



Head Start & Early Head Start Annual Report

2024-2025

Program Overview

The SIUE Head Start and Early Head Start program served more than 357 families and children from birth through age five, including children with special needs, throughout St. Clair County during the 2024-2025 program year. The program also provided services to expectant mothers. The program was housed in seven early childhood centers managed directly by SIUE staff, one collaboration site and one Home Based Option. The program included a rigorous school readiness program and offered comprehensive services to children and families in the areas of instructional early learning, health, and family well-being to ensure that children are ready to learn.



Belleville Head Start Center

1404 East Main Street
Belleville, IL 6222

Bluffview Head Center

8100 Bunkum Road
Caseyville, IL 62232

Cahokia Head Start Center

150 Edgar Street
Cahokia, IL 62206

JJK Head Start Center

101 Jackie Joyner Kersee Circle
East St. Louis, IL 62204

Lessie Bates Collaboration

1045 State Street
East St. Louis, IL 62201

Lovejoy Head Start Center

120 N 6th Street
Brooklyn, IL 62059

New Life Head Start Center

689 Scott Troy Rd.
Lebanon, IL 62254

SIUE Discovery Center for Little Scholars

601 James R. Thompson Blvd.
Bldg. D, Room 1027
East St. Louis, IL 62201

Key Highlights

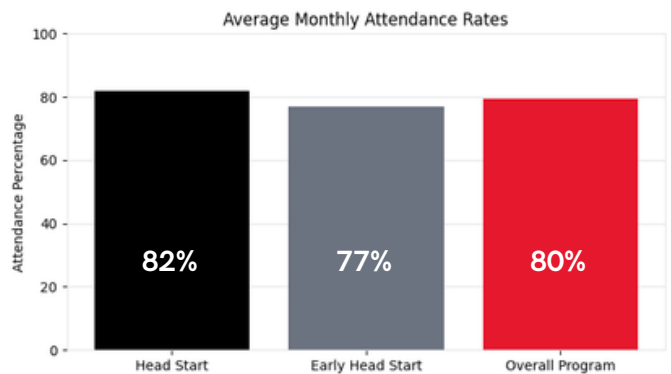
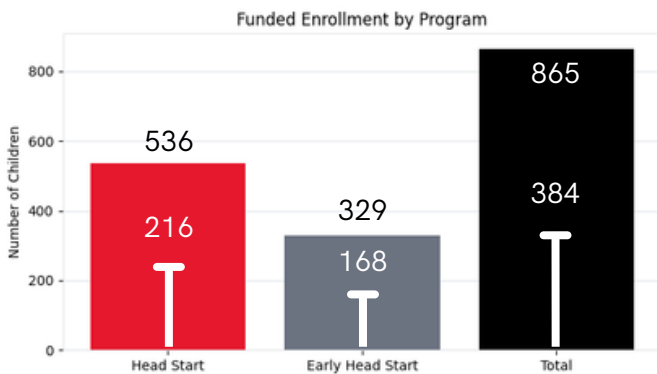
Comparison of current-year data with prior-year outcomes demonstrates steady progress and sustained strengths across key program areas. Health outcomes, including preventive care and immunization rates, remained strong and showed improvement over the previous program year. Classroom quality indicators, including CLASS scores, continued to exceed established quality thresholds, reflecting consistent instructional practices across sites. Family engagement indicators remained high, demonstrating ongoing success in partnering with families to support child development and family well-being. These trends reflect the program's commitment to continuous improvement and data-informed decision-making.



All SIUE Head Start and Early Head Start centers have received recognition by ExceleRate Illinois by going beyond quality standards in three areas: learning environment and teaching quality; administrative standards; and training & education. ExceleRate Illinois is a statewide quality recognition and improvement system designed to make continuous quality improvement an everyday priority among early learning providers. The program establishes standards for helping infants, toddlers and preschool age children develop intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally. It provides a framework for early learning professionals to identify opportunities for improvement, increase their skills and take steps to make positive changes. Other notable program recognitions include several Head Start/Early Head Start parents, teachers, a home visitor and an administrator who have received Parent of the Year, Teacher of the Year, and Administrator of the Year state and regional awards in recent years.

