


**HEAD START
ANNUAL REPORT TO PUBLIC
2023-2024**





The purpose of this document is to share data and updates to the program during the program year. This document is made available to the public via the Agency's website, astorservices.org. Parents may also request this report at anytime and a copy will be made available to them.

Astor Head Start and Early Head Start

Astor Early Childhood Program provides comprehensive services to pregnant mothers, infants, toddlers and preschool children and their families in Dutchess County, New York. Services were offered from sites in Poughkeepsie, Beacon, Wappingers Falls (Mt. Alvernia), Red Hook, Millerton, and Wingdale. Both EHS and HS offered home based and center based program opportunities. During the fiscal year 2023-2024, Astor offered programming county-wide, serving approximately half of the income eligible children and families in the county. Funding for the program comes from the federal Office of Head Start and the New York State Education Department.

Astor's Federal Report Card/External Audits

Astor began the first year of the grant cycle November 1, 2021. The Office of Head Start has developed a new monitoring system to align with the new Head Start Performance Standards, AMS 2.0. Astor was reviewed in the areas of CLASS and Focus Area 2 in March 2019. Focus Area 2 is a comprehensive review of all services to children and families and resulted in compliance on all but 2 federal performance standards. Both have since been corrected. CLASS scores consistently met or exceeded the national average in all areas of assessment. Astor Head Start completed an OHS Focus Area 1 Review in July 2023, no corrective actions were needed.





Efforts to Prepare Children for Kindergarten

Our Head Start program works in partnership with the public schools, parents and parent/teacher organizations to support the successful transition of children and families into the new educational setting. This partnership strives to maintain open communication, cooperation and coordination of efforts to streamline the process.

To prepare and facilitate the smooth process from Head Start to Kindergarten, we plan the following activities:

- Notification to parents of the dates of their school district's Kindergarten registration to make sure they understand the importance of taking their child to district activities
- Provide Kindergarten transition workshops for parents on what to expect from the public school experience
- Plan special events for Kindergarten teachers to visit the classrooms and begin to prepare for our children
- Offer our facilities to district personnel to provide opportunities for meetings with parents of all our children, including those with special needs
- Tracking of annual review appointments and arranging for special education staff to participate in the development of the child's IEP, when the child is involved with the CPSE
- Kindergarten checklist is completed by the classroom teacher for the parent and the school district
- Letter of agreement is signed annually between Head Start and each school district-(LEA) in our local community to facilitate the process of successful transition

To prepare children for school readiness during the preschool years, our Head Start program utilizes the Creative Curriculum approach to early childhood education. This curriculum is research based and provides outcomes for the same children from birth to age 5.

We support our families with our transition process as our children leave us and venture into public schools. We continue to focus on building a strong relationship with public schools, families and other providers to ensure that children and families are ready for school and that public schools are ready and prepared for our children. We share our school readiness plans and goals with our families and partners throughout our communities.



Astor Takes Pride in Family Engagement

Astor views parents as the primary educators of their children and we welcome and encourage involvement in every aspect of the EHS and HS programs. From volunteering in the classrooms and offices to setting policy, Astor's early childhood programs know that the program is only as effective as the level of family engagement. Astor's parent engagement opportunities also include parenting classes and workshops which are available at every site.

Children are more successful in school and life when parents/families are engaged in their education. Astor Early Childhood Program develops a variety of activities with parents to encourage and support parents to become engaged in their child's education and success.


Opportunities include:

- Policy Council
- Parent Committee Meetings
- Classroom volunteers
- Parent trainings
- Parent curriculum suggestions
- Parent/teacher conferences
- Home visits
- Take Home activities
- Lending Library
- Education Advisory Committee
- Center Level Committee
- Personnel Committee



Program Highlights

- In light of our community's needs assessment and new studies showing children's loss of knowledge over the summer Astor is now a full year program for all Head Start and Early Head Start children. Astor successfully completed their first full year in August 2017. In order to meet the new hour requirement for Early Head Start, the program increased the hours for toddlers by 1.5 hours per day beginning July 9, 2018.
- The children continue to demonstrate high gains across all developmental areas. This evidences the program's commitment to nurturing school readiness and life-long learners. In order to ensure curriculum fidelity and utilize the most up-to-date, appropriate curriculum all education staff utilize the Creative Curriculum.
- The leadership team spent quality time reviewing the program's self-assessment, community assessment and child outcomes. Structured focus groups with staff and families continued to take place to brainstorm and action plan for ongoing work towards Astor's long-term program goals. A review of short-term objectives, baseline data needed and action plans revealed that the program is on track based on the fourth year of the grant cycle.
- The Office of Head Start rolled out the new Program Performance Standards in November 2016. Leadership team reviewed the standards at length and began the implementation process through staff trainings, revision of program policies and procedures as well as planning and preparing for the extension of services delivered to families.
- Successful collaborations continued with the Lion's SEE Program, Dover School District UPK, Wappingers Central School District UPK, Poughkeepsie City Schools UPK, NYS Education Department, Astor Services for Children and Families Hudson Valley Counseling Services as ways to enhance services to our Head Start children and their families.
- Astor Head Start collaborated with Ampact Early Learning Corps to provide an environment for tutors to be apprentices at the Poughkeepsie center.
- During the 2018-2019 year, the program implemented use of a family outcomes tool, Parent Gauge. Parents reported a better understanding of the emotional and mental well-being of their child, trust the program to help their child grow and learn, understand the importance of attendance and stated that our program's activities have helped them get ready for Head Start and school. Beginning in the Fall of 2020, the program received the funding to launch Ready4K. Ready4K is a parent engagement



