

REGION 9 HEAD START/EHS

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT



2025 - 2030



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of Assessment

The community assessment must be conducted every 5 years as the Head Start Performance Standards require. The community assessment is a systemic examination of program services and a tool to identify key needs for the populations we serve to determine short-term and long-term program goals and objectives and to assist in annual program planning.

The 2025 community assessment provides the most recent data regarding demographics, early learning programs, disabilities, health and nutrition, and social services for children and families in Lincoln County. The assessment provides our community resources and strengths and identifies where there are gaps between available services and needs.

Key Findings

Causes & Conditions of Poverty

In our research, we found that almost 16% of residents in Lincoln County live in poverty. Children ages 0-5 have the highest poverty rate out of all the age groups at almost 49%. The average size of a family in Lincoln County is 3 and the federal poverty line for a family of three is \$25,820. 15% of individuals in Lincoln County make less than \$25,000 a year. For a family of 3 to have a living wage in Lincoln County (based on cost of living and highest-rated expenses) a married couple would need to make \$23.55/hour and a single parent would need to make \$38.50/hour. That means a family of 3 needs to make between \$80,000 and \$90,000 a year to have a living wage and afford to live in Lincoln County. Granted, some areas are more expensive to live in than others (Alto versus Ruidoso Downs) but the top 4 expenses were transportation, childcare, food, and housing.

Poverty rates in Lincoln County have increased since 2021 with 10% of families living in poverty. Single-parent households have a higher rate of poverty than married-couple households. There are 26% single-parent households in Lincoln County. 36% of those households are female only and in poverty. Ruidoso Downs and Carrizozo have the highest rates of poverty across all demographics. Children of color have a higher rate of poverty at 30% of American Indians and 29% who are of two or more races. Although Lincoln County is made up of 76% white, the child population has a higher rate of Hispanics than non-Hispanics (44% versus 36%). 12% of children under 18 years of age in Lincoln County receive SNAP/Food Stamp assistance.

The Region 9 Head Start & Early Head Start program's data shows that the population served coincides with the community data. The program enrolled more Hispanic families than non-Hispanic white families. There were more two-parent families enrolled than single-parent ones, but more children with single mothers were enrolled than single fathers. 8% of the families enrolled were not employed (unemployed, retired, or disabled), but the majority of the families either had one parent working or in job training. 79% of the neediest families were enrolled (minus families who were between 100-130% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines or Over-Income). Those families qualified with income at or below the FPL, received SNAP assistance, were homeless, in foster care, or received SSI (social security income). 47% of the families were income eligible and 24% of them received SNAP assistance.

Needs of Community Assessed

The top five needs of our community include childcare (after-school, extended hours, and quality), housing, medical services, dental services, and mental health services. Transportation is a need because there are limited resources for public transportation but according to the data it was not one of the top 5 highest needs according to community surveys. Families need after-school care or extended hours because of their work hours. There are limited childcare centers that take ages from birth to 5 years old and most of them have a waitlist.

Housing costs are higher in some areas than others within Lincoln County. However, families are willing to pay the rent costs if they can find the housing to rent. 54% of homes in Lincoln County are vacant. There are more short-term rentals (vacation rentals) than long-term rentals. There are limited resources for low-income housing and the waitlists are long. The Village of Ruidoso built a housing complex but the families who lost their homes in the McBride Fire were given priority and it filled up quickly. Apartment complexes and condos are limited and a lot of them are used for short-term rentals. Medical, dental, and mental health services were all mentioned in the Presbyterian Community Health Assessment and the staff & parent feedback. There are 0 specialists in Lincoln County (except a bone and joint specialist), there's one dentist who accepts Medicaid in Carrizozo, and the patient-to-provider ratio is 2,710 people for every one provider. The mental health provider ratio is 190 patients to one provider. Two providers in Ruidoso specialize in children and only one who specializes in Early Childhood age. There are limited resources for mental health services and counseling especially for children.

Recommendations

The information in this assessment demonstrates that Region 9 and the Head Start/EHS program have a unique opportunity to enhance or increase programs and initiatives to meet the needs of our community. Based on the information gathered and analyzed the top priority or goal is to complete the Region 9 Early Childhood Complex for Head Start and Early Head Start. This will continue to be the top priority until it is completed. As part of this goal, the program will request to convert Head Start slots to Early Head Start slots based on the need in the community for childcare for children aged birth to three years old. If the program could build a facility for both programs we could continue providing the quality services we already provide but we can serve all families in one location, provide nutritious and healthy meals (maybe larger portions according to some parent/staff feedback), PFCE events and parent trainings & meetings, and provide a smoother transition for children going from EHS to Head Start. The program could also offer a summer program in the new facility and possibly extended hours through state childcare funding.

A second recommendation is that we consider making changes to the selection criteria based on the community data. Based on the research, we need to consider equitable services across Hispanic and non-Hispanic families, prioritizing families living in higher poverty areas (higher points for those living in Ruidoso Downs), and re-evaluating the at-risk category of our selection criteria. Youth who are categorized as at-risk are increasing based on Part C and census data.

METHODOLOGY

The Region 9 Head Start/EHS Program conducted a Community Assessment to use the data in our community to guide program planning and goal setting for the next 5 years. The data was collected in various ways including websites (U.S Census Data 2022, CYFD, NMDOH, etc.), using other data books or community needs assessments that the program was aware of like NM Kids Count Data Book which comes out every year and the Presbyterian Community Healthcare Services Assessment. The different topics and service areas were researched through Google where various articles were found to help in the data analysis. The program used community partners for data including Region 9 Developmental Services, Sierra Blanca Counseling, Early Childhood programs, etc. The data provided is also from the Head Start and Early Head Start program data (Child Plus Database, PIR reports, surveys, staff meetings/training, etc.)

The data was divided by demographics, poverty data, services (Education, Health, Nutrition, etc.), and qualitative data like surveys and staff feedback. Each piece was then analyzed separately and data that was most relevant was used and compared to program data. Some of the data across each area was repetitive and more current data is the one that was used.

Some challenges that we faced during our research were some of the data for Hondo and Capitan was limited. Since they are very rural areas it is hard to find reliable and valid data sources. The program used data that was published by reputable sources and explained if it was missing or invalid based on our observations and experience.

Data Sources Cited

- New Mexico Kids Count Data Book 2023 - accessed at www.nmvoices.org
- MIT Living Wage Calculator - accessed at <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/35027>
- 2022 United States Census Bureau - data.census.gov
- Presbyterian Healthcare Services Community Health Assessment (CHA) 2023-2025
- 2023 Kids Count Data Book - The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- 2022 PIECE Coalition of Lincoln County Community Needs Assessment
- New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee Reports
 - Addressing Substance Abuse Disorders, August 24, 2023
- New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families 360 Quarterly Report, 1st Quarter SFY 2022
- U.S Department of Health and Human Services
- ECECD (Early Childhood Education and Care Department) and NMFIT Family Handbook
- New Mexico Health and Human Services Databook 2022
 - New Mexico County Factsheets Report
 - Programs and Services Data Report
- New Mexico Dental Therapist Coalition, "The Dental Crisis in New Mexico Access, Dental Therapists and Considerations" by Barbara Weber
- NMDOH - Healthy Kids New Mexico, "The Weight of Our Children - New Mexico Childhood Obesity 2022 Update", March 2023
- IDEA Section 618 LEA Part B Child Count 2022-2023 Report - accessed at data.ed.gov
- IDEA Section 618 Data Products: Static Tables Part C Child Count and Settings Table 3 2022-2023 - accessed at data.ed.gov
- Region 9 Head Start/EHS Annual Report
- Region 9 Head Start/EHS Self-Assessment Report
- Region 9 Head Start & Early Head Start PIR Reports
- Lincoln County Health & Wellness Guide 2024
- Community Partners
 - Region 9 School-Based Health Center
 - Sierra Blanca Counseling
 - Early Childhood Programs in Lincoln County
 - Region 9 Education Cooperative
 - Region 9 Developmental Services & Home Visiting
 - Region 9 PIECE Coalition

OVERVIEW OF REGION 9 EDUCATION COOPERATIVE

Region 9 Education Cooperative

Region 9 Education Cooperative provides direct services to children and families, and support services to member districts in south-central New Mexico. The service area includes Capitan, Corona, Hondo, Tularosa, Ruidoso, Carrizozo, and Cloudcroft school districts and communities.

Region 9 Departments Include:

- Developmental Services
- Home Visiting
- PIECE Coalition
- Educational Services
- Head Start/Early Head Start
- HR Department
- Fiscal
- Internal Supports
- School-Based Health Services
- Technology



Region 9 is the largest educational cooperative in the state of New Mexico. Region 9 has been providing services and support since 1984 and continually expanding other services across New Mexico!

Region 9 Vision Statement

Region 9 - Your innovative Regional Education Cooperative providing exceptional services to children, families, and communities across New Mexico.

Region 9 Mission

A Community Member
Educating - Supporting - Serving

Region 9 Motto

Serving Kids - Priority One!



OVERVIEW OF HEAD START & EARLY HEAD START



Region 9 Head Start started serving children and families in Lincoln County, NM in 1993. The program has grown over the years and has been through some significant changes in terms of enrollment and facilities. The Head Start program has had the support of local school districts including Capitan, Hondo, Ruidoso, and Carrizozo over the last 30 years. Currently, the program is funded to serve 115 children within Lincoln County, NM. The three sites that are reported in the Head Start Enterprise System include Hondo, Capitan, and Ruidoso. After the 2022-2023 school year, the program closed the Hondo Head Start classroom due to low enrollment and staffing issues. The program also had to close one Ruidoso Head Start classroom after the 2022-2023 school year. Ruidoso Head Start had three classrooms at the First Baptist Church, and two in the Sierra Vista Primary School (Ruidoso School District). The program was asked to relocate from both facilities in June 2023. Each facility had space needs for their programs, and Head Start relocated to Ruidoso Downs, NM. The new facility is large enough for four Head Start classrooms based on the square footage requirements of Licensing and OHS.

Region 9 Early Head Start has served children and families in Lincoln County, NM since 2015. The grant was originally awarded as a Child Care Partnership grant through OHS. In 2018, Early Head Start was awarded as an expansion grant after the dissolution of the childcare partnership and has successfully operated as a stand-alone Early Head Start program for 6 years.

Region 9 Head Start applied for and received the ECECD NM PreK grant in 2023. New Mexico PreK opened the application to Head Start programs so that Head Start and PreK could create a blended approach to providing quality early childhood programs for children 3 and 4 years old across the state. The Head Start classrooms are now a mix of PreK and Head Start children (with some of them dually enrolled). This allows the program to access state funds to improve the services provided to children and families and hire & retain qualified staff.

The program's number one goal for the past 5 years was to build an Early Childhood Complex. The building isn't completed (we are waiting on funding from outside sources or the Office of Head Start through a 1303 application) and will continue to be a program goal until it is completed. The facility will be a permanent home for our Head Start and Early Head Start programs which is a huge need for both programs. One of the objectives of this goal and a part of our action plan for an Under Enrollment Plan, is to convert 50 Head Start slots to 16 EHS slots. If the conversion request is approved, our Early Head Start program will have two more EHS classrooms and Head Start will have 4 classrooms in Ruidoso and 1 in Capitan.



