DEAR PARENTS, STAFF, COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF YDI

The YDI Early Childhood Education and Family Development Division is pleased to share with you the 2014-15 Head Start/Early Head Start and the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Annual Report. For the past 20 years, New Mexico families have entrusted YDI Head Start/Early Head Start to educate and care for our nation’s next generation of leaders. It has been our privilege and honor to serve. New to our division this year is the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership program, this report also includes information about this new community venture.

What distinguishes Head Start/Early Head Start from any other early learning program in the county is the comprehensive services we provide including: nutrition, mental wellness, health and dental, disability services and a strong academic and positive social-emotional environment. The Head Start/Early Head Start program provides full inclusion for both children and parents. Parents are strongly encouraged to participate in all aspects of the program. Parents, through their membership in Policy Council, parent center committees, or volunteering in the program, shape and define the YDI Head Start/Early Head Start program. Working together, staff and parents make a significant difference. Head Start is governed by parents for children!

Over 25,000 children and families have benefited from YDI’s program since 1995. This year, I am pleased to report YDI served 1,840 children between the ages of 6 weeks to five years old. This represents approximately 14% of the 1995. This year, I am pleased to report YDI served 1,840 children between the ages of 6 weeks to five years old. This represents approximately 14% of the

YDI Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council

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Each child is unique and can succeed,
Learning occurs from building relationships,
Children learn best when they are emotionally and physically safe and secure,
Teaching must be intentional and focused on how children learn and grow.
We believe children learn through play, learning should be fun.
Our parents are committed to fostering their child’s growth and development and demonstrate their commitment through their engagement, and
YDI staff are committed to their ongoing education and professional development to ensure high quality services.

Early Childhood Education and Development has demonstrated its effectiveness and is our best investment. Thank you all for embracing the YDI Head Start/Early Head Start program and allowing us to serve! Respectfully Yours,
Debra L. Baca

YDI formalizes partnerships with First Fruits Christian Academy and St. Marks in the Valley Day School to offer high quality Early Head Start services

Youth Development, Inc. has formalized partnerships with two private child care providers: First Fruits Christian Academy and St. Marks in the Valley Day School. In February 2015, YDI received a grant under the Administration for Children and Families’ new initiative for Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships. These grants allow new or existing Early Head Start programs to partner with local child care centers and family child care providers serving infants and toddlers from low-income families. YDI has selected wonderful partners with St. Marks in the Valley Day School (Tony Pruitt, Center Director) and First Fruits Christian Academy (Pastor Dennis Dunn and Lawrene Dunn, Center Directors). This partnership provides 40 Early Head Start opportunities for infants and toddlers 6 weeks to 5 years old at these locations.

Partnerships between child care and Head Start have the potential of offering children and families with the best aspects of each program. Specifically, partnerships can offer parents in need of child care for their children while they work or attend school with full-time, accessible care. And partnerships can provide children and families the comprehensive services and high quality early learning environments necessary for school readiness and future success. Youth Development, Inc. is pleased to partner with these two wonderful child care providers to provide high quality early childhood education and family development services.
KINDERGARTEN READINESS AND FUTURE SUCCESS

Youth Development, Inc. has established goals for Head Start school readiness and future success. These goals have been aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines, and the YDI 12 program goals. The school readiness goals also illustrate the domains that correlate with the goals based on the assessment instruments YDI utilizes to assess the children. The goals also illustrate the YDI-adopted Early Head Start and Head Start curricula activities and experiences and how these activities correlate with the overall school readiness and future success of children.

Early Head Start/Early Head Start has created school readiness goals based on assessment and observation results from both inside and outside of the classrooms, and are providing many opportunities for the parents to become actively involved in their child’s school readiness and success from day one. YDI uses both formal and informal assessments, screenings, questionnaires and surveys while collecting and aggregating data. The families are provided with engaging “take home activities”, Parent Child-Connections (PCCs), connecting the school with the home, while involving the parents with their children’s development and school readiness. The activities are connected to the theme based learning experiences that take place in the children’s classrooms.