Enrollment & Attendance

During the 2024–2025 program year, the SIUE Head Start and Early Head Start Program maintained a funded enrollment capacity of 865 children, reflecting a significant regional investment in early childhood services across St. Clair County. Cumulative enrollment reached 384 children at the time of reporting. This figure represents enrollment to date rather than the final annual total and reflects ongoing recruitment and enrollment activity throughout the program year.



These attendance levels demonstrate consistent family participation and reflect program efforts to address attendance barriers through family engagement, transportation coordination, and responsive communication with caregivers. Attendance trends are reviewed regularly to identify children and families who may benefit from additional outreach or individualized supports.



Recruitment Strategies

Recruitment and enrollment activities during the 2024-2025 program year focused on strengthening community partnerships and improving enrollment responsiveness. The program collaborated with local agencies, health providers, and community organizations to identify eligible families and reduce enrollment barriers. Enrollment data was reviewed regularly to monitor trends and inform outreach strategies.



During the 2024-2025 program year, the SIUE Head Start and Early Head Start Program continued to prioritize staffing stability and workforce capacity as essential components of service delivery. Building on lessons learned during the previous program year, the program implemented targeted recruitment, onboarding, and retention strategies to support classroom continuity and minimize service disruptions. While staffing challenges continue to affect early childhood programs nationally, SIUE maintained consistent service delivery across program options and continued to provide comprehensive services to enrolled children and families. Ongoing monitoring of staffing patterns informed enrollment pacing and classroom operations to ensure compliance with Head Start Program Performance Standards while maintaining instructional quality.

Parent Involvement

Participation data reflects the program's comprehensive approach to supporting both children and families. Family engagement remained a program strength. A total of 236 parents and guardians volunteered across centers and program activities, and 150 family events and meetings were held during the reporting period. The program delivered 344 family support services, which included assistance related to housing stability, employment readiness, health care access, and family goal setting. In addition, 53 families participated in job training or workforce development opportunities, supporting family economic stability.