HEAD START LOCATION SERVICE AREAS

Zip Code	Head Start Site	4 days/week	5 days/week	HS Capacity	EHS Capacity	Number of Classrooms	Qualifying Children In Zip Code
88345	Ruidoso Head Start		X	52	0	4	55
88345	Early Head Start		X	0	44	6	60
88316	Capitan Head Start	X		13	0	1	8
88336	Hondo Head Start	X		0	0	1	10
Totals		2	2	65	44	12	133

Table 1. 2023-2024 Enrollment Data

The total qualifying children in each zip code are children who are income-eligible or who qualify in the 101-130% income category. Between EHS and Head Start, the program has enrolled 10 over-income families, and there are 8 on the EHS waitlist.

LINCOLN COUNTY, NM



Figure 1. Map Provided by Google Maps

Lincoln County is the 8th largest county in New Mexico by land area with a total of about 4,831 square miles¹. In 2020, Lincoln County had a total population of 20,251 people and in 2022 the population is about 20,222 with a 0.14% increase in total population. Lincoln County is famous for the Lincoln County War of 1878 and it's where Billy the Kid shot and killed Sheriff Pat Garrett. Lincoln is a historic site where visitors can walk through the original courthouse, mercantile store, and hotel where Billy the Kid visited and resided. There is a lot of rich history within Lincoln County and its surrounding areas including the Mescalero Apache Reservation and the famous Smokey Bear.

Region 9 Head Start and Early Head Start can serve any family living in Lincoln County. Some families live between Capitan and Carrizozo, and they enroll their children in the Capitan Head Start. We have families who live in the Hondo Valley and choose to bring their children to the Ruidoso Head Start or Early Head Start site because of their work situation. However, if a child has qualified for special education services they must be served within the LEA boundaries (i.e a Ruidoso resident who receives SPED services must be served at the Ruidoso Head Start site to receive their services and cannot attend the Capitan Head Start site even if it's the parent's preference).

1 - Presbyterian Healthcare Services Community Health Assessment (CHA), 2023-2025

SERVICE AREA DEMOGRAPHICS

Service area (Lincoln County, NM) demographics are as follows. Demographic information is also included for the state of New Mexico for comparison purposes. All data in this section was sourced from the 2022 U.S Census ACS, the 2021 U.S Census ACS, the 2023 NM Kids Count Data Book, and the 2023-2025 Community Health Needs Assessment from Presbyterian Health Services.



Population

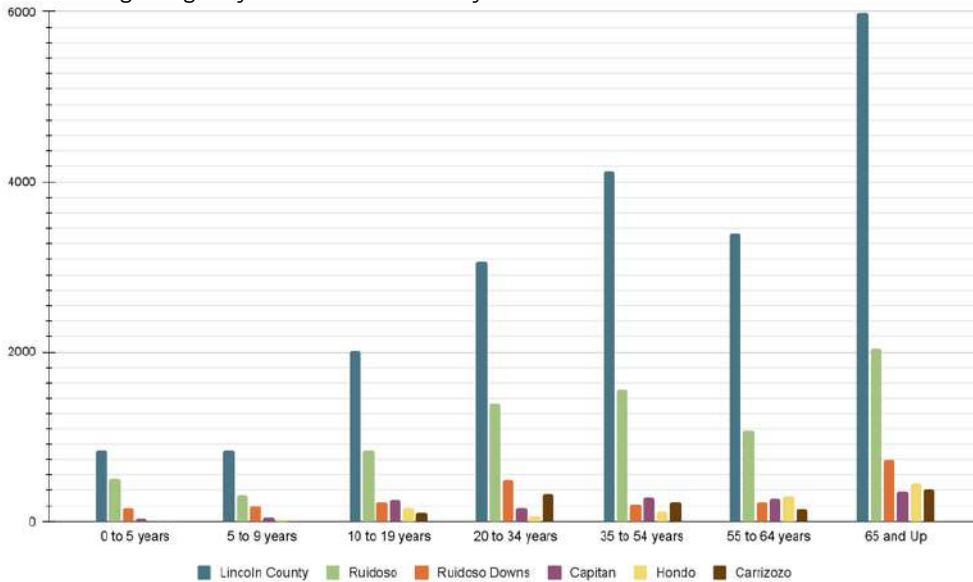
Service Area	Total Population, 2022 Census ACS	Total Population, 2021 Census ACS	Total Change in Population	% Change in Population
Lincoln County, NM	20,222	20,084	138	0.69%
Ruidoso Village, NM	7,696	7,636	60	0.78%
Ruidoso Downs, NM	2,635	2,618	17	0.65%
Capitan, NM	1,381	1,354	27	1.99%
Hondo, NM	1,130	1,246	-116	-9.3%
Carrizozo, NM	1,035	1,089	-54	-4.9%
New Mexico	2,113,344	2,109,366	-3,978	-0.18%

Table 2. Population and Change in Population

Age & Gender

Age Ranges by Area

Chart 1. Age ranges by area in Lincoln County



The median age in Lincoln County is 51 years.² As you can see by the two charts shown here, the largest population in Lincoln County are ages 35 to 54 years and 65 years and up. Ruidoso & Ruidoso Downs have the largest population of children 0 to 5 years old. And Ruidoso has the highest population out of all the areas in the chart. The median age in Ruidoso is 44 years.³

Table 3. Population by Age in Each Area of Lincoln County

	Lincoln County	Ruidoso	Ruidoso Downs	Capitan	Hondo	Carrizozo
0 to 5 years	825	507	148	33	0	14
5 to 9 years	831	306	184	46	18	0
10 to 19 years	2,019	827	237	257	157	101
20 to 34 years	3,051	1,395	493	151	56	322
35 to 54 years	4,124	1,563	199	285	116	235
55 to 64 years	3,392	1,060	228	265	295	145
65 and Up	5,980	2,038	724	344	449	378

Gender Percentages - Lincoln County Only

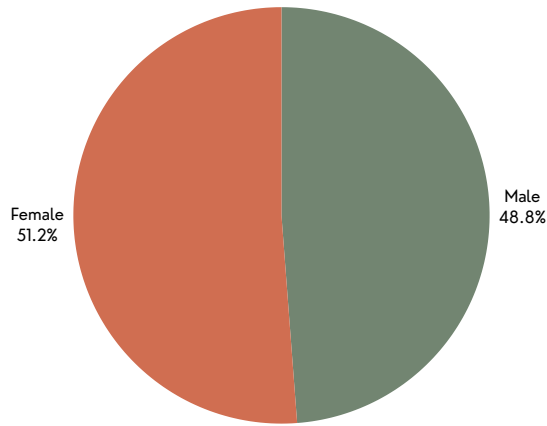


Chart 2. Comparison of Females and Males in Lincoln County

Lincoln County has almost an even male-to-female ratio. All of the areas in Lincoln County had about the same percentages of males and females, except for Carrizozo has a slightly higher male population than females at 60% males and 40% females.⁴

The U.S. Census considers Hispanic an ethnicity rather than a race⁵. While children of color are now the majority population in the United States, a much higher share of children in New Mexico are children of color - about 77% - than in the nation as a whole.⁶

The first chart shows the total population of Lincoln County by race. The majority of the population in Lincoln County is White. About 34% of the population is Hispanic/Latino with 66% of the population not Hispanic/Latino.

The second chart shows the percentages of race and ethnicity amongst the child population in Lincoln County with a total of 3,511 children. There are more Hispanic/Latino children in Lincoln County than non-Hispanic at 44% of the population. The percentages for Native American, Black, and Asian were 0%.

Race & Ethnicity

Lincoln County Total Population

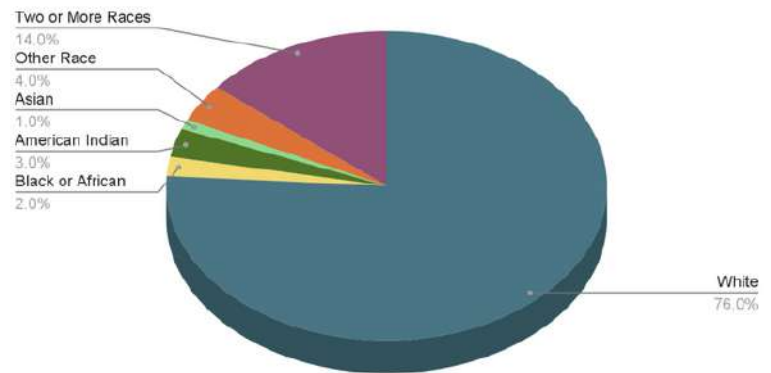


Chart 3. Percentages of Race and Ethnicity in Lincoln County

Lincoln County Child Population

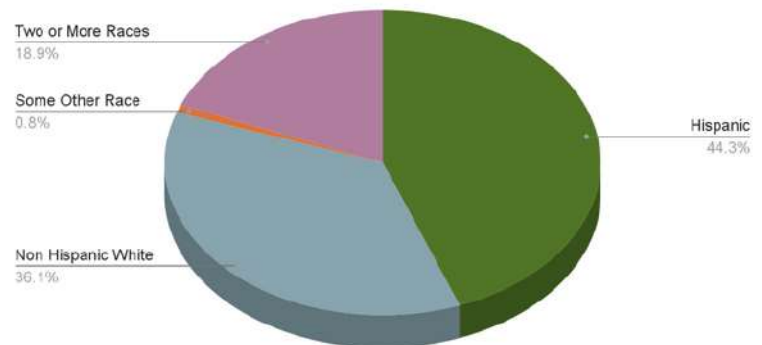


Chart 4. Race and Ethnicity of the Child Population of Lincoln County



Home Languages

Across Lincoln County, the majority of the population speaks only English. Carrizozo has the highest percentage of people who speak a language other than English at 39%. Spanish is the second language that most Lincoln County residents speak.⁸ The other languages may include Mescalero Apache since 3% of the population is Native American and the reservation is right on the border of Lincoln County and Otero County. According to the program’s PIR report for 2023-2024, 35% of the Head Start children and 33% of the Early Head Start children are dual language learners.

Home Language	Lincoln County	Ruidoso	Ruidoso Downs	Capitan	Hondo	Carrizozo
Speak Only English	82%	86%	76%	85%	72%	61%
Speak A Language Other Than English	18%	14%	24%	15%	28%	39%
Spanish	16%	13%	24%	15%	28%	35%
Other Indo-European Languages	0.2%	0.2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Asian & Pacific Island	0.3%	0.3%	0%	0%	0%	1.7%
Other Languages	1.5%	0.5%	0%	0%	0%	2.3%

Table 3. Home Language of Residents in Lincoln County and Specific Areas in the County

Households & Types of Families

The total number of households in Lincoln County is 9,031 and the average household size is 2.22. There are a total of 5,552 families with an average family size of 2.76. The majority of families in Lincoln County are married-couple families. There is a higher percentage of single female households than single male households. 12% of households in Lincoln County have grandparents who are responsible for their grandchildren.

The chart shows the family household type by the areas in Lincoln County. Capitan has a higher percentage of single-male households at 18% than female only households. Ruidoso Downs has a higher single-female household percentage at 55% than married-couple households. Ruidoso has more male only households than single-female households at 19% versus 10%.

