

**Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska
Head Start**

2025 Community Assessment

Strengthening children, families, and communities through quality education, comprehensive health and family services, and by fostering community partnerships.

Head Start Program (0-5)

Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start operate under the mission of *strengthening children, families, and communities through quality education, comprehensive health and family services, and by fostering community partnerships.*

The primary goal of Head Start is to provide comprehensive Head Start programming to enrolled children and their families, and to provide additional funding for expansion and/or collaboration to assist the unserved and underserved populations in the Head Start service area. Head Start strives to fulfill its mission by providing children who are enrolled in our program with comprehensive child development services in the following domains:

- Language and Literacy
- Cognition and General Knowledge
- Approaches to Learning
- Physical Health and Social Wellbeing
- Motor Development
- Social and Emotional Development

The Head Start program delivers comprehensive high-quality services designed to foster healthy development in low-income children. Head Start grantee and delegate agencies provide a range of individualized services in the areas of education and early childhood development; medical, dental, and mental health; nutrition; and family engagement. Head Start services are responsive and appropriate to each child and their family's development, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage and experience.

The following report is an overview of the 2025 Head Start Community Assessment, including relevant demographic data; the education, health, nutrition, and social service needs of children and their families; available resources; community strengths; and gaps in community resources. For further information on Head Start, or Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska, please refer to the contact information page, or visit our website at communityactionmidne.com.



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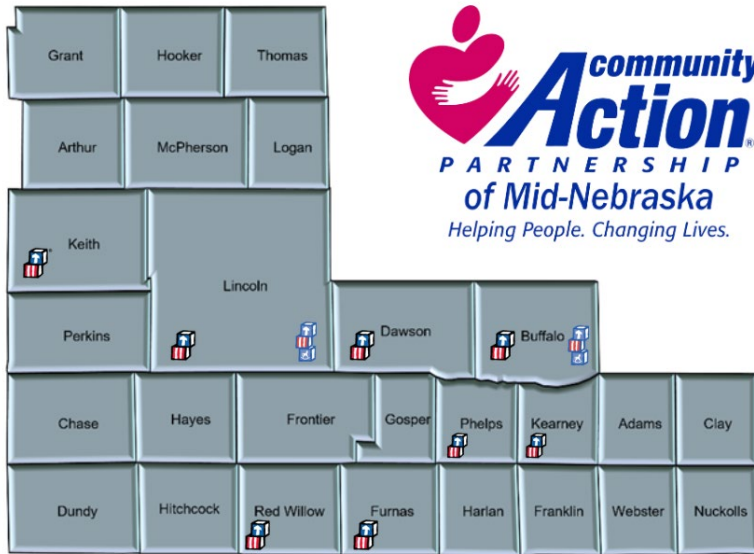
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Service Area | Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska



*Helping People.
Changing Lives.
Making
Communities a
Better Place to
Live.*

Head Start Center-Based Sites

- Cozad | *Full-Day, School-Year*
- Holdrege | *Full-Day, School-Year*
- Kearney Blue | *Part-Day, Part-Year*
- Kearney Purple | *Full-Day, Full-Year*
- Kearney Red | *Part-Day, Part-Year*
- Kearney Teal | *Full-Day, School-Year*
- Lexington | *Full-Day, School-Year*
- McCook | *Full-Day, Part-Year*
- Minden | *Full-Day, School-Year*
- North Platte | *Full-Day, Part-Year*
- North Platte | *Part-Day, Part-Year*
- Ogallala | *Full-Day, School-Year*