236

PARENT &
GUARDIAN
VOLUNTEERS

150

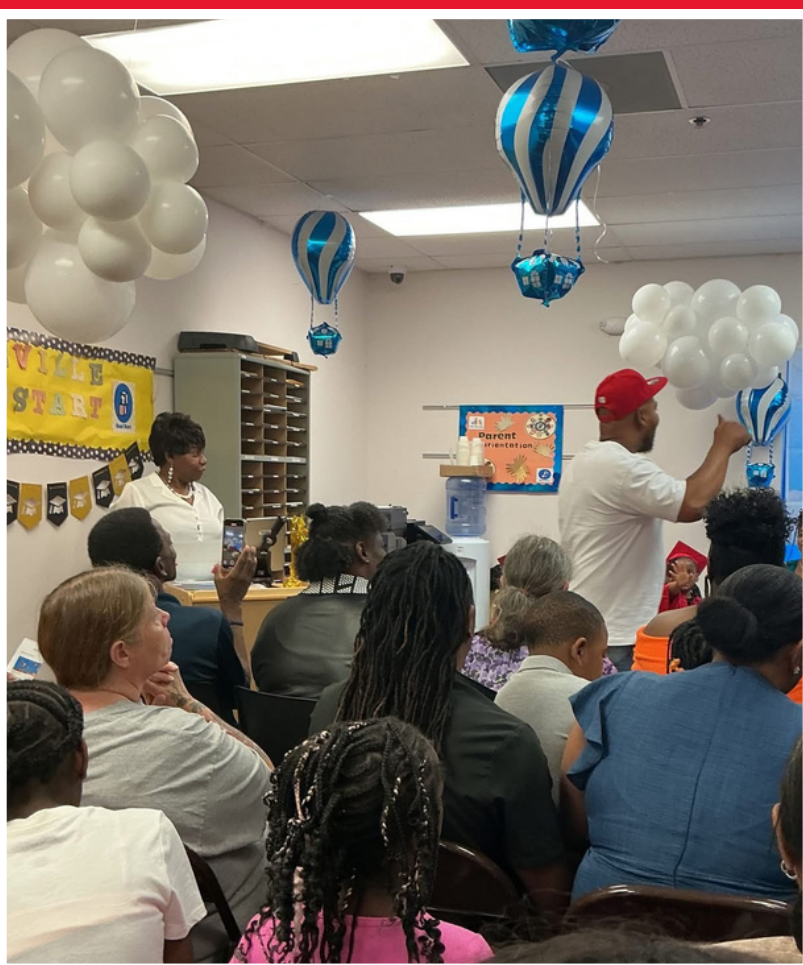
FAMILY EVENTS
AND MEETINGS

344

FAMILY SUPPORT
SERVICES
DELIVERED

Shared Governance

Shared governance remained a central component of program operations during the 2024-2025 program year through active Policy Council participation. The council included nine elected representatives and six alternates, totaling 15 members who contributed to program planning, oversight, and decision-making. Policy Council members actively participated in program planning, review, and decision-making processes. The program provided ongoing orientation and support to ensure members understood their roles and responsibilities within the Head Start governance structure. Parent leaders contributed to discussions related to program services, policies, and priorities, strengthening transparency and accountability. These efforts supported meaningful parent voice and leadership development across the program.