The Head Start Children’s growth and development in the domains of approaches to learning, social-emotional development, language, communication, literacy, mathematics development, scientific reasoning, and perceptual, motor, and physical development are assessed several times per year, using the criterion referenced instrument Learning Accomplishment Profile, 3rd edition (LAP 3) and the results are used by the teachers to create an individualized lesson plan each week for the children, building on their strengths, and developing their emergent skills. YDI Early Head Start utilizes the Early Learning Accomplishment Profile (E-LAP) as its quantitative analysis of progress. The E-LAP is a criterion referenced assessment used by preschool teachers, parents, and clinicians in understanding individual skill development.

Quantitative assessment tool is developmentally appropriate and takes clinicians in understanding individual skill development. This quantitative assessment tool is developmentally appropriate and takes into account the patterns of uneven development, limited language and emotional behaviors. The results from this measure provide an overview of the parent’s perception of the child and how the child interacts with others. Based on the child’s age, the score reflects if there might be issues that need to be addressed both at home and at school. If a child’s score is above the cutoff score, the child is referred to the Director of Mental Health Services for observation with caregiver consent. Children can also be referred for observation by either teacher or parent.

For the program year 2014-2015, there were a total of 179 children from all three counties who were referred for observation by either teacher or parent. For the program year 2014-2015, there were a total of 126 children and their families who were referred to YDI’s community partner, Community Lighthouse for play therapy. The purpose of play therapy is to allow the child to process any difficulties he or she might be experiencing through the mechanism of play. The efficacy of play therapy is a powerful way of allowing the child to freely express their feelings and then the feelings are processed with a licensed counselor.

Each observation is completed with the teacher’s input and conducted through naturalistic observation. This form of observation allows for the child to continue functioning in the classroom setting without observer interruption. From the results of the observation, suggestions are compiled for the teacher to implement in the classroom and it is hoped that the suggestions will also be implemented at home.

Consideration of natural child developmental stages is a primary focus during the observation. Any suggestions provided are a starting point to support the child on the path to school readiness. A follow up phone call is placed by the Director of Mental Health Services to the caregiver to ensure that the suggestions were received, clarification if there are any questions on the suggestions and if there might be any concern that the Director could provide assistance to the caregiver.

Throughout the year, training is provided to staff and parents that includes prevention of child abuse and neglect education and reporting, “Building Blocks for a Healthy Future”, “Believe in the Miraculous” and “Campaign to Change Direction and Classroom Strategies from Promoting Children’s Success: Building Relationships and Creating Supportive Environments- NM Pyramid Framework”. The Campaign to Change Direction is a national initiative to recognize when someone has experienced a personality change, agitation, withdrawal, poor self-care or hopelessness and provide a mechanism for the individual to receive support. This campaign may be found at http://www.changedirection.org.
CHILD NUTRITION

Nearly ten years ago the U.S. government replaced the term ‘hungry’ with “food insecure” to describe any household, sometime during the previous year, people didn’t have enough food to eat. But whatever name is used, it is clear that the number of people going hungry has increased, and 29% of the children in New Mexico are food insecure (Map the Meal Gap, Feeding America, 2014). We are in a time where we see a growing number of children who are overweight, and we ask, how can that be, if so many are hungry? It is a paradox that hunger and obesity lie on two sides of the same coin. One may ask, “do parents purchase food that is filling or food that is healthy, or, the extra portion that is given from a pot a door are the unintended side effect of hunger itself.” As we witness hunger in our families, dinners are made from macaroni-and-cheese mixes and processed foods from food banks, with fresh fruits and vegetables being eaten only the first few days before the SNAP payment arrives. In an effort to reverse this trend, YDI has intentionally enhanced the menu to combat childhood obesity, to serve protein items three times a week for a weekend, a protein is offered twice a week before the children go for the weekend, food production is increased for all meals when the children return from being away, and second meals are provided. YDI Family Service Specialists work with families to seek necessary resources for nutrition needs. YDI’s Nutrition Component works with local organizations to provide nutritional needs and prepares them for a day filled with learning activities.