Head Start Home-Based Sites

- Dawson County
- Furnas County

Early Head Start Center-Based Sites

- Kearney
- North Platte

Contact Us

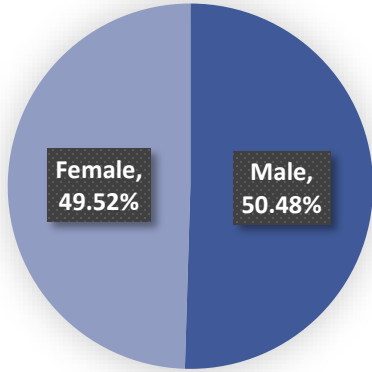
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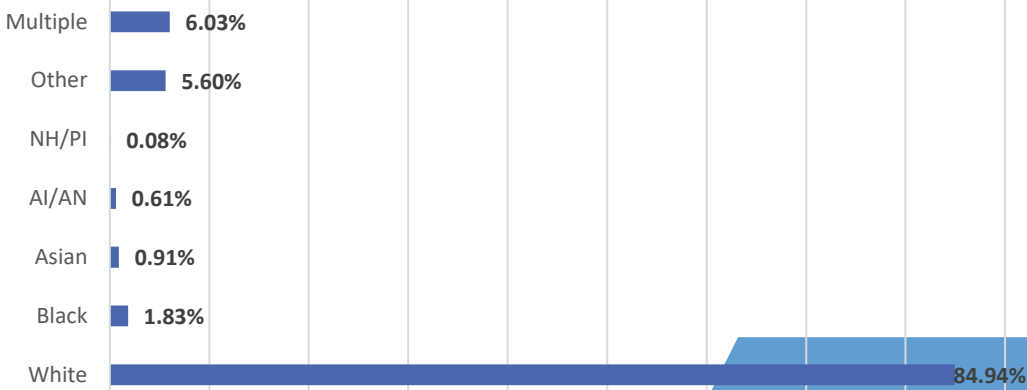
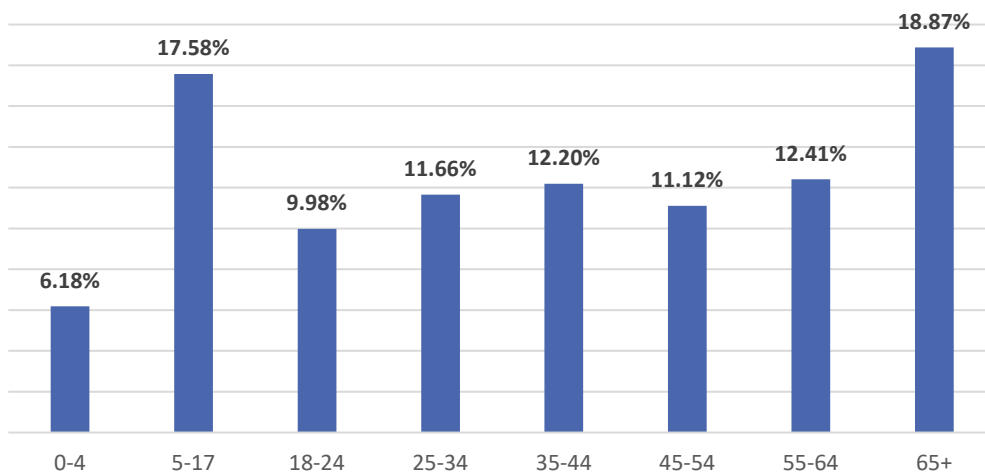


Demographic Data | Population Overview

A total of 147,600 people live in the Head Start service area where physical sites are located, which includes the following counties: Buffalo, Dawson, Furnas, Kearney, Keith, Lincoln, Phelps, and Red Willow. The following is an overview of demographic indicators, including gender, age, race, and ethnicity.



13.33% of Head Start service area population identify as Hispanic/Latino/Latina.



Demographic Data | Population Change

Data was gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau and Kids Count Data Center to assess the changes in population count from 2020 to 2024. The following charts show the population for each county in the Head Start service area in 2020 and 2024, with the population change in the last column.