Family Type - Lincoln County Only

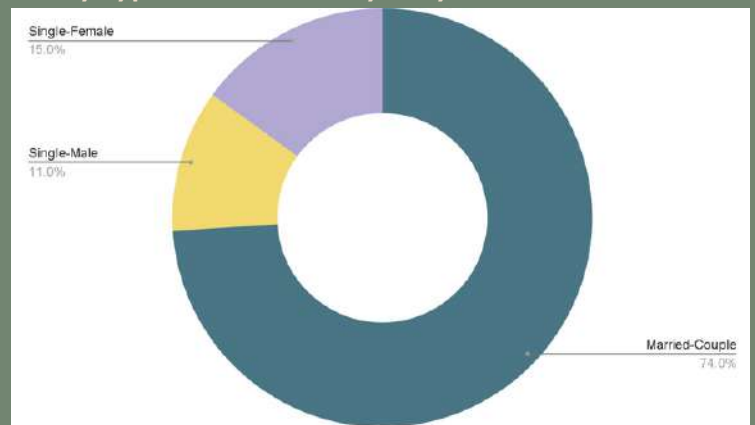


Chart 5. Family Types in Lincoln County

Service Area	Total Families	Married-Couple Families	Single-Male Householder Families	Single-Female Householder Families
Ruidoso Village, NM	1,989	71%	19%	10%
Ruidoso Downs, NM	622	44%	1%	55%
Capitan, NM	327	67%	18%	15%
Hondo, NM	301	94%	2%	4%
Carrizozo, NM	320	72%	0%	28%

Table 4. Types of Families and Households in the Areas of Lincoln County

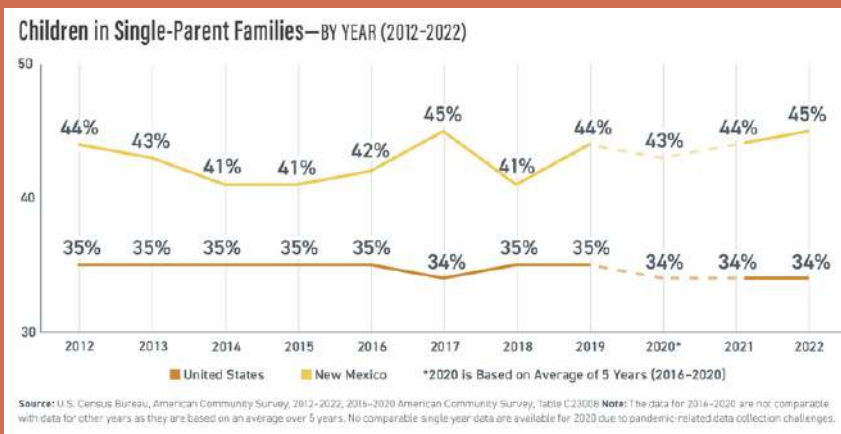


Chart 6. Provided by NM Kids Count Data Book 2023

In 2022, 45% of children in New Mexico were living in single-parent families, much higher than the national average of 34%. New Mexico ranks 48th among the states on this measure. Lincoln County ranked 16th in the state with 37% of children living in single-parent households in 2021.¹⁰ The percentage has decreased to 26% according to the 2022 Census Data.

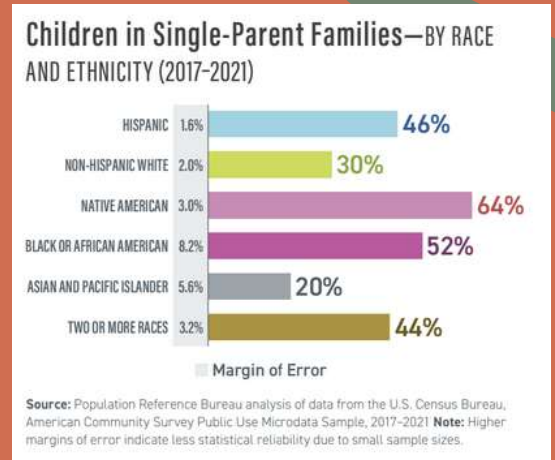


Chart 7. Provided by NM Kids Count Data Book 2023

Employment

As of December 2023, the New Mexico unemployment rate was 3.6% according to the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics (NMDWS).¹¹ The chart below data shows the historical unemployment rate of New Mexico from January 2016 to February 2024. In 2020, the unemployment rate jumped to 13.4% which is a record high for New Mexico. This was due to the rise in COVID and when the governor closed the state of New Mexico.

Chart 8. New Mexico Historical Unemployment Rate from 2017-2023

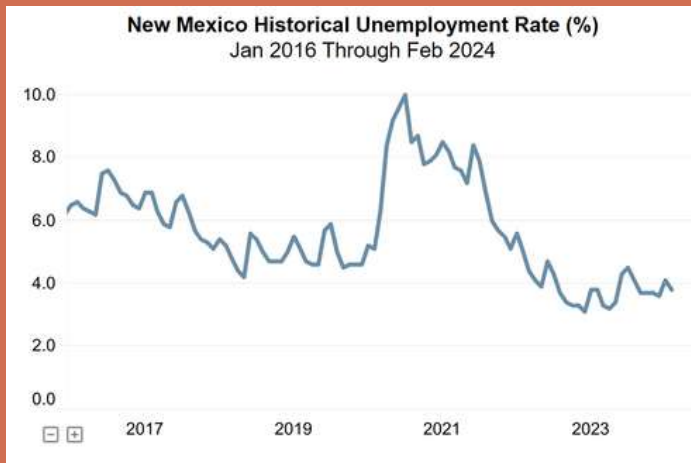


Chart from New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions

According to the 2022 Census Bureau American Community Survey, 25% of families in Lincoln County did not have any workers in the household in the last 12 months.¹² This is a significant increase since 2021 when there were only 11% of families who did not have any workers in the household. There is an even amount of families who have 1 worker (37%) and 2 workers (38%) in the household in the past 12 months.¹³

The top 5 industries in Lincoln County are Construction & Extraction (14%), Office & Administrative Services (14%), Healthcare & Social Services (12%), Retail Trade (12%), and Accommodation & Food Services (10%).¹⁴

Industries in Lincoln County, NM

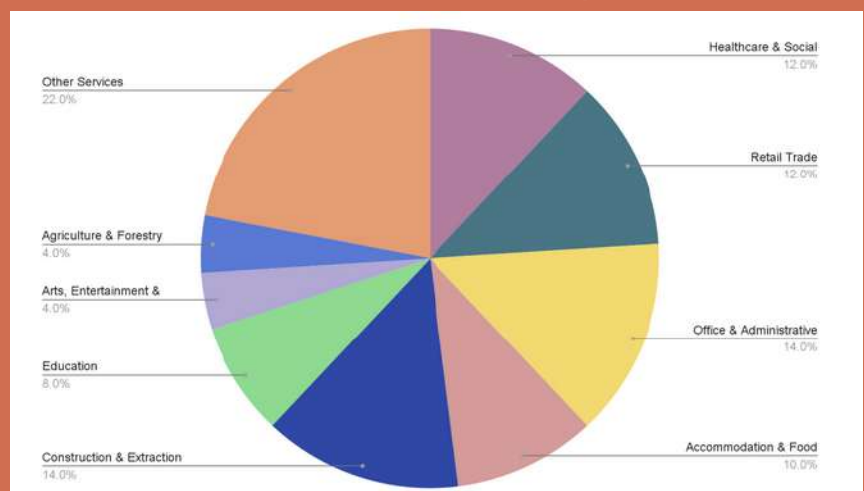


Chart 9. Percentages of Each Industry in Lincoln County

10 - NM Kids Count Data Book 2023

11 - U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics

12, 13, & 14 - U.S Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2022



The chart shows the percentage of the Lincoln County population in each income category. The highest percentage of residents make between \$50,000 and \$74,999 with a median income of \$47,919 based on the 2022 census data. The median income in 2021 was \$47,247 with a 1.4% increase.¹⁵

Income in the Last 12 Months - Lincoln County

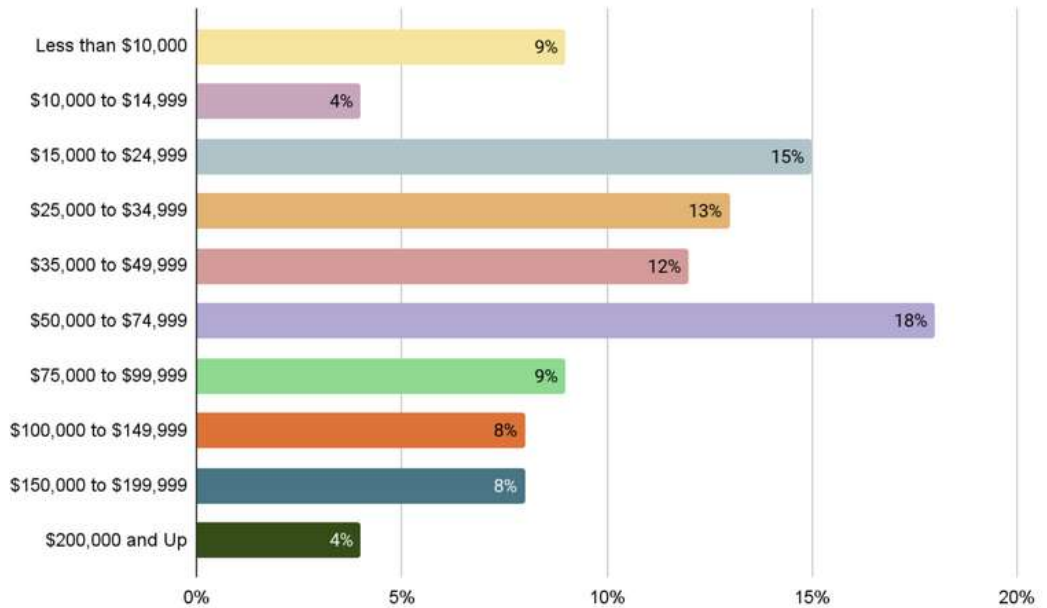


Chart 10. Population Percentages in Each Income Category from the Last 12 Months

Median Earnings by Education Attainment in Lincoln County

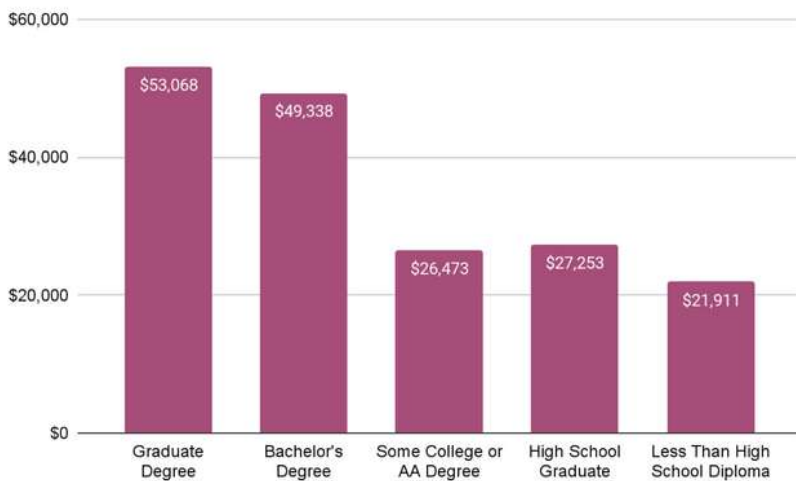


Chart 11. Population Percentages in Each Income Category from the Last 12 Months

In 2017, the average income for a resident who had a bachelor's degree was \$40,189. In 2022, the average income increased a little over \$9,000. According to the 2022 U.S Census, the average income for someone with a high school diploma is higher than for someone with an AA degree.¹⁶ The minimum wage in New Mexico is \$12.00 per hour. A full-time employee (40 hours a week) who makes minimum wage will earn approximately \$24,960 a year. If a household had three people and lived on minimum wage they would be below the federal poverty level. According to the MIT Living Wage Calculator, both parents in a family of 4 need to make \$23.55 per hour and a single parent needs to make \$38.50 an hour with 2 children to make a living wage in Lincoln County. According to the MIT Living Wage Calculator, the highest expenses in Lincoln County for a family of 4 are transportation, childcare, and food.¹⁷ Surprisingly, housing is the fourth highest expense considering the housing costs in Lincoln County.