CHILD HEALTH AND WELLNESS

As YDI Start and Early Head Start, the children’s well being is of the greatest importance. Overall good health and wellness is influenced by our efforts, and YDI dedicates much of the time making sure children are both healthy and safe. YDI believe that healthy children make better learners and the program’s goal is to help children and families engage in healthy lifestyles and practices.

YDI utilizes several key practices to help ensure we are monitoring and caring for our children’s overall health and wellness; giving them the resources and tools their bodies need to develop. One key practice we utilize in monitoring and caring for our children’s health and wellness is to ensure our families in attending and securing sources for ongoing and important medical and dental care. At YDI, we know first-hand that healthy children make well-equipped learners. We recognize how critical it is to develop a love and passion for the child’s physical and dental health is well cared for, they are better prepared to handle school days and absorb what they learn and experience. We also know that when children receive ongoing medical and dental care, they are less likely to miss school due to illness or dental problems, which increases the child’s learning rate, and thereby, promotes academic success. At centers, we provide parental estimates of appropriate screening methods and practices, such as vision and hearing screenings, to further assist in monitoring our children’s physical health.

Staff will also work with community organizations to offer direct health and dental services at our centers. Daily health checkups are provided for ensuring our children are ready to keep healthy children. Health and wellness are also incorporated into classroom activities to teach children the importance of developing healthy habits such as brushing their teeth, washing their hands often, and eating well balanced meals.

Good health begins at an early age. Therefore, it is important to make certain that each child is given the best possible start to a path to good overall health in the early years and that their Early Head Start and Head Start experiences set the foundation for lifelong healthy living.

PREPARING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FOR TRANSITIONS

YDI Head Start/Early Head Start values the family as the primary influence in a child’s school readiness. Family engagement in school is important for a child’s ultimate success. Parents who are actively involved in their child’s education are truly engaged. When families have successful early childhood transitions, their children are more ready and have successful transitions into kindergarten and future educational settings. YDI Head Start/Early Head Start transition activities are relationship-focused and designed to help families learn to navigate with special needs and settings. During transition activities, families gain skills in advocating for their children and their child’s rights. Parent orientation provides an opportunity for families to meet Head Start/Early Head Start early childhood classroom, center and program. During parent/teacher conferences and parent/teacher meetings, parents and teachers discuss each child’s strengths and needs and develop individual goals for each child. Individualized planning is monitored when transitioning children with disabilities. YDI Head Start/Early Head Start collaborates with local early intervention agencies and the local education agencies to assist the children transitioning between agencies and to develop transition plans to meet each child’s individual needs. Transition planning for children with disabilities includes a discussion about the child’s strengths, needs, current developmental levels and any special considerations that should be addressed. Individual transition plans are also developed for children transitioning from Early Head Start to Head Start or their next placement.

During the 2014-2015 school year, 81 individual transition meetings were held for children with special needs and 91 individual transition meetings were held for children transitioning from YDI Early Head Start to Head Start.

Several activities prepare children and families for the transition from YDI Head Start to kindergarten. In the spring of the program year, Head Start meets with the families of transitioning children and complete “Meet Your Kindergarten Child” forms, transition plans from Head Start to kindergarten. During this meeting the Head Start teacher and family discuss the child’s strengths and needs and develop individual goals for the child. They also review the child’s Head Start assessment results with parents. With parental consent, the “Meet Your Kindergarten Child” form is forwarded to the child’s elementary school along with the child’s assessment results. Parents are also invited to attend Kinder Parent Workshops and they receive a Kinder Parent Handbook. These kindergarten transition services are designed to support families through the transition process and to help families understand the importance of parental engagement in the early education and the role of parents as educational advocates for their children.

During the 2014-2015 school year, 675 Children transitioned from YDI Head Start to kindergartens.