Change of Population by County			
County	2020	2024	Pop. Change
Buffalo County	50,084	51,156	1,072
Dawson County	24,111	24,554	443
Furnas County	4,636	4,468	(168)
Kearney County	6,688	6,749	61
Keith County	8,335	8,148	(187)
Lincoln County	34,676	33,319	(1,357)
Phelps County	8,968	9,042	74
Red Willow County	10,702	10,409	(293)

Change of Population by County Age 0-5			
County	2020	2024	Pop. Change
Buffalo County	3,284	2,955	(329)
Dawson County	1,898	1,902	4
Furnas County	278	256	(22)
Kearney County	436	395	(41)
Keith County	378	370	(8)
Lincoln County	2,078	1,870	(208)
Phelps County	536	611	75
Red Willow County	627	610	(17)

Children <6 with All Available Parents in the Labor Force

County	2019	%
Buffalo County	2,884	75%
Dawson County	1,688	74%
Furnas County	219	72%
Kearney County	413	85%
Keith County	236	59%
Lincoln County	1,455	61%
Phelps County	487	84%
Red Willow County	421	62%



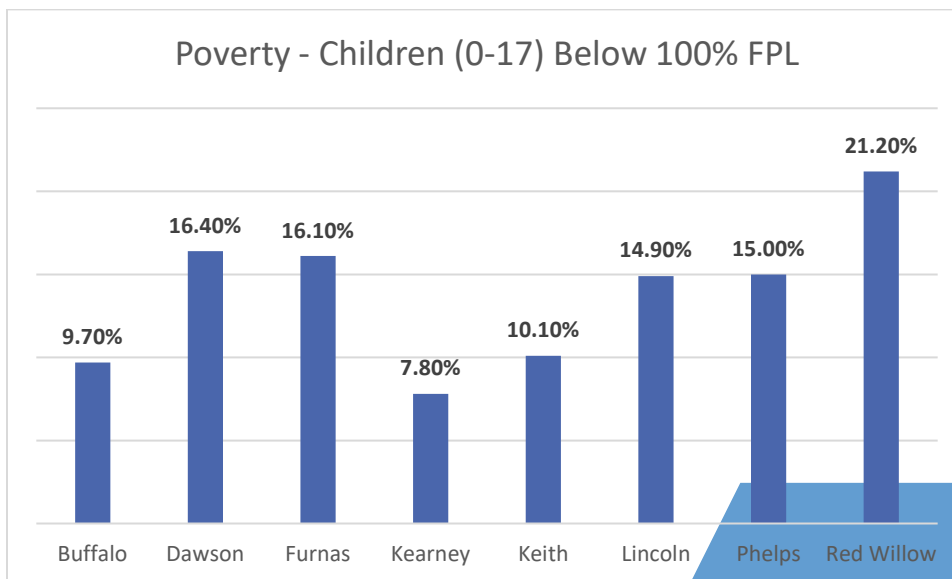
Demographic Data | Poverty

Within the report area, 11.86% or 17,015 individuals for whom poverty status is determined are living in households with income below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). This indicator is relevant because poverty creates barriers to access including health services, healthy food, and other necessities that contribute to poor health status.

Report Area	Total Population	Population in Poverty	Population in Poverty, Percent
Report Location	143,409	17,015	11.86%
Buffalo County, NE	48,068	5,297	11.02%
Dawson County, NE	23,789	2,935	12.34%
Furnas County, NE	4,512	557	12.34%
Kearney County, NE	6,606	442	6.69%
Keith County, NE	8,127	871	10.72%
Lincoln County, NE	33,324	4,278	12.84%
Phelps County, NE	8,712	1,186	13.61%
Red Willow County, NE	10,271	1,449	14.11%
Nebraska	1,916,409	197,300	10.30%
United States	324,567,147	40,390,045	12.44%