Annual Expenses for a Family of 4 in Lincoln County

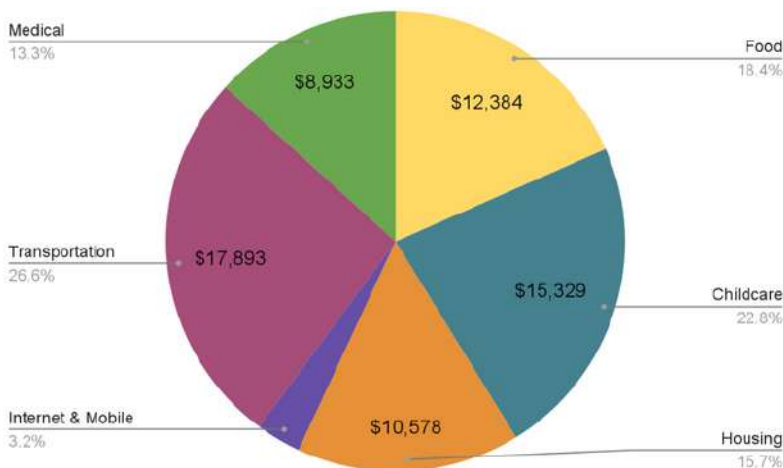
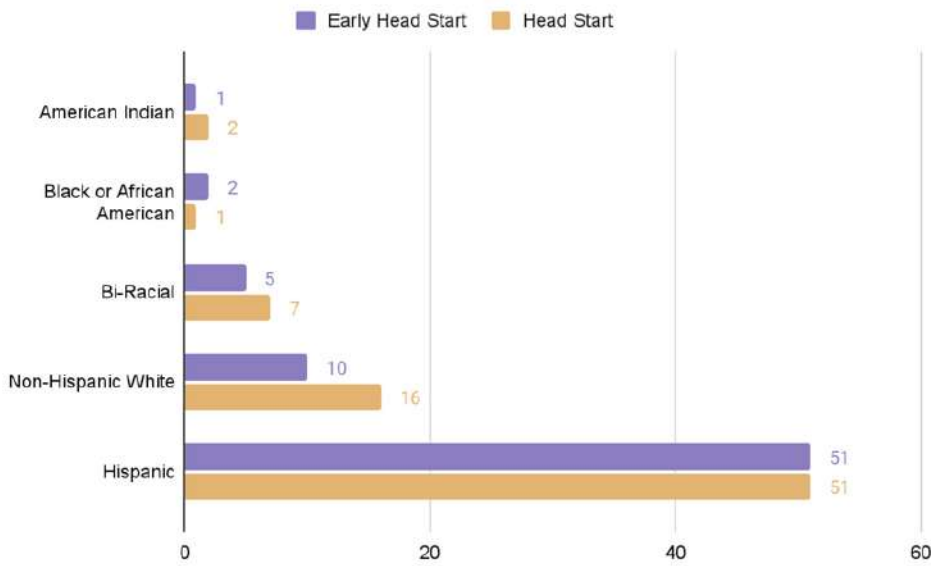


Chart 12. Annual expenses of a family of 4 in Lincoln County

15 & 16- U.S Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2022
17 - MIT Living Wage Calculator

Head Start/EHS Child & Parent Demographics

Race & Ethnicity of Children, 2023-2024



The program enrolls more Hispanic children than non-Hispanic children. This year the program did not enroll any other race other than American Indian or Black/African American.

Chart 13. Race and Ethnicity of Head Start & EHS Children 2023-2024

Primary Language at Home, 2023-2024

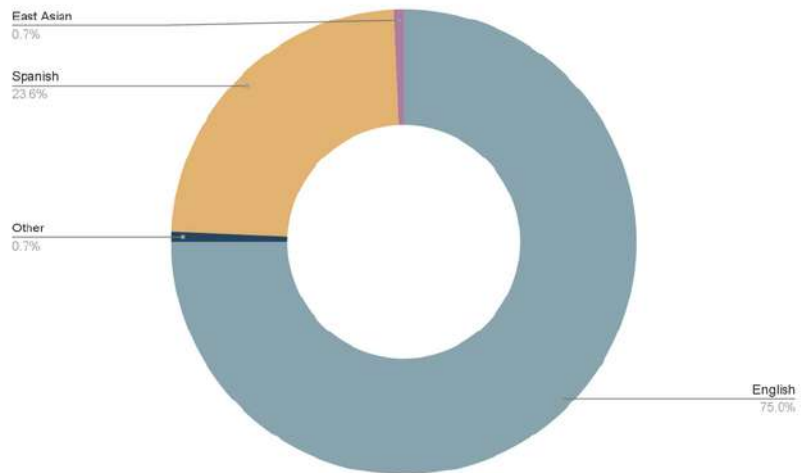


Chart 14. Primary Language Spoken at Home for Head Start & EHS Children 2023-2024

The majority of the children speak English at home. There are 14 children acquiring another language at home. 34% of the children are dual language learners and 40% of the program staff are bilingual and speak Spanish.



Families & Households, 2023-2024

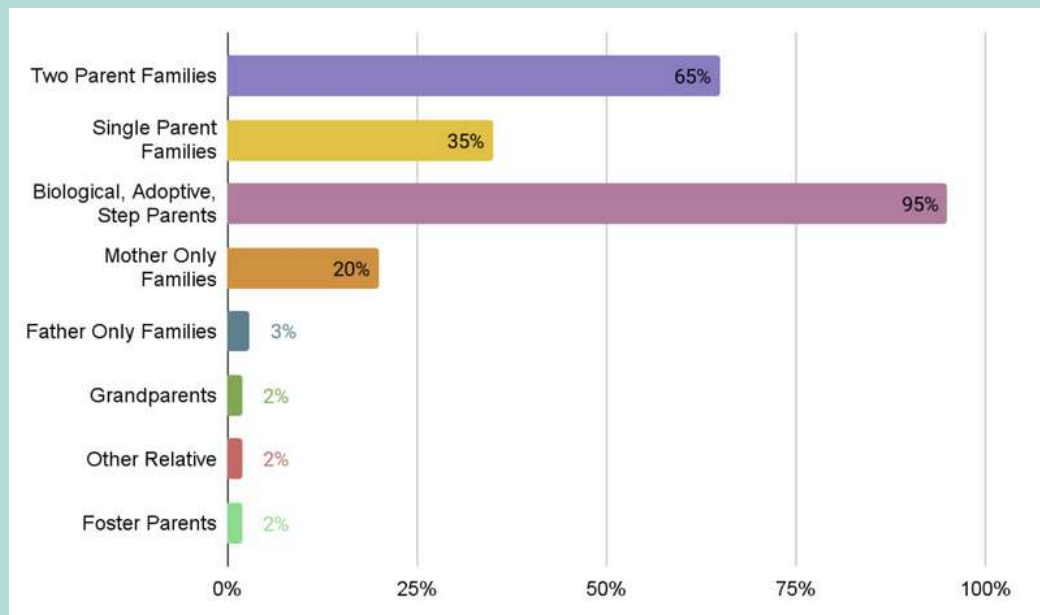


Chart 15. Family and Household Types for Head Start & EHS, 2023-2024

The chart shows the types of families and households for Region 9 Head Start and Early Head Start during the 2023-2024 school year. The majority of families are two-parent families. 35% of the program's families are single-parent families; most are mother-only.

Employment, 2023-2024

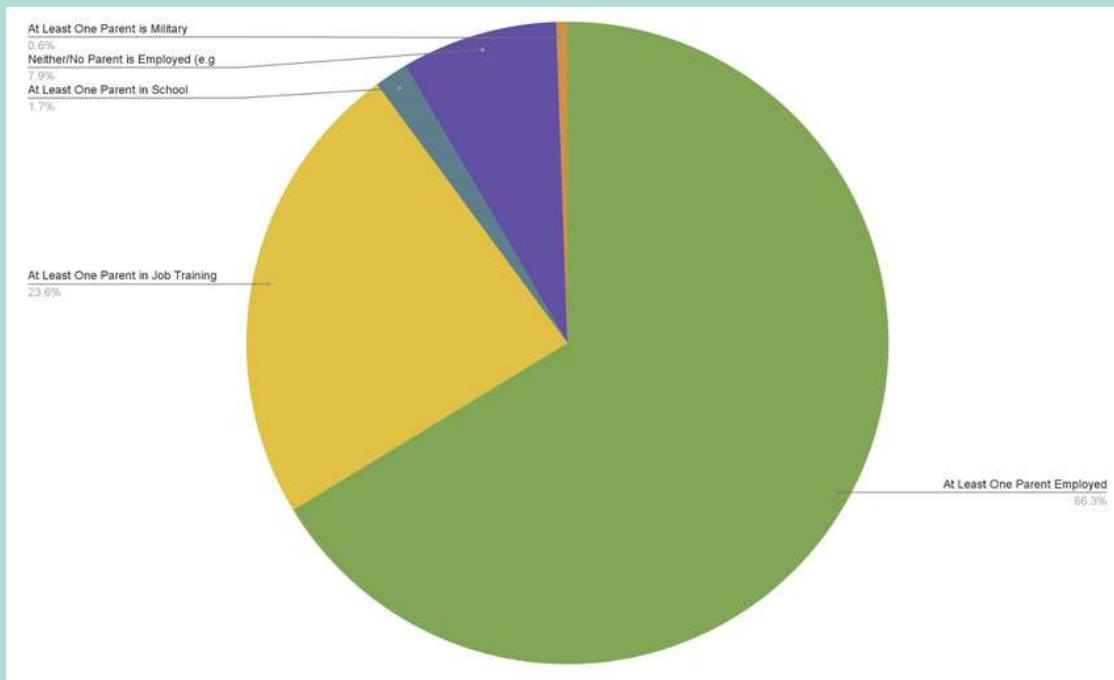


Chart 16. Type of Employment for Head Start & EHS Families, 2023-2024

The chart shows the percentage of Region 9 Head Start and EHS families by employment. The majority of families have at least one parent employed at 66% or in job training at 23% of families. Almost 8% of the families during the 2023-2024 school year were unemployed, retired, or disabled.



POVERTY STATISTICS

Poverty Guidelines

2024 POVERTY GUIDELINES FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	
Persons in family/household	Poverty guideline
1	\$15,060
2	\$20,440
3	\$25,820
4	\$31,200
5	\$36,580
6	\$41,960
7	\$47,340
8	\$52,720
For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$5,380 for each additional person.	