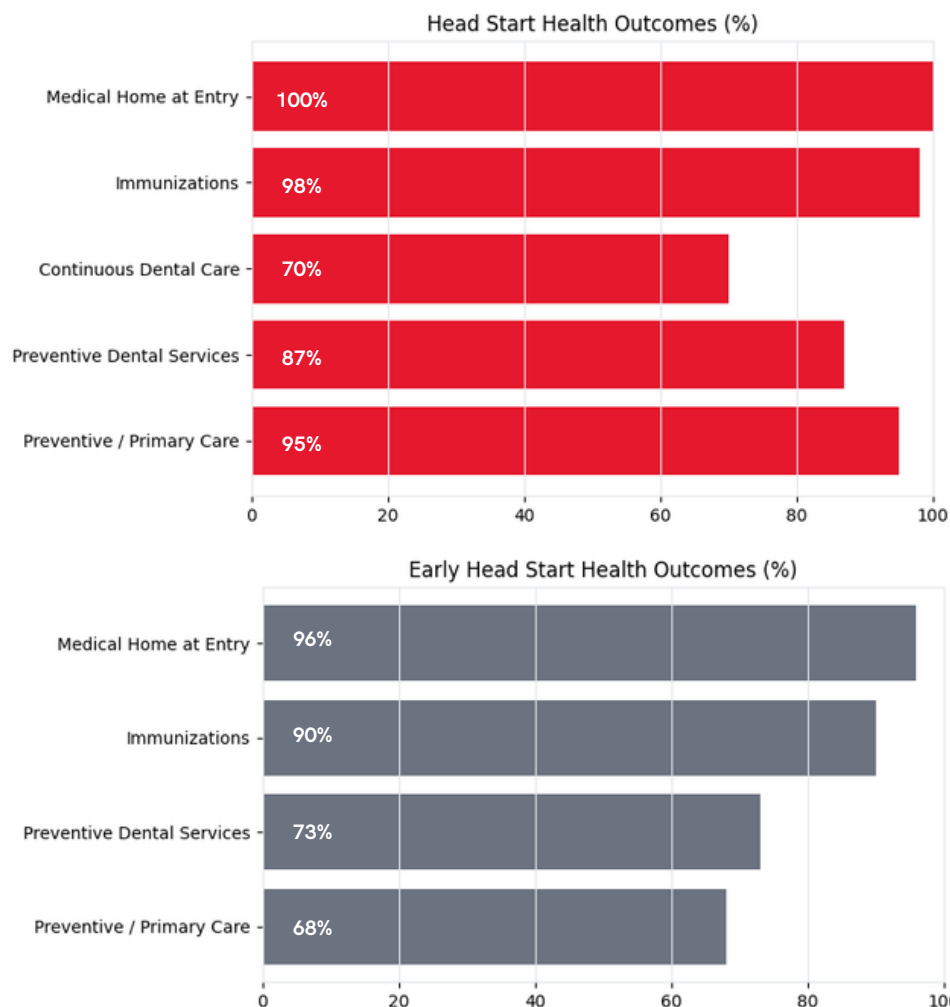
Health Outcomes

Health outcome data indicates strong compliance with Head Start health requirements and consistent access to preventive services. Among Head Start children, 95 percent were up to date on preventive and primary care, and 98 percent were up to date on immunizations. All Head Start children began the program year with an identified medical home, demonstrating effective health tracking and enrollment processes. Preventive dental services were received by 87 percent of Head Start children, and 70 percent maintained continuous and accessible dental care. While these outcomes reflect strong partnerships with dental providers, the program continues to prioritize strategies to increase continuity of dental care for all children.



The SIUE Head Start and Early Head Start Program recognizes that children's behavioral and social-emotional health is foundational to school readiness and overall development. During the 2024-2025 program year, the program supported children's social-emotional growth through relationship-based practices, classroom strategies, and access to mental health consultation services. Children were supported in developing self-regulation, emotional expression, and collaborative skills through daily classroom interactions and structured learning experiences. When concerns were identified, staff collaborated with families and qualified professionals to provide targeted supports, observations, and referrals as appropriate. These services strengthened children's emotional well-being and supported positive learning environments across program sites.

Health Outcome Data



Community Partnerships

Associated Bank, East St. Louis

Birth to Five Illinois

Bright Smiles Mobile Dentistry, LLC

Center for Hearing and Speech

Illinois Head Start Association

KinderMusic

SIUE School of Dental Medicine - Mobile Dental Unit

SIUE School of Education, Health & Human Behavior

SIUE We Care Clinic

Nutrition Services

Nutrition services remained a critical component of the comprehensive service model. Throughout the program year, a substantial number of meals and snacks were served to children enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start. These meals supported healthy growth and development and addressed food insecurity experienced by many families in the service area.

In addition to providing nutritious meals, we emphasize nutritional education for families. Workshops and resources are made available, helping parents understand the importance of healthy eating habits. Our goal is to foster lifelong wellness for children and their families, ensuring they have the tools to make informed choices about their diets and nutrition.

All meals were provided in alignment with federal nutrition guidelines. USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program reimbursements supported meal service operations and contributed to the program's ability to maintain high nutrition standards while offering education to families on healthy eating practices.



The United States Department of Agriculture, Child and Adult Care Food Program provided additional federal funding as reimbursement payments for Head Start/Early Head Start children's meals in the amount of \$215,313.