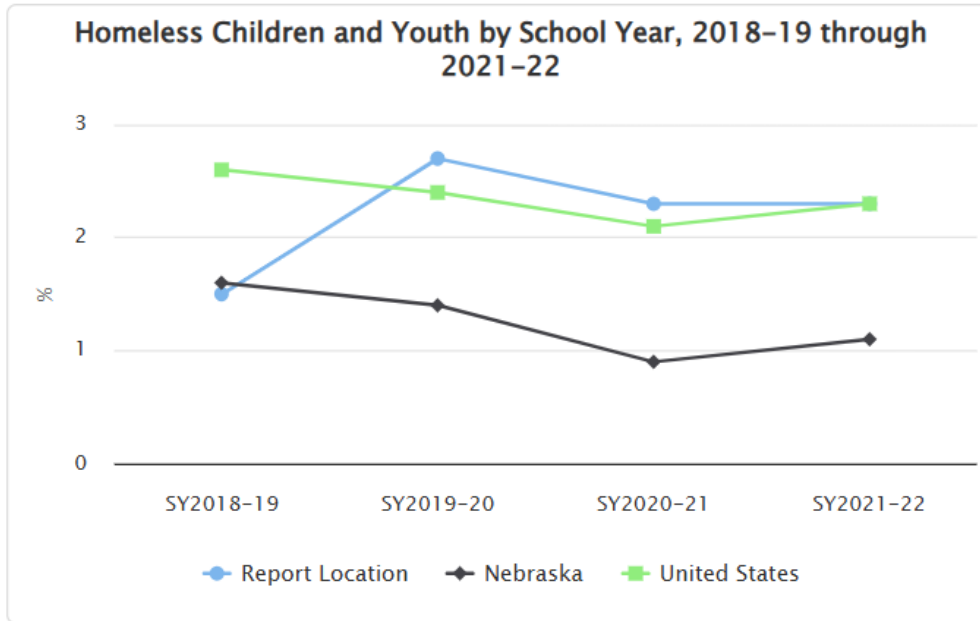
According to the American Community Survey, 2019-2023, 7,709 households, or 12.81%, are living in poverty within the report area. Phelps County has the highest percentage of households in poverty at 15.9%, exceeding the State percentage of households in poverty by 4.8%.

Additionally, in the report area, 13.3% or 4,594 children aged 0-17 are living in households with income below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The county with the highest rate of child poverty is Red Willow County at 21.2%, exceeding the State percentage of children in poverty by 9.6%.



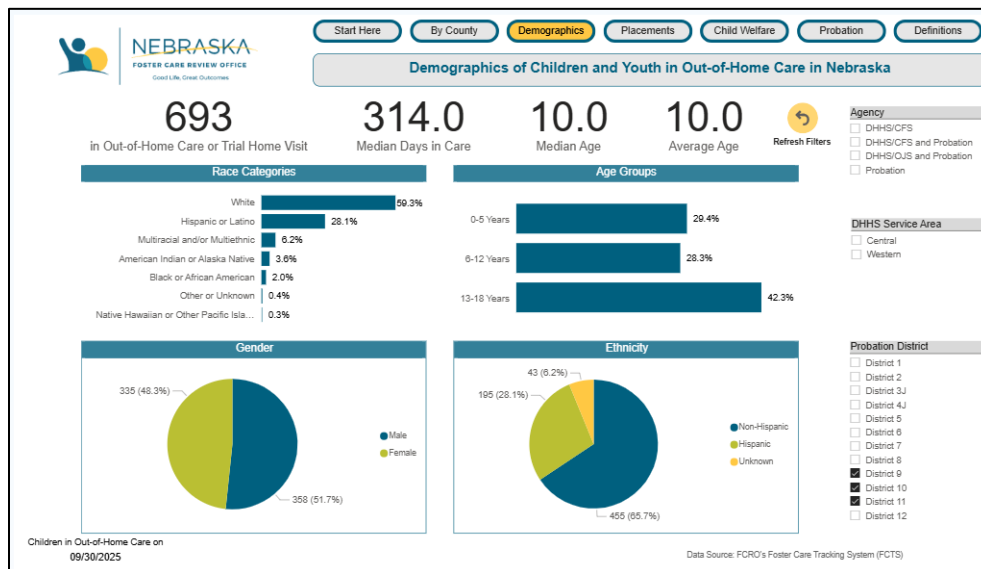
Demographic Data | Homelessness

In the report area, of the 25,698 students enrolled in reported districts during the 2021-22 school year, 541 of them, or 2.11% reported experiencing homelessness. Dawson County has the highest rate of child and youth homelessness at 7.57%, which is 6.62% higher than the State of Nebraska. Since the 2018-19 school year, the rate of homelessness in students attending school within the report area increased by over 1% from 2018-19 to 2019-20, dropping slightly in 2020-21 and plateauing in 2021-22.