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) releases updates to the poverty guidelines every January. The program uses the most current poverty guidelines to determine eligibility when enrolling children and is updated in the Child Plus Database each year.



Table 5 from the U.S Department of Health and Human Services - <https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines>

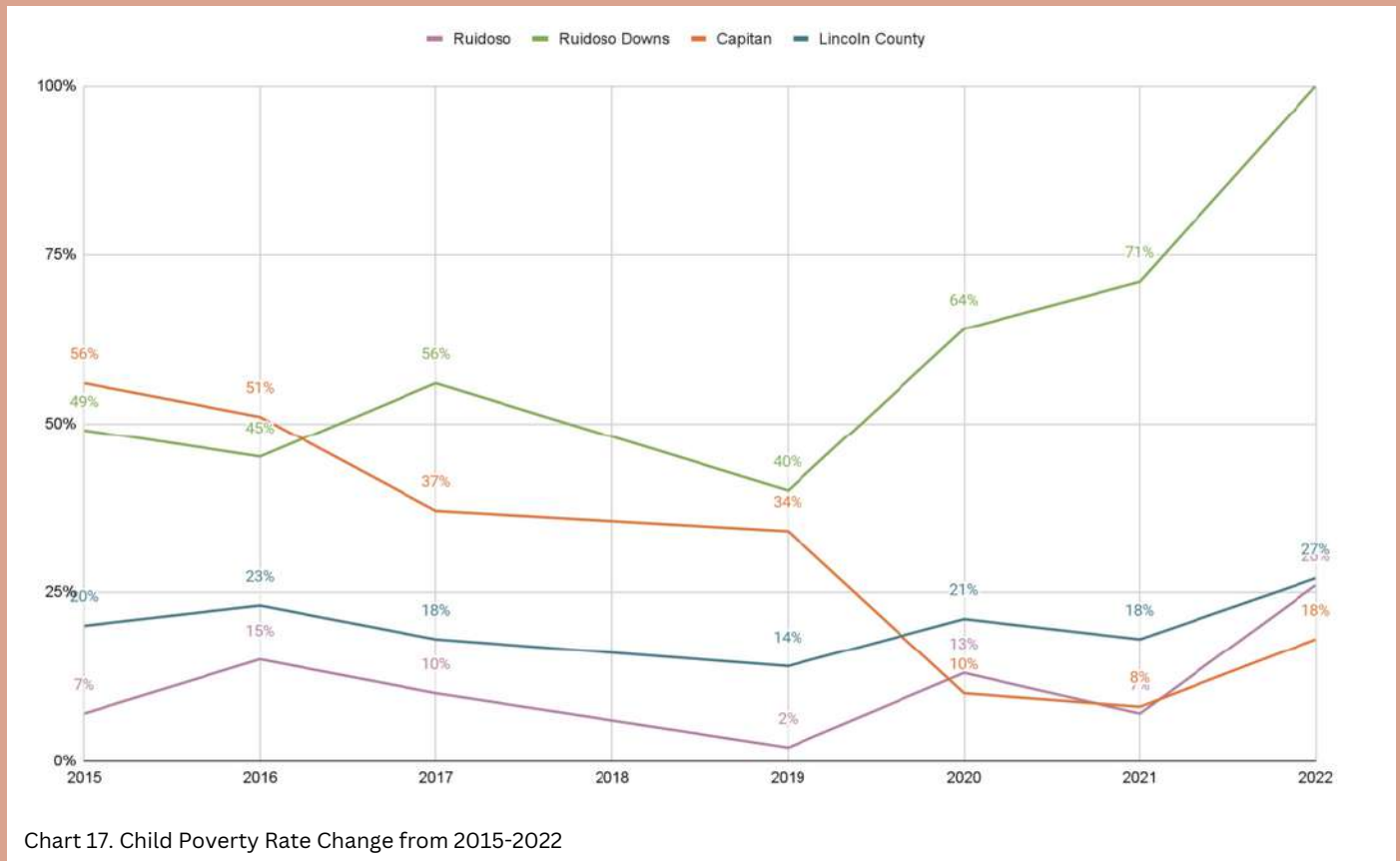
Poverty Rate 5 Year Estimate 2022 (ACS)

Service Area	All Ages - # of Persons in Poverty	All Ages - Poverty Rate	Ages 0-17 # of Persons in Poverty	Ages 0-17 Poverty Rate	Under 5 - # of Persons in Poverty	Under 5 - Poverty Rate
New Mexico	364,725	17.6%	105,030	23.5%	23,304	22.6%
Lincoln County	3,140	15.7%	900	26.9%	387	48.7%
Ruidoso Village	1,151	15%	388	26%	225	47.3%
Ruidoso Downs	955	36.2%	377	73.3%	148	100%
Capitan	193	14.5%	44	17.5%	0	0%
Hondo	111	9.8%	0	0%	0	0%
Carrizozo	289	24.5%	64	64.6%	14	100%

Table 6. Poverty Rates and Ages for NM, Lincoln County, and the Areas of Lincoln County

New Mexico ranks near the bottom in the nation in child poverty. New Mexico's rate of children living in high-poverty areas (19%) is much higher than the national average of 8%, which ranks our state 48th in the nation for children living in high poverty.¹⁸ Lincoln County is ranked first with 0% of children living in high poverty. However, Lincoln County has a poverty rate of 26.9% of children 0-17 years old which is higher than the New Mexico poverty rate for the same age group. Data for Hondo may be missing because there is 0% of children in each age group living in poverty, but from the program's experience, all children who applied for our Head Start program in that area were income-eligible and below the FPL. Ruidoso Downs and Carrizozo have 100% of children under 5 years old who are below the poverty level.

Child Poverty Rate Change



The chart above depicts the poverty rate change for children 0 to 17 years old in Lincoln County, Ruidoso, Ruidoso Downs, and Capitan over the last 8 years. Ruidoso Downs has the highest poverty rate out of all the areas each year after 2016. The poverty rate increased in 2020 for all areas except for Capitan which decreased. All three areas and Lincoln County's poverty rate increased from 2021 to 2022. All the areas have a higher poverty rate than New Mexico except for Capitan.

Population in Poverty by Gender

Service Area	Total Male	% Male	Total Female	% Female
Lincoln County	1,302	14%	1,838	18%
Ruidoso	587	16%	564	14%
Ruidoso Downs	291	28%	664	42%
Capitan	80	12%	113	17%
Hondo	27	5%	84	15%
Carrizozo	120	24%	129	34%

Table 7. Population in Poverty by Gender in Lincoln County and Areas of Lincoln County

Lincoln County has a higher percentage of females in poverty than males at 18%. Ruidoso Downs also has a higher percentage of females (42%) in poverty than males at only 28%. Ruidoso is the only area that has a higher percentage of males in poverty than females.

Families in Poverty

Service Area	Total Families	% of Families In Poverty	% of Families - Married Couples in Poverty	% of Families - Female Householder in Poverty
Lincoln County	5,552	10%	4%	36%
Ruidoso Village	1,989	9%	5%	13%
Ruidoso Downs	622	31%	0%	55%
Capitan	327	18%	15%	32%
Hondo	301	0%	0%	0%
Carrizozo	216	29%	0%	72%

Table 8. Percentage of Families in Poverty and Types of Households in Poverty of Lincoln County

The 2022 U.S Census Data did not provide data on the percentage of families who have a male householder in poverty. The percentage of female-only households have a significantly higher poverty rate than married-couple households. Hondo data did not include poverty rates for any of the categories but they do have a total of 301 families in Hondo. Ruidoso Downs has the highest percent of families who live in poverty with Carrizozo second.



Population in Poverty by Race & Ethnicity Lincoln County Only

The chart shows poverty rates by race and ethnicity in Lincoln County. People of color have a higher poverty rate including American Indians and those who are 2 or more races. Hispanics/Latinos have a higher rate of poverty than people who are non-Hispanic White.

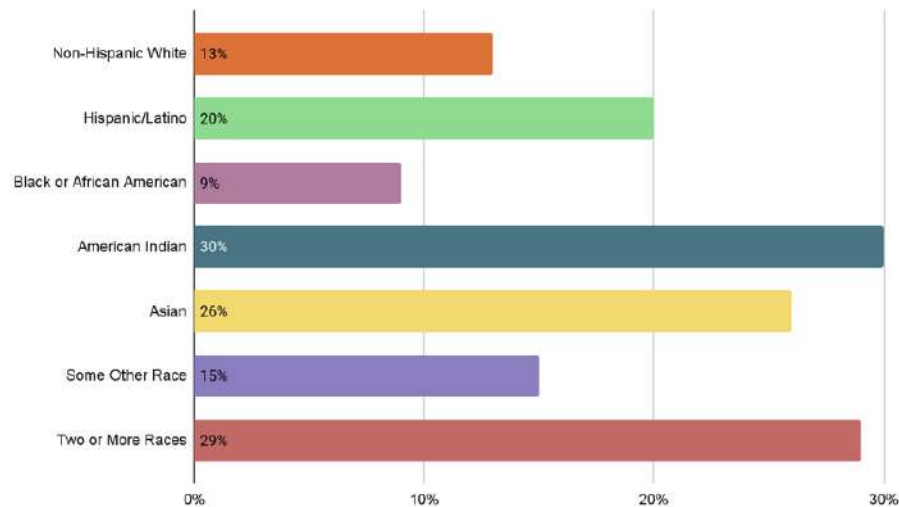


Chart 18. Population in Poverty by Race & Ethnicity in Lincoln County

Summary of Poverty Trends

Poverty affects individuals and families from all demographic groups in New Mexico and Lincoln County. Children under 5 years of age are experiencing the highest rates of poverty in Lincoln County, specifically in the service areas where the program provides services except for Capitan. Ruidoso Downs has the highest rate of poverty among all individuals, children 0-17 years old, children under 5 years old, and families experiencing poverty. Lincoln County ranks in the mid to low range in the state for children ages 0-17 compared to other counties.¹⁹

Whites experience poverty at lower rates than any other racial or ethnic category in Lincoln County, including American Indian and those who are of Hispanic/Latino Origin. According to the NM Kids Count Data Book 2023, Native American children are most likely to live in high-poverty areas, followed by Hispanic and Black Children in New Mexico. Non-Hispanic White and Asian children are least likely to live in high-poverty areas.

IDENTIFIED NEEDS

Region 9 Head Start recognizes eight areas of need: Education, Health, Social Services, Nutrition, Housing, Child Care, Transportation, and Employment. What follows is an in-depth analysis of community needs and trends that affect our children and families in our service area.

Education

We recognize that education is a core element for children and families to move out of poverty, and to improve their self-sufficiency. Educational attainment is highly correlated with economic outcomes. Those who receive high quality education from the start are more likely to achieve future success in economic well-being.



Early Childhood Education

Region 9 operates two early childhood education services: Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start. According to the parent survey, 90% of families stated that their child's teacher included them in their child's development and set goals with them to help their child succeed in school. 100% of families stated they believe their child has learned new skills and is prepared for Kindergarten.