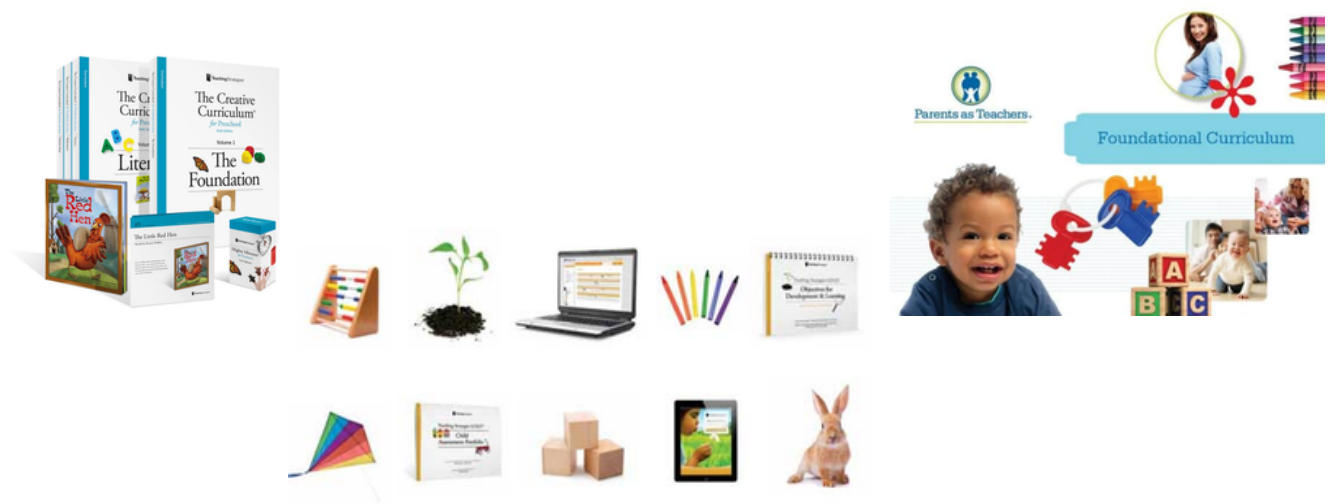
The SIUE Head Start & Early Head Start Program also collaborates with local organizations to enhance food security for families, ensuring children have access to nutritious meals. These partnerships enable us to create holistic support for our community's health and well-being.

Curriculum & Assessment

The SIUE Head Start and Early Head Start Program implemented research-based curricula and assessment practices aligned with state standards and The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. Center-based classrooms used the Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers, while the Home-Based Option implemented Parents As Teachers.

Teaching Strategies GOLD served as the primary child assessment system, supporting a whole-child approach across developmental domains that include social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and mathematics. Formal assessments were conducted three times during the year for Head Start and four times for Early Head Start.

Assessment results showed that 80% of children demonstrated mastery in five of six developmental domains, meeting the program's school readiness benchmark. Assessment data reflects meaningful developmental progress across the program year. Consistent with prior years, children demonstrated growth across assessment periods in all developmental domains, including social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and mathematics. Progress patterns reflected typical developmental trajectories, with particular variability observed among children under three years of age, whose development often occurs in overlapping and non-linear ways. These outcomes reflect strong instructional alignment, intentional use of assessment data, and consistent professional development for teaching staff.

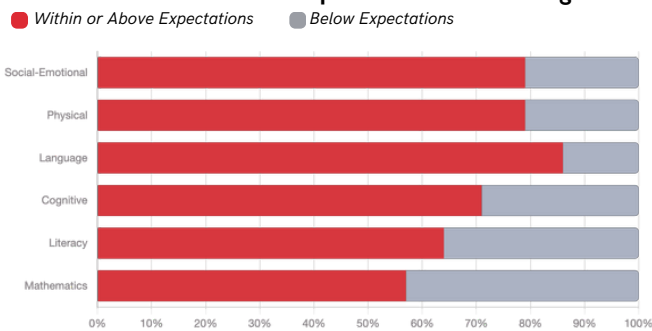


Preparing Children and Families for Kindergarten

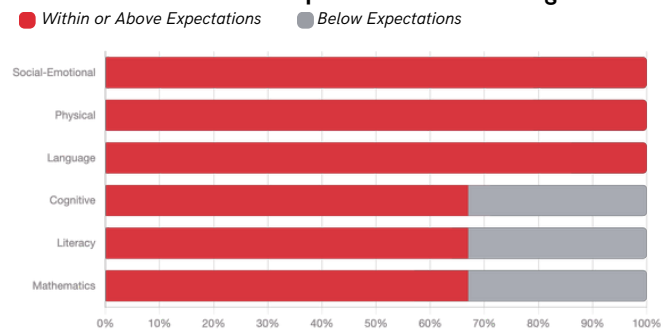
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Head Start and Early Head Start helps children enter kindergarten ready to succeed. The program provides research-based learning activities that support early literacy, math, social-emotional development, and problem-solving skills. Families are active partners, receiving guidance and resources to reinforce learning at home and prepare for school routines. Staff provides transitional information regarding the school district, district calendars, requirements for enrollment, mock lunchroom scenarios, and maps of the school and district from which their child will participate.