Community collaboration is essential to creating successful transitions for children and families. YDI Head Start/Early Head Start participates in several collaborative community groups including the Albuquerque Early Childhood Collaborative and the Metro Transition Team. Collaborative community with local agencies allows for a greater understanding and development and relationship building among early childhood professionals. During the 2014-2015 school year, YDI Head Start offered a training on the Nurtured Heart Approach that was attended by 180 people. In addition, 101 Kinder children attended the Kinder Parent Workshops.
SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Program collaboration between YDI Head Start/Early Head Start and the Local Education Agencies (Part B Providers) and the Early Intervention Agencies (Part C Providers) has continued to be a key factor in providing special education services to children with identified needs. Building a good working relationship with community partners enables more children with disabilities to be served alongside typically developing peers and reduces unnecessary duplication of efforts.

One of the main responsibilities of the Special Education Manager is to track the number of students who are referred for special education services and support teachers in developing effective lesson plans and modifications, as needed. Communication between the Part B and Part C Providers, the parents, the Head Start/Early Head Start staff and the Special Education Manager or Northern Component Manager is crucial in providing appropriate special education services to children who qualify for an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Enrollment of children with a disability into the Head Start/Early Head Start Program has to meet with the placement criteria as outlined in the American with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and the Head Start Performance Standards.

During the 2014-2015 school year, 213 Head Start children were referred as a result of teacher concerns, parent concerns, and/or doctor recommendations. 140 of YDI Head Start children received services outlined in their IEP. For Early Head Start, 25 children were referred as a result of teacher concerns, parent concerns, and/or doctor recommendations. 41 of YDI Early Head Start children received services from an Early Intervention Agency. YDI Head Start and Early Head Start met the goal of serving 10% of children with disabilities for the 2014-2015 school year, at 10% of the actual enrollment.

Two critical themes, Family Engagement and School Readiness, were major areas of focus in referrals and identifying children with special needs. The responsibility for school readiness lies not with children, but with the adults who care for them and the systems that support them. Child development occurs across all areas of development—physical, social, emotional, and cognitive. Teachers and parents can respond to the challenges and needs of our children and families. The staff who work in early childhood education services have a major influence on children’s learning and development. This is because the ways in which staff interact with children—such as whether they focus on a child’s learning, encourage children to explore activities, extend and challenge children’s thinking, promote meaningful activities, and are responsive to

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Youth Development, Inc. believes that continuous professional development is important to a child’s growth and development. As the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Naeyc) states, Early childhood education professionals develop a repertoire of learning and support activities designed to prepare individuals for work and on behalf of young children and their families, as well as ongoing experiences to enhance this work. These opportunities lead to improvements in the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions of early education professionals. Professional development encompasses education, training, and technical assistance, which is essential to providing high quality services to children and families.

As such, the YDI Early Childhood division has established, as its program Goal #3—To ensure high expectations that promote the quality of services by recruiting and training a highly qualified and skilled staff who understand and can respond to the challenges and needs of our children and families. The staff who work in early childhood education services have a major influence on children’s learning and development. This is because the ways in which staff interact with children—such as whether they focus on a child’s learning, encourage children to explore activities, extend and challenge children’s thinking, promote meaningful activities, and are responsive to

YDI EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION & FAMILY DEVELOPMENT—FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Public Funds = 100%

2014-2015 Teachers and Home Visitors Credentials

100% of all YDI Head Start teachers have a minimum of an Associate’s Degree
100% of all YDI Early Head Start teachers have at least a CDA credential
49% of YDI Head Start teachers have a BA or greater
92% of YDI Early Head Start teacher associates have CDA credentials
*YDI met the minimum qualifications for teachers

YDI FOREIGN AID PROGRAM FINANCIAL REVIEW AND AUDIT

The financial aid program is administered by YDI. A financial report is submitted to the Office of Head Start on a quarterly basis. Reviews of Head Start agencies are conducted by the Office of Head Start under the authority of the Head Start Act to determine whether Head Start agencies meet regulatory requirements with respect to program, administration, and financial management, and to help programs identify areas for improvement and areas of strengths as part of their ongoing self-assessment process.

The agency’s financial aid report is prepared by Moss Adams LLP in December 2014 in accordance with the Uniform system of accounts. The audit was approved by the OHS Policy Council on January 2015.