Early Childhood Education Facts

New Mexico ranks 50th in the nation for child well-being by the Annie E. Casey Foundation 2023 Kids Count State Rankings System¹⁹. This is the same ranking New Mexico had in 2018 when our first Community Assessment was written. New Mexico ranks 50th in Education which has not changed since 2018.²⁰

- 59% of young children in New Mexico are not enrolled in school.²¹
- 46% of young children in Lincoln County are not enrolled in school.²²
- 55% of 3 to 4-year-olds in Lincoln County are not enrolled in school.²³
 - 28% of 3 to 4-year-olds in Ruidoso aren't enrolled in school.²⁴
 - 100% of 3 to 4-year-olds in Ruidoso Downs are enrolled in school.²⁵
- 65 low-income children are enrolled in preschool in Lincoln County²⁶
- Approximately 15% of Lincoln County children under five are in family-based childcare.²⁷
- 9% of babies born in New Mexico have low birth weight.²⁸
- 14% of babies born in Lincoln County have low birth weight.²⁹
- 9% of low-income children 0-19 years old in Lincoln County do not have health insurance.³⁰
- 69% of Ruidoso School District students qualify for free or reduced-price meals.³¹
- 50% of Capitan Municipal Schools qualify for free or reduced-price meals.³²
- 56% of Lincoln County families have difficulty finding or affording child care in Lincoln County.³³

Early Childhood Education Programs in Lincoln County

There are 6 programs in Lincoln County besides the Region 9 Head Start program that provides services to 3 and 4 year olds. Some of the programs are licensed childcare centers, and some are NM PreK programs. The licensed childcare centers provide full day, full year services which PreK and Head Start does not. However, the childcare programs aren't free for families and they must private pay or apply for state subsidies to pay for childcare. In 2022, the childcare subsidy requirements changed drastically. The Child Care Assistance Program subsidizes the cost of child care for families at or below 400% of the federal poverty level that are working, seeking employment, and/or in school in a job training program or searching for employment.³⁴ There are 4 childcare centers in Lincoln County that accept infants and toddlers, besides Early Head Start. Imagination Station does not accept children under 18 months old.

Early Childhood Program	Programs/Services Offered
Ruidoso School District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75 - 4Y PreK spots available (must be 4 before September 1st) 48 - 3Y PreK spots available (must be 3 before September 1st) 5 days a week with early release on Wednesday Free program for all families Enrollment is on a first come, first serve basis Teachers must be licensed teachers in NM
Hondo Valley Public Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - 3Y/4Y PreK Mixed Classroom 4 days a week (Monday through Thursday) Free program for all families Enrollment is a first come, first serve basis Teacher must be a licensed teacher in NM
Capitan Municipal School District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - 3Y PreK classroom 1 - 4Y PreK classroom 4 days a week (Monday through Thursday) Free program for all families Enrollment is on a first come, first serve basis Teachers must be licensed teachers in NM
Mountain Montessori LLC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides services to 3-6 year olds using a Montessori curriculum Tuition is charged based on part-time or full-time services. Accept childcare subsidies
First Christian Church Child Development Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides services to infants to 12 year olds Open full day, full year Meals and snacks are not provided Do not use a research based curriculum Tuition is based on part-time or full-time care Accept childcare subsidies
Mountainview Christian Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enroll preschool children through college classes Preschool option is not available to the public. Staff children and grandchildren are the only ones enrolled in the preschool program and must be potty trained 4 days a week with an after school program Private school with a high tuition
Imagination Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides services to children ages 18 months to 5 years old Open full day, full year Meals and snacks are not provided Do not use a research based curriculum Tuition is based on part-time or full-time care and offer a sibling discount Accept childcare subsidies
Early Years Childhood Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide services to infants to 5 years old Open full day, full year Meals and snacks are not provided Do not use a research based curriculum Tuition is based on part-time and full-time care and offer a sibling discount Accept childcare subsidies
Rocking Horse Daycare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide services to infants to 4 years old Open full day, full year NM PreK program for 4 year olds is free Tuition for children birth to three is based on part-time or full-time care Accept childcare subsidies
Boys & Girls Club of Sierra Blanca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serve children from kindergarten to high school Children are separated by age group Five core areas of programming: arts & cooking skills, homework help & tutoring, sports/fitness/recreation, health & life skills, and character and leadership Meals and snacks are served throughout the year through the At Risk Afterschool food program and the Summer Food Service Youth Program
Region 9 Developmental Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide Early Intervention services for children birth to three years old Children qualify through 1 or more enrollment eligibility requirements: Developmental Delay, Established Condition, Medical/Biological at Risk or Environmental at Risk. Offer respite services for Birth-21 years old. Our children are transitioned by their 3rd birthday to Part B 3Y programs in school districts.
Region 9 Home Visiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program serves families Prenatal through age 5 in the convenience of their own homes or other setting preferred by the family. Home Visitor offer support, listen, refer to community resources, help families to reach their goals, and provide information on issues such as attachment and brain development.

34 - ECECD Website. <https://www.nmececd.org/information-for-parents/>

Table 9. The Various Types of Early Childhood Programs Offered in Lincoln County

Early Childhood Programs Enrollment Data

Early Childhood Program	Enrollment Data	Waitlist
Capitan Municipal School District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 – 4Y Prek 10 – 3Y PreK 	No
Hondo School District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 - 3Y/4Y PreK 	No
Imagination Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 - 18 month olds 10 - 2 year olds 10 - 3 year olds 9 - 4 & 5 year olds 	Yes 11 for summer program 7 toddlers
Ruidoso School District	Unknown	Unknown
Rocking Horse Daycare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Infants 14 - 1 to 2 year olds 20 - 3 & 4 year olds 10 - School Aged 	Yes 10 children
Boys & Girls Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60 children ages 6 years to 12 years old 	Yes
Early Years Childhood Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 Infants 10 - Toddlers 10 - Preschool Age 	Yes
Mountain Montessori LLC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 - 12 month to 2.5 year olds 17 - 3-5 year olds 10 - 6 to 9 year olds 	Yes for 6 to 9 year olds
First Christian Church Child Development Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Infants 3 - 2 year olds 4 - 3 year olds 7 - 4 to 5 year olds 9 - School Aged 	Yes
Mountainview Christian Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - 3 Year Old 5 - 4 Year Olds 	No
R9 Developmental Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 55-65 children enrolled across Lincoln County 	No
R9 Home Visiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 111 Families are enrolled 	No

Table 10. Enrollment and Waitlist Information Provided by Early Childhood Programs

The waitlist information provided by each early childhood program is the most current data as of March 2024. By this time of year, most of the PreK programs have exhausted their waitlists and don't enroll children after a certain date close to the end of the school year. The childcare centers are full-year programs so they will enroll children as they apply. According to a parent community survey conducted by the Region 9 PIECE Coalition, half of the families surveyed had issues with finding child care with the top 3 reasons being expense, vacancy/availability, and hours of operation.³⁵ Region 9 Head Start surveyed families and according to the survey, one of the top issues in our community is the lack of childcare and afterschool care and the lack of teaching staff for the schools.

35 - Region 9 PIECE Coalition of Lincoln County 2022 Community Needs Assessment



Youth Education

Disconnected youth are at a higher risk for poor health and economic outcomes as adults, have less access to comprehensive health care (including mental health services), and are more likely to miss out on the social and emotional supports that can increase their chances of economic success and improve overall well-being.³⁶ 13% of teens in Lincoln County aren't in school or working.³⁷

Chronic absenteeism has increased over the last few years and may be reflective of the tremendous trauma and economic challenges families faced during the pandemic. Below is a table showing the percent of students who are chronically absent and student dropout rates for the school districts in Lincoln County.

School District	Percent of Students Chronically Absent	Student Dropout Rate
Capitan Municipal Schools	15%	2%
Carrizozo Municipal Schools	29%	<5%
Corona Municipal Schools	20%	<10%
Hondo Valley Public Schools	17%	12%
Ruidoso Municipal Schools	45%	4%

Table 11. Percent of Students Chronically Absent & Dropout Rates by School District

Ruidoso schools has the highest percentage of students who are chronically absent, but they are also the largest school district out of the five districts. Hondo has the highest student dropout rate across the five districts.

Adult Education

Educational Attainment in Lincoln County

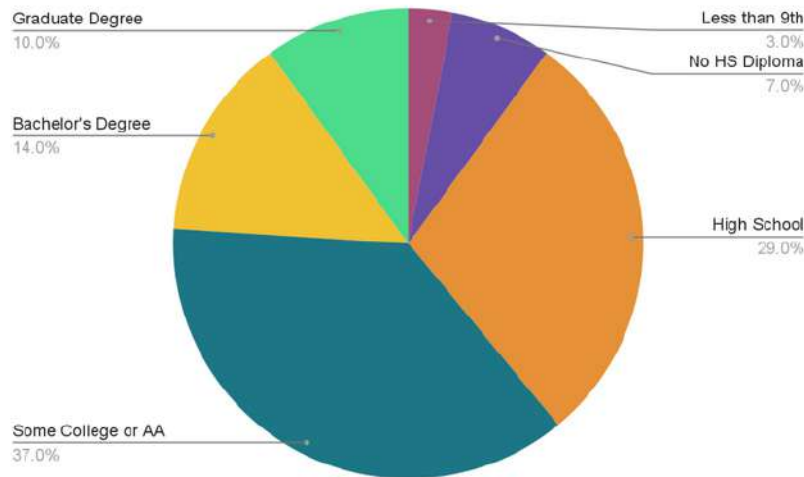


Chart 19. Educational Attainment in Lincoln County

The chart shows the percentage of educational attainment by adults who are 25 years and older in Lincoln County. The majority of the population have some college or an AA degree. 29% of adults have a high school diploma in Lincoln County.³⁸

Head Start & EHS Parent/Guardian Education, 2023-2024

Education Level	Early Head Start	Head Start
Advanced Degree or Bachelors	12%	13%
Associates Degree or Some College	26%	37%
High School or GED	49%	37%
Less Than High School Graduate	13%	13%

Table 12. Head Start & EHS Parent/Guardian Education 2023-2024

The majority of Early Head Start parents have a high school diploma or GED. Head Start has an even percentage of parents who have an associate's degree or a high school diploma/GED. Eight parents received help and enrolled in the ESL program offered by the ENMU (Eastern NM University) in Ruidoso, and one parent had help enrolling in another education program.

HEAD START & EHS EDUCATION DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the 2023-2024 PIR Data, 148 children were enrolled in our programs at least one day. As of March 2024, 52 children were enrolled in Head Start. Early Head Start has maintained full enrollment all year with 44 children enrolled. As of March 2024, we have 16 children on the Early Head Start waitlist. In 2022, 185 children were enrolled in our programs for at least one day. Head Start enrollment has decreased from 108 in 2022 to 52 in 2023. This is due to facility issues, and increased enrollment in local school district PreK programs.