Demographic Data | Foster Care

According to data found on the Nebraska Foster Care Review Office website, a total of 693 children are in out-of-home care as of September 2025. The service area for this report includes Probation districts 9, 10, and 11. According to the same source, 29.4% of children in out-of-home care are 0-5 years old, with a median number of days in care at 314.



Demographic Data | Disabilities

According to the 2024 Kids Count in Nebraska report, a total of 2,373 infants and toddlers had an individualized Family Service Plan through the Early Development Network (EDN), which serves families with children born with disabilities.

Children (birth-age 3) (2022-23)	
# of children	
With developmental delay	2,320
With speech language impairment	79
With hearing impairment	53
With autism	77
With some other disability	98

For the report area specifically, 2020-2024 data indicates that an average of 0.9% of children under the age of five and 5.9% of children ages 5-17 have some form of disability. The county with the highest rate of child and youth disability is Furnas County at 12.1%.

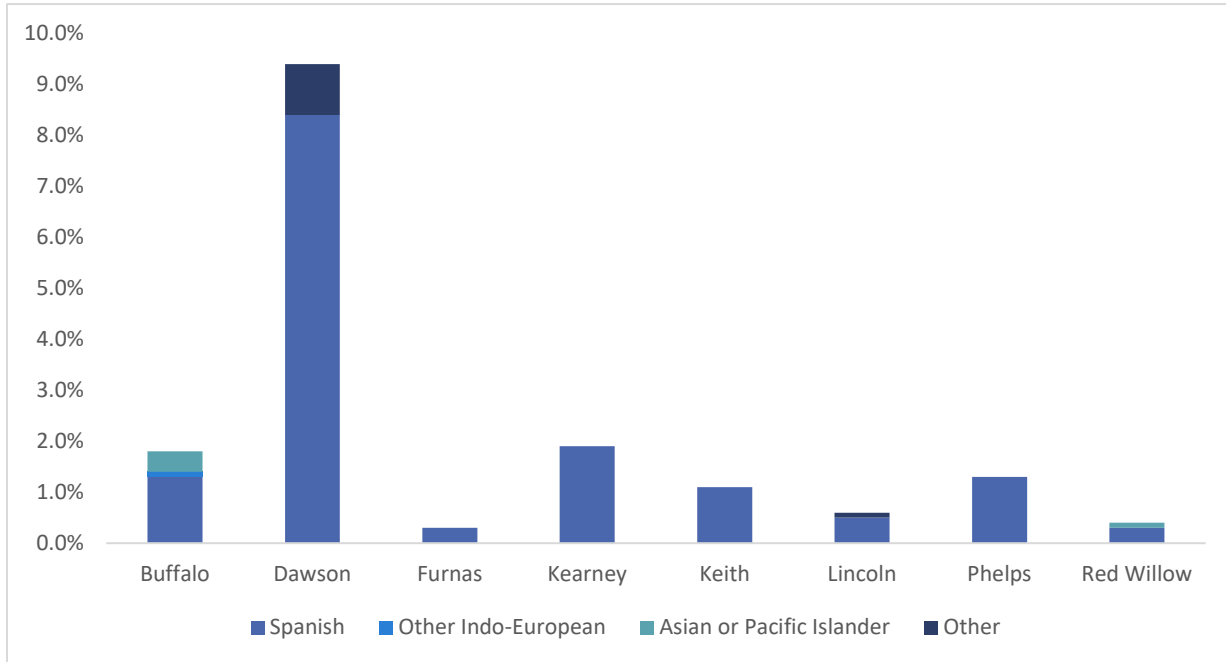
The following is a list of resources that are available to families who have children with disabilities:

- Department of Health and Human Services
- Public Schools
- Early Development Network
- Educational Service Units
- P.T.I. Nebraska (Parent Training and Information)
- Families Care
- ARC of Buffalo County
- Nebraska Child Find
- Answers 4 Families
- Autism Society of Nebraska
- Nebraska – Child Care Aware of America

Demographic Data | Language

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2020-2024 American Community Survey, an average of 9.5% of individuals five years of age and older speak a language other than English at home. The chart below shows the percentage of children age 5-17 who's primary language fall into one of the following categories: Spanish, Other Indo-European, Asian or Pacific Islander, or Other. As the data indicates, roughly 8% of children in Dawson County speak Spanish, with a small percentage speaking some other language. The remaining counties recorded relatively low numbers of non-English speaking youth in the year 2024.