Student Outcomes

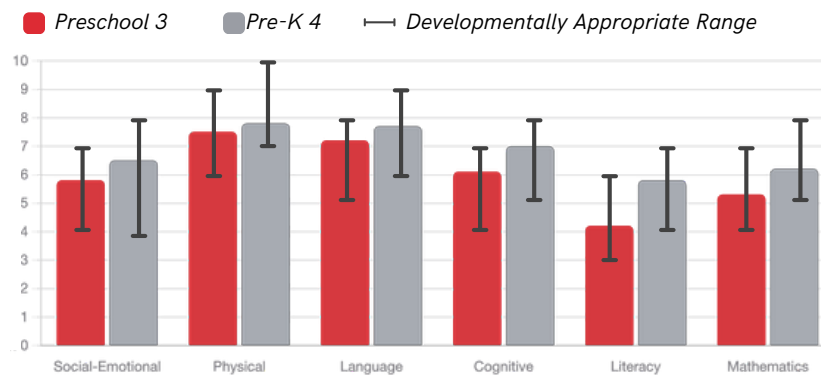
Preschool 3: Within Expected Outcome Range



Pre-K 4: Within Expected Outcome Range



Head Start Scores



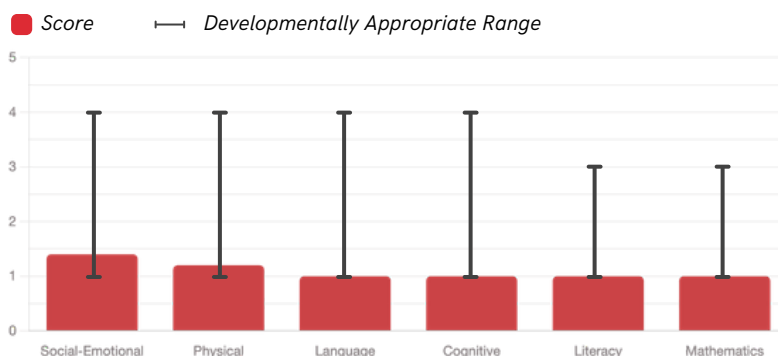
Students in our Head Start and Early Head Start classes are performing within or near widely held age appropriate expectations, confirming solid developmental progress.

100% of Pre-K 4 classes scored within or above expectation for Social-Emotional, Physical, and Language domains.

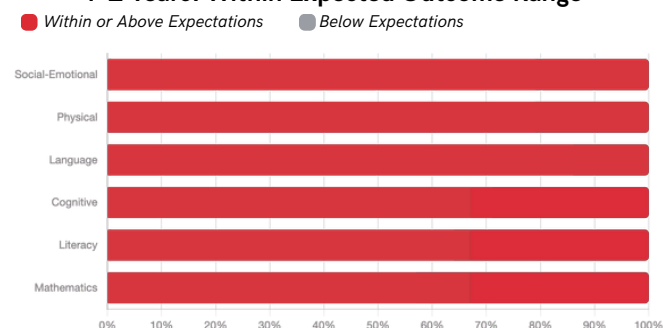
79% of Preschool 3 children at level 8 for engaging in conversations, and **86%** at level 8 for using social rules of language.

Early Head start classes scored within range across **all six domains**.

Early Head Start Scores



1-2 Years: Within Expected Outcome Range



Teacher Performance

CLASS observation data collected in April 2025 indicates high-quality interactions between staff and children across program classrooms. Feedback from observers indicates improvements in emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support, which are crucial for children's academic and social-emotional growth, ultimately preparing them for future success.