New and Returning Enrollees, 2023 - 2024

Early Head Start:

25 new applications

44 returning applications (2nd year students = 24) (3 or more years = 20)

Head Start:

47 new applications

32 returning applications (2nd year students = 25) (3 or more years = 7)



Enrollment By End of Year - Over the Last 6 Years

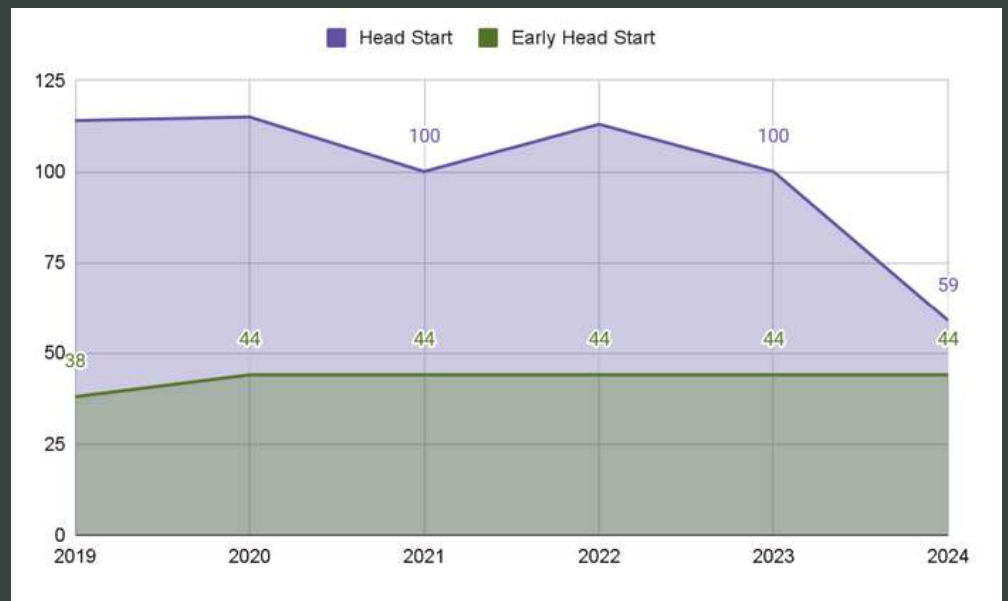


Chart 20. Head Start & EHS Enrollment over the last 6 years (By the End of the School Year)

The chart shows total enrollment by the end of the school year for Head Start and Early Head Start. Head Start's funded enrollment is 115 children. In May 2019 the year ended with 114 children enrolled, and in May 2020 the program met full enrollment. Over the course of the last 4 years enrollment has fluctuated but in 2024 it decreased significantly from 100 to 59. Early Head Start's funded enrollment is 44 children. In June 2019 the program ended with 38 children enrolled but over the last 5 years it has stayed at a steady 44 children which is full enrollment.

EHS Waitlist at End of Year - Over the Last 4 Years

An average of 15 children have been on the Early Head Start waitlist during the 2023-2024 school year. The chart to the right depicts the end of year waitlist counts for the last four years at Early Head Start. The highest waitlist throughout the last 4 years was 22 in April of 2022. Currently, there are 16 children on the EHS waitlist.

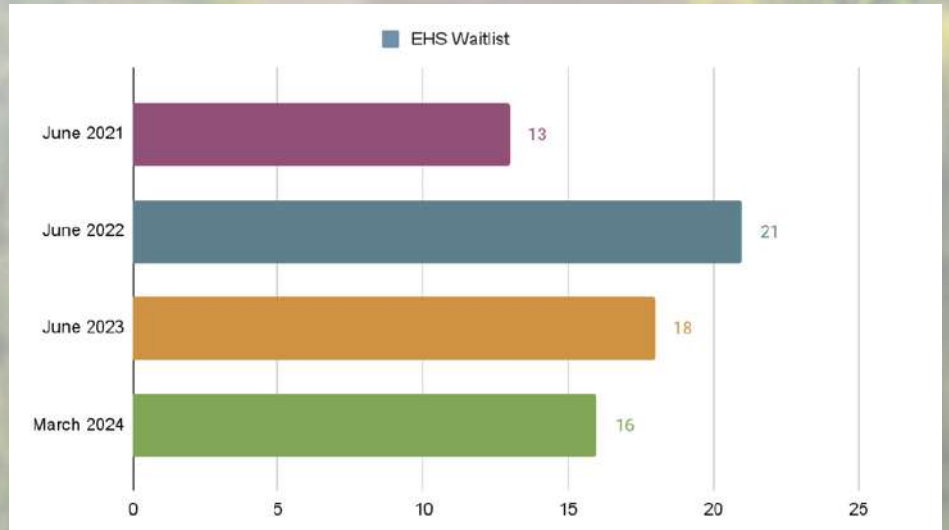


Chart 21. Early Head Start Waitlist by End of the Year, Over the Last 4 Years

Enrollment By Age, 2023 - 2024

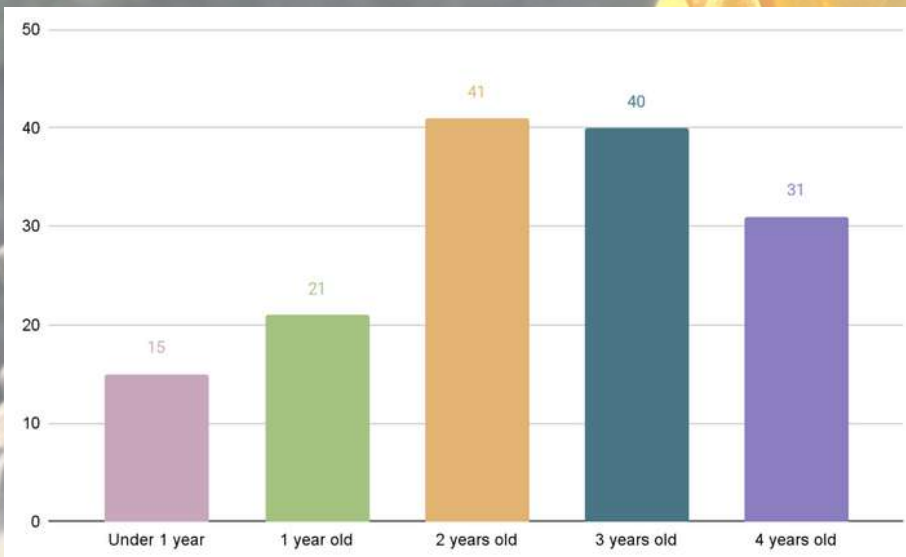


Chart 22. Enrollment by Age for Head Start and EHS during the 2023-2024 School Year.

During the 2023-2024 school year, 24 EHS children left the program within the year, and 20 HS children left the program. A total of 23 children were enrolled less than 45 days. 14 Early Head Start children aged out of the program and 13 transitioned to Head Start. By the end of the school year there are 22 Head Start children who will be entering Kindergarten in the Fall of 2024.

Eligibility Criteria

Selection Criteria

Head Start/EHS Enrollment Eligibility Point Criteria	Points
4 Years old by September 1 of each academic year, but younger than 5	50
3 Years old by September 1 of each academic year, but younger than 4	75
3 Year old Transitioning Child from EHS (Must transition within 6 months of turning 3 and has not dropped before 3rd birthday)	100
Income Eligible 100% Poverty Guidelines	100
Income Eligible 130% Poverty Guidelines	75
Type of Services: Receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	100
Type of Services: Receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	100
Type of Services: Receiving SNAP	100
Parent Type: Two Parent Family	25
Parent Type: Single Parent Family (Mother or Father)	75
Parent Type: Teen Parent (Mother or Father)	75
Both parents (or single parent) working full-time and/or attending school full-time	100
Both parents (or single parent) working part-time and/or attending school part-time	75
Family Type: Other Relative, Grandparent/Legal Guardian	100
Family Type: Foster Family	100
Family Type: Homeless Family (McKinney-Vento Act)	100
Other: Environmental Risks (Other): considered at risk; child protective services, abandonment, death of a parent, in a drug/alcohol program, terminal illness, unemployment, parent incarcerated, child support/alimony.	75
Other: Any child who has formally withdrawn and returned within the school year	75
Other: Child With an Identified Disability	100

Table 13. Head Start & EHS Enrollment Selection Criteria 2023-2024

Type of Enrollment Eligibility, 2023-2024

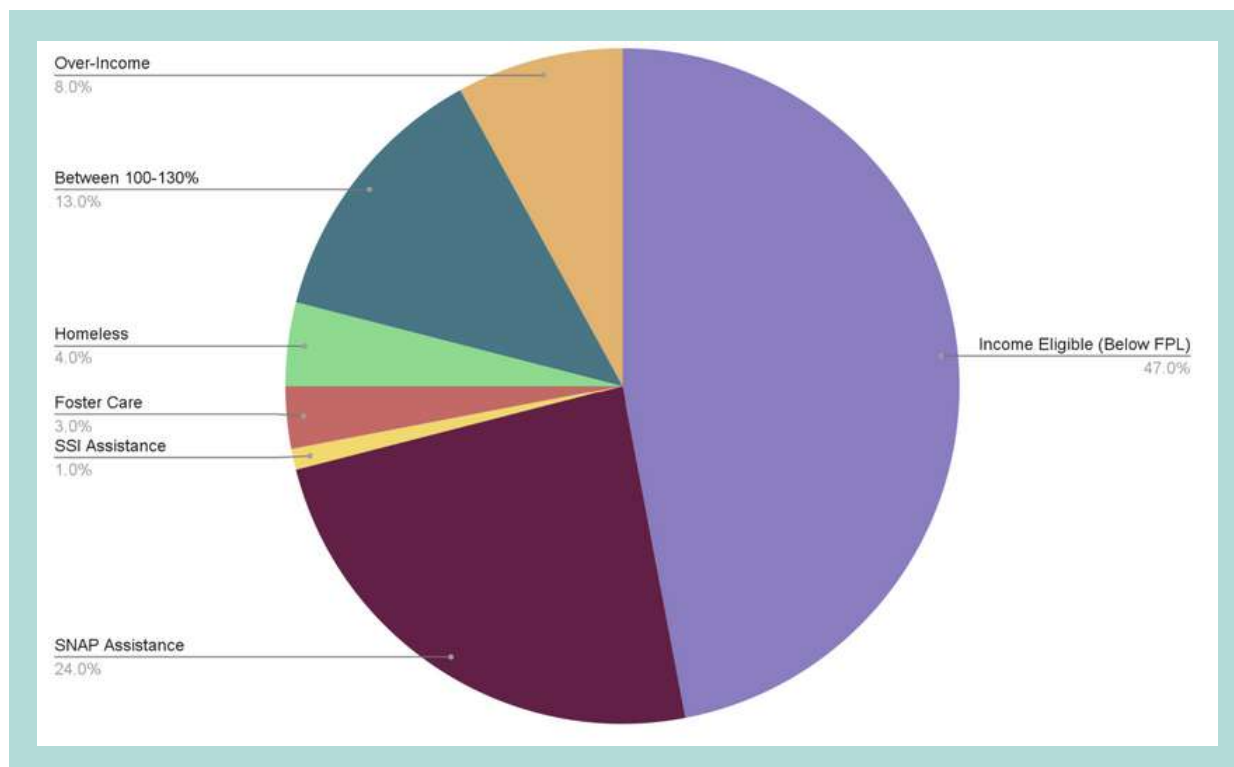


Chart 23. Percentage of Families Based on Income Eligibility for Enrollment

In 2022, The Administration for Children and Families announced that Head Start programs would be able to accept SNAP documentation as income. Adopting this interpretation made it easier for eligible families to enroll children in Head Start services by allowing families to demonstrate proof of SNAP receipt or eligibility to enroll in Head Start, and simplified the process for grantees to determine eligibility.