Primary Language



Available Programs & Resources | Childcare in Nebraska

Buffalo County	Number of Facilities	Capacity
Child Care Center	16	1545
Family Child Care Home I	32	316
Family Child Care Home II	29	346
Preschool	6	174
Provisional Child Care Center	1	27
Provisional Family Child Care Home II	8	96
School Age Only Child Care Center	7	1015
School-Age-Only Child Care Center	4	425
Dawson County	Number of Facilities	Capacity
Child Care Center	5	582
Family Child Care Home I	10	100
Family Child Care Home II	16	192
Preschool	4	65
Provisional Child Care Center	1	88
Provisional Family Child Care Home II	3	34
School Age Only Child Care Center	1	180

Furnas County	Number of Facilities	Capacity
Child Care Center	1	50
Family Child Care Home I	3	30
Family Child Care Home II	6	72
Preschool	1	25
Provisional Family Child Care Home I	1	10
Provisional Family Child Care Home II	2	22
Kearney County	Number of Facilities	Capacity
Child Care Center	1	56
Family Child Care Home I	8	80
Family Child Care Home II	7	84
Preschool	1	12
Provisional Family Child Care Home I	2	18
Provisional Family Child Care Home II	1	12
School-Age-Only Child Care Center	1	30
Keith County	Number of Facilities	Capacity
Child Care Center	2	113
Family Child Care Home I	6	60
Family Child Care Home II	2	24
Preschool	1	12
Provisional Family Child Care Home I	1	8
Lincoln County	Number of Facilities	Capacity
Child Care Center	11	872
Family Child Care Home I	3	30
Family Child Care Home II	8	96
Preschool	3	99
Provisional Family Child Care Home II	1	12
School-Age-Only Child Care Center	1	50
Phelps County	Number of Facilities	Capacity
Child Care Center	3	242
Family Child Care Home I	4	40
Family Child Care Home II	6	72
Preschool	2	41

Provisional Family Child Care Home I	1	10
Provisional Family Child Care Home II	3	36
School Age Only Child Care Center	1	80
Red Willow County	Number of Facilities	Capacity
Child Care Center	5	276
Family Child Care Home I	7	70
Family Child Care Home II	4	48
Preschool	3	66
Provisional Child Care Center	1	10

Information current as of 2/20/26

Head Start Parent Satisfaction Highlights | Fall 2025

A summary of parent feedback from our 2025 Head Start Center-Based Parent Experience and Satisfaction Survey.

Participation	109 parents responded from all centers
Overall Satisfaction	94% satisfied overall
Safety	89% feel their child is safe
Staff Approachability	88% find staff approachable & helpful
Activities	86% rated variety of activities 'Excellent'
Would Recommend	94% would recommend Head Start to other parents

Strengths Noted by Families

Families praised caring, bilingual, and dedicated staff, strong communication, engaging curriculum, classroom activities, family events, and a safe, home-like environment. Parents frequently said their children love coming to Head Start.

Areas for Growth

Common suggestions included improving communication consistency (daily updates, notifications), reducing staff turnover, addressing parking and drop-off logistics, and adding more outdoor/playground options. Over 70% reported no major concerns.

