Metawee School Program.

Kindergarten Transition

Rutland County Head Start works with all of the school districts in Rutland County to enhance the transition procedure for children entering kindergarten. Head Start and public-school teachers and administrators share child portfolios and review the child's preschool experience. Rutland County Head Start gives each child going to kindergarten a book about going to kindergarten, the opportunity to engage in kindergarten preparation nights and classrooms watch an intro to kindergarten video, in an effort to help deepen their understanding of this important life transition. *Off to Kindergarten* family training was provided for kindergarten families, facilitated by a kindergarten teacher and Head Start staff. Rutland County Head Start children receive a book about kindergarten, and classrooms and parents watch a video narrated by the Rutland City Public Pre-K Teacher Leader of kindergarten classroom and what a typical day will look like.

Individualized Learning Opportunities



Rutland County Head Start utilizes an individualized observation and planning process for each child. In partnership, staff and families assess the child's development and identify areas for growth across all domains of learning. Information is obtained through interviews with parents, observations of the child, and formal evaluative protocols (ASQ3), Teaching Strategies GOLD and, if applicable, information from a child's Individualized Education Program. Information collected from these sources is then used to provide for individualized experiences and services for children and families.

Table 4: Rutland County Head Start Children Receiving Special Education or Specialized Services

Child Demographics			Special Services/Supports					
Program	Age	Gender	IEP	OT	SLP	SPE D	1:1	MH
MET	3	M	x	x	x	x	x	
RUT	3	M						x
RUT	3	F						x
MET	4	M	x	x	x	x	x	
RUT	4	M						x
RUT	4	M						x
RUT	4	F						x
RUT	4	M	x					x
MET	5	F	x	x	x	x	x	
MET	5	M	x			x	x	
RUT	5	M	x					x
RUT	5	M	x					x
RUT	5	M	x					x

Parent Survey Data

Table 5: Parent Kindergarten Readiness Survey (n=20)

Areas rated most important for kindergarten readiness.

RCHS School Readiness Goals	Total
1. Children will develop and/or enhance gross motor developments	1
2. Children will demonstrate fine motor strength and coordination.	2
3. Children will develop skills in listening and expression.	16
4. Children will regulate their own emotions and behaviors.	15
5. Children will increase their abilities to demonstrate self-control and develop effective problem-solving	15

6. Children will explore and discover with ample time, space, and a variety of interesting materials.	1
7. Children will use their existing knowledge and new experiences to enhance their learning.	3
8. Children use visual comparisons of length, height, weight and area.	2
9. Children will demonstrate emergent writing skills.	7

COLLABORATION IN 2023

Rutland County Head Start partners with all school districts in Rutland County including the Metawee school-based partnership. Additionally, during the 2022-2023 school year, RCHS maintained and enhanced longstanding community partnerships with organizations that provide supports to RCHS families and children, including: financial assistance programs, homeless resource programs, Building Bright Futures, SNAP and Reach Up caseworkers, Federal Nutrition Program, Rutland Mental Health. New partnerships were established to enhance program quality:

- Castleton Faculty Partnerships
- Vermont Arts Exchange
- Let's Grow Kids
- Bowes Health Trust
- Community College Vermont

For more information about Rutland County Head Start please visit
rutlandcountyheadstart.org