Following the observations, our program engages in targeted professional development, enhancing instructional strategies to elevate classroom experiences. This commitment to professional development not only strengthens teaching practices but also positively influences child outcomes and engagement. The collaborative feedback loop ensures that we are constantly adapting and refining our approach to meet the needs of our young learners.



Quality Educators

Our dedicated Teachers, Teacher Assistants, and Administrators create engaging, supportive environments that foster learning and development, ensuring that each child receives personalized attention and encouragement.

The Illinois Head Start Association recognized Angela Davison, a Teacher at Jackie Joyner-Kersee Center as the 2024-2025 IHSA Teacher of the Year. The also recognized Lisa Tate, Assistant Program Director/Center Operations was recognized as the 2024-2025 IHSA Administrator of the Year.

The SIUE Early Childhood Center (ECC), the SIUE Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) Program and the SIUE School of Education Health and Human Behavior (SEHHB) Department of Teaching and Learning joined with area early childhood agencies to take part in the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) Week of the Young Child.



Fiscal Operations

The SIUE Head Start and Early Head Start Program demonstrated responsible fiscal management during the 2024-2025 grant period. A waiver of the non-federal share requirement was approved for the grant period, and additional support was provided through USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program reimbursements and private contributions.

During this program year, the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) Head Start and Early Head Start Program participated in a Focus Area Two (FA2) monitoring review conducted from January 6, 2025 through March 14, 2025. The review highlighted strong performance across key areas, including program design and strategic planning, program governance, staffing supports, teaching practices, mental health and nutrition services, and recruitment and enrollment systems. Reviewers also recognized notable strengths in family and community engagement, including experienced family services staff and well-developed systems that help families achieve their goals and access pathways to economic mobility.

The review also provided guidance to enhance operational systems, including documenting child health and oral health determinations, completing developmental screenings on schedule, monitoring health and safety practices, and strengthening administrative procedures such as staff background checks, facility maintenance requests, and federal reporting.

In response, the program implemented targeted improvements to internal monitoring, staff training, and tracking systems. These enhancements support continuous quality improvement and reflect SIUE Head Start's ongoing commitment to providing safe, high-quality early childhood services to children and expectant families in St. Clair County, Illinois through both center-based and home-based program options.

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville undergoes an annual Single Audit in accordance with federal requirements, conducted by the auditing firm Plante Moran.



The audit evaluates compliance with applicable federal regulations, internal controls, and financial reporting related to sponsored programs. For FY 2024, the Single Audit resulted in zero findings, reflecting strong institutional compliance and effective financial management practices.

Budget

	Budgeted	Expended
Salaries	\$6,919,079	\$3,694,851
Travel	\$21,644	\$18,471
Equipment	\$0	\$58,448
Supplies	\$253,179	\$91,182
Contractual	\$1,984,825	\$2,452,520
Fringe Benefits	\$4,226,469	\$1,915,551
Indirect Charges	\$1,206,467	\$788,960
Total	\$14,611,663	\$9,019,983



Total federal expenditures during FY 2024-2025 totaled \$9,019,982.82.

Contractual and equipment expenditures exceeded initial projections due to operational needs and strategic investments. Technical and Training Assistance funds supported professional development and quality improvement efforts

Non-Federal Share

Adjustments from Center for Hearing & Speech-HS	\$15,160.00
Policy Council	\$1,601.00
Discounts from Vendors-HS	\$2,086.11
Discounts from Vendors-EHS	\$2,749.39
Invoices Paid by 741037	\$884.18
Donations: Diapers/Pull-ups/Wipes	\$1,232.00
Total	\$23,712.69

During FY 2024-2025, the value of non-federal share efforts, or matching, included \$4,159 from public sector sources and \$23,712.69 from private sector sources.

Thank you!

We appreciate the commitment of our Teachers, Teacher Assistants, Staff, Administrators, Volunteers, Families, and Partners in our mission to enhance the lives of children and families, fostering growth and resilience in our community through ongoing support and engagement.

Dr. Robin Hughes

Director (January - December 2025)

Dean, SIUE School of Education, Health, & Human Behavior