supplement which sends weekly text messages to parents that encourages positive parent-child interactions and developmentally appropriate activities. During the program year 2022-2023, Ready4K sent 43,624 text messages to parents. The final survey of the year shared that 100% of the parents found the text messages increased their confidence in supporting their child's learning.

- With the need for more Early Intervention services identified in Dutchess County, the program opened its first Bright Steps room. This integrated class serves 3 Early Intervention students and 4 non-classified students, providing a variety of services including special instruction, speech therapy, counseling and occupational therapy. This classroom is located at the Mount Alvernia site.
- Given the increased need in services for preschoolers, the program opened its first 12:1:2 classroom at the Beacon center. This class is a self-contained classroom of 12 students with IEPs.
- Red Hook has recently moved to a new location, serving 15 center-based preschool children.
- In response to childhood obesity, the program has expanded its pilot of a nutrition and physical activity curriculum. This curriculum is currently implemented at the Beacon and Mount Alvernia centers. I'm Moving, I'm Learning is fun and engaging. The children enjoy the music and movement. The program will review progress and plan the steps to incorporate the curriculum to the other centers.
- With the increase in UPK funding from New York State, local school districts offered collaboration and expansion opportunities to community partners. The program now has 1 UPK classroom for the Wappingers Central School District at the Mount Alvernia center. The Poughkeepsie center now has 1 UPK classroom for the Poughkeepsie City School District.
- The program has seen an increased need for homeless children in our county. The program was able to use funding to collaborate with the 2 largest shelters in the county to transport the children to school each day. Hudson River Housing Lodge and Community Housing Innovations Vanderbilt shelter drop off and pick up the children each day. The children enjoy the consistency that school offers when their housing may be unstable.

Head Start Program
2023-2024 Service Area Statistics

Astor operated Early Head Start and Head Start Programs at the following Dutchess County locations: Beacon, Wappingers Falls (Mt. Alvernia), Poughkeepsie and Wingdale. Head Start services are provided in Red Hook.

	HS	EHS
Total # children served	370	163
Total # families served	352	150
% of children completing medical exams	86.2	52.1
% of children completing dental exams	76	45*
Avg. Monthly Enrollment	305	98
Percent of Capacity	85.1%	50.2%

* percentage reflects all EHS children, including those under 2 years of age

Astor Early Childhood FY23 Budget vs FY23 Spending

Program Name	BUDGET FY23			ACTUAL @ 6/30/23			
	% of Rev.	Revenue	Expense	Surplus (Deficit)	Revenue	Expense	Surplus (Deficit)
HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START	76.18%	8,088,399	8,129,785	(41,386)	8,551,347	8,508,682	42,665
SPECIAL CLASS / INTEGRATED SETTING	9.39%	996,938	997,574	(636)	1,025,399	1,032,739	(7,340)
BEHAVIORAL SPECIAL CLASS	6.46%	686,263	686,910	(647)	608,418	609,732	(1,314)
POUGHKEEPSIE DT - PRESCHOOL	3.36%	356,559	358,006	(1,447)	364,495	364,903	(408)
UNIVERSAL PRE-K	3.09%	328,000	217,141	110,859	257,657	233,211	24,446
EVALUATIONS - UPSTATE	0.37%	39,250	21,515	17,735	41,794	27,681	14,113
TITLE I - PRESCHOOL	0.79%	83,458	84,818	(1,360)	14,690	17,671	(2,981)
1:1 AIDE - SPECIAL EDUCATION	0.37%	39,000	35,055	3,945	32,986	3,197	29,789
TOTAL EARLY CHILDHOOD	100.00%	10,617,867	10,530,804	87,063	10,896,786	10,797,816	98,970



**Year to Date July 2022 to June 2023
Results vs. Budget and Prior Year -
Early Childhood Programs - Dutchess
County**

	<i>2023 Actual</i>	<i>2023 Budget</i>	<i>2022 Actual</i>
<i>Revenue</i>	<i>10,896,786</i>	<i>10,617,867</i>	<i>9,986,352</i>
<i>Expense</i>	<i>10,797,816</i>	<i>10,530,804</i>	<i>9,959,879</i>
<i>Surplus/Deficit</i>	<i>98,970</i>	<i>87,063</i>	<i>26,473</i>