IDENTIFIED NEEDS



Children with Disabilities

According to a Special Education Progress Report by the NM Legislative Finance Committee in 2023, special education enrollment has grown by 10% in the last decade in New Mexico, particularly among students with specific learning disabilities. In FY24 school districts across the state will receive \$835 million for special education to serve approximately 68 thousand students in special education statewide.⁴⁰ New Mexico ranks in the bottom third of states in special education and we are experiencing a special education teacher shortage. The state has established new administrative offices dedicated to elevating special education policy issues and improving outcomes and services. The Legislature established an Office of Special Education Ombud at the state’s Developmental Disabilities Planning Council in 2021 and the governor enacted a new Office of Special Education at the Public Education Department (PED) in 2023.⁴¹ The special education ombud helps families navigate the special education system by attending school meetings with families, providing information, and answering questions. From December 2021 to October 2023, the special education ombud office assisted 390 families in 61 school districts across 27 counties.⁴²

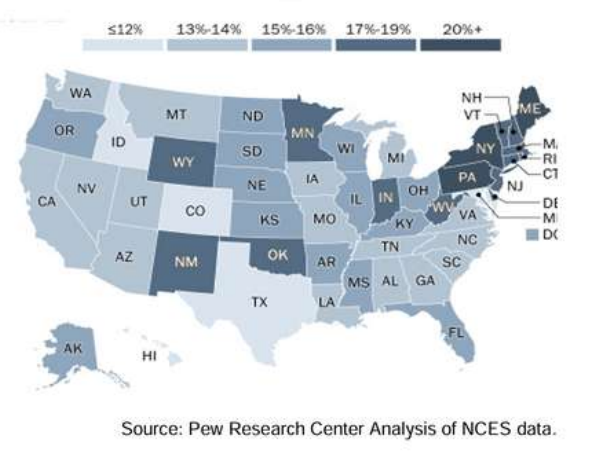
Table 1. State Public Education Funding Formula Allocations for Special Education, FY24

SEG Formula Component for Special Education	Students or Staff	Additional Funding per Student/Staff	Total Funding Allocated Statewide
Students in A/B level Special Education	47,965	\$ 4,369	\$ 209,567,191
Students in C-level Special Education	8,678	\$ 6,242	\$ 54,165,212
Students in D-level Special Education	8,190	\$ 12,483	\$ 102,238,555
3-4 year olds with developmental delays	3,487	\$ 12,483	\$ 43,523,165
Special Education Ancillary or Related Service Staff	1,962	\$ 156,042	\$ 306,107,101
Grand Total			\$715,601,224

Source: LFC analysis of PED FY24 preliminary funding formula.

Table 1 shows the state funding formula called the State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) which is based on a district’s special education enrollment and the level of intervention those students need. An additional \$12,483 is allocated for each 3 to 4-year-old with developmental delays, a total of \$43,523,165 across the state.⁴³

Figure 2: Percentage of students ages 3-21 served under federal IDEA funding by state, FY22

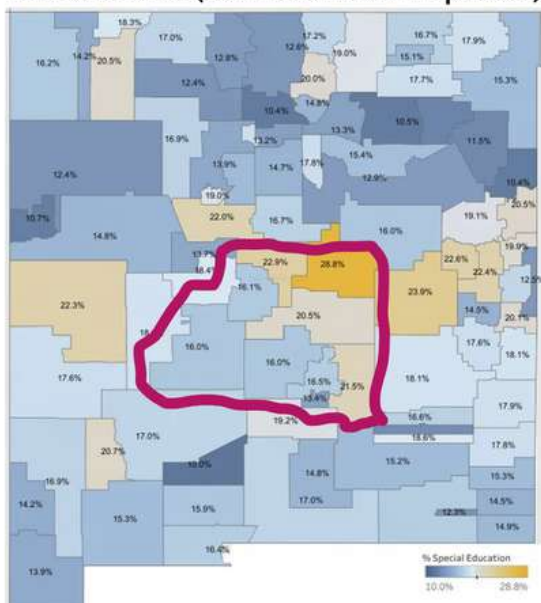


Source: Pew Research Center Analysis of NCES data.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of students ages 3-21 served under IDEA by each state. New Mexico ranks 13th in the nation and has 17-19% of students receiving services under IDEA.⁴⁴

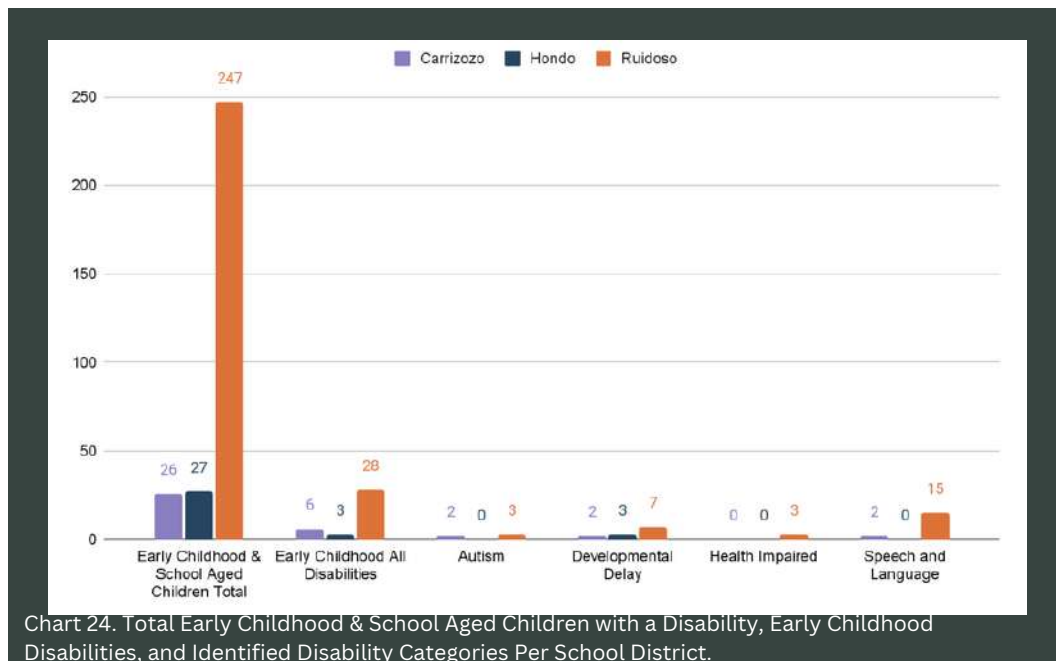
Figure 3 shows the percentage of students with a disability by district from the 2023 school year.⁴¹ The pink border is a rough estimate of Lincoln County but the percentage ranges from 13.4% to 28.8% depending on which district. The average within Lincoln County is 17%.

Figure 3. Percent of Students with a Disability by District in SY23 (Statewide Total = 17 percent)



Source: LFC analysis of PED student data.

Part B (IDEA) Disability Category by School District



The chart above shows data provided by the Office of Special Education Programs for the 2022-2023 school year. The data set did not include Capitan School District. The chart shows the Carrizozo, Hondo, and Ruidoso School district enrollment numbers for early childhood disabilities. The four disability categories were the only ones represented by each district. Most Ruidoso School District's identified disabilities during the 2022-2023 school year fall under Speech and Language Impairment.⁴⁵

Hondo, Ruidoso, and Capitan School District provided the following data for the 2023-2024 school year:

- Capitan
 - 3 children receive DD services, and 1 child is speech-only in their 4Y PreK classroom (out of 15 children enrolled)
 - There are 2 speech-only children receiving services in their 3Y PreK classroom (out of 10 children enrolled)
 - 24% of their early childhood enrollment is receiving special education services
- Ruidoso
 - There are 12 - 3Y PreK students receiving services and 12 - 4Y PreK students receiving services
 - Based on the number of slots available and assuming all spots are filled, Ruidoso School's percentage of children with an IEP is 20%. This does not include the enrollment of Head Start children who receive services from RMSD.
- Hondo
 - They have 2 PreK students with an IEP (out of 9 children enrolled)
 - 22% of their early childhood enrollment is receiving special education services

Based on this information, Ruidoso and Hondo have fewer children receiving services in 2023-2024 than during the 2022-2023 school year.

Ruidoso and Hondo did not provide specific information on what categories the identified disabilities were. Region 9 Educational Services staff have conducted 16 evaluations of children 4 to 8 years old across Corona, Hondo, and Carrizozo as of February 2024. The Region 9 Child Find Coordinator reported that the following number of screenings were conducted at the 2023 Child Find events: 17 in Capitan, 25 in Carrizozo, 6 in Corona, and 12 in Hondo.

Part C (Birth to Three) Early Intervention Data

Total Count of Part C Children in NM	# of Birth to 1 Year Olds with IFSPs	# of 1 to 2 Year Olds with IFSPs	# of 2 to 3 Year Olds with IFSPs	# of Birth to 2 Year Olds with IFSPs	% of Population
10,926	1,224	2,563	3,368	7,155	11.2%

Table 14. Children Receiving Part C (EI) Services in NM by Age Group

Total At-Risk Children Receiving Part C Services	# of Birth to 1 Year At-Risk	# of 1 to 2 Year Olds At-Risk	# of 2 to 3 Year Olds At-Risk
1,616	479	619	518

Table 15. At-Risk Children Receiving Part C Services in NM by Age Group

American Indian	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic/Latino	Native Hawaiian	2 or More Races	White
416	53	129	4,890	10	152	1,505

Table 16. Children Receiving Part C Services in NM Based on Race & Ethnicity

The NMFIT Program offers support and services to families through early intervention provider agencies across New Mexico. Early intervention supports a child’s learning and development during the important time from birth to three years of age. The category “At-Risk” refers to at-risk due to medical or biological factors such as low birth weight or prematurity. “At-Risk for Developmental Delays” is due to environmental conditions that could affect a child’s development. The tables provided are from the Office of Special Education Programs research center. Most children in New Mexico who are receiving Part C services and have an IFSP are ages 2 to 3 years old. There are a total of 7,155 children from birth to 2 years old who have an IFSP. 11.2% of the New Mexico children population are receiving Part C services. The At-Risk table refers to children who are at-risk due to medical or biological factors such as low birth weight or prematurity. A total of 1,616 children in New Mexico fall into this category. Hispanics/Latinos are the highest population of children who receive Part C services across the state.

Region 9 Developmental Services Data

Region 9 Developmental Services is the NMFIT provider for Lincoln County and provides services in every city of Lincoln County. From August 2023 to April 2024, they served a total of 79 children with 44 currently enrolled in services. 6 children have transitioned from Part C to Part B from August 2023 to April 2024, which includes all the school districts in Lincoln County. Below is a chart that shows the eligibility/IFSP categories of the 79 children who have been served by Developmental Services this school year.

Eligibility Category of Children with an IFSP

Eligibility Category	Count
At Risk, Environmental	2
At Risk, Environmental, At Risk, Medical/Biological, Established Condition	3
At Risk, Environmental, Developmental Delay	10
At Risk, Medical/Biological	2
At Risk, Medical/Biological, Developmental Delay	38
At Risk, Medical/Biological, Developmental Delay, Established Condition	3
At Risk, Medical/Biological, Established Condition	6
Developmental Delay	51
Developmental Delay