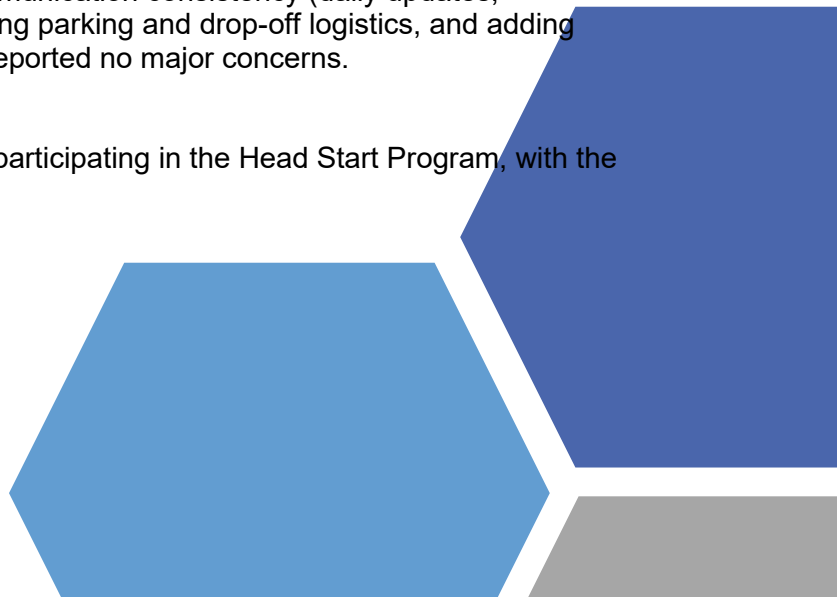
Family Engagement Snapshot

Families were asked how long they had been participating in the Head Start Program, with the following results:

44% | less than 1 year

33% | 1-2 years

23% | 3+ years



Most families (61%) heard about Head Start through friends or family.

Parent Voices

“Feels like a family.”

“Great communication and care.”

“My child loves coming every day.”

“Staff go above and beyond.”

Self-Assessment Analysis | 2025-2026

Location	Strengths of the Program	Strengths of the Center/Site
Cozad	That our families see the importance of our program and support us	The relationships we have with the families and children
	The Head Start Policies and Procedures that we have in place	The community is willing to help us when needed- Dental, vision and physicals
Dawson	Knows resources in the area	Serving families across larger area
		Spanish speaking
Furnas	Services in home	Community partnerships
	Referrals for families and Health assessments/services	In-Kind goal met
	Well known in this area of NE	Strong Policy Council Members
Holdrege	Offering continuing training to staff	Staff wanting to be here and have good attendance
	Central Office staff willing to help with Centers that are short staffed	Motivated staff
	Different races, diversity, special needs	Team work and communication
Kearney	Here for our families and willing to help them	Have great relationships with our families
	HS has policies and procedures in place to help the programs be the best they can be	Have great partnerships within the community
Lexington	Help families	Very engaged with children
	Dual Language learning	Family and child relationships
	All centers help each other	Keep kids active
McCook	Being able to ask for help	Strong team
	Positive Central Office Staff	Hard working team
		Continued growth
Minden	Strong central office team that is there to support our staff and centers	Our willingness to stick together in any situation
		Strong community support (library, public preschool, etc)
North Platte	Providing resources	New ideas
	Advocating	Interest in the wellbeing of children

NP EHS	Scheduled routines	Communication
	Accommodating	Dependable employees
Ogallala	Ample training opportunities	Good working environment
		Good communication
Kearney EHS	Helping the parents that utilize our program correctly	Everyone genuinely cares about the kids
	Strong Curriculum We set the families up for success	
Management	Active Board members, w/HS expertise	Assist with college coursework, if applicable
	Strong attendance	Training opportunities for all staff
	Tri-Partite structure-private, public and consumer	New Hire Orientation for agency and program
	Board represents all of the service area	Family Service Assistant and Family Educator Mentors
	Former HS parent on BOD	Curriculum training combined with Pyramid Model training
	PC Chairperson sits on the Board	Have begun incorporating Standard Response Protocol
	Past PC Community Representative on Board	Coaching program
	Past PC Parent Representative on the Board	
	5-year term limit enhances PC knowledge	
	Tenured CEO, CFO, Business and Planning Director	
	Established Schedule for planning-strategic planning	
	Updating processes/systems, as needed, to ensure quality	

https://fcro.nebraska.gov/data_dashboards.html

<https://kidscountnebraska.com/home-2-2-2/>

DHHS Early Childhood Capacity Count by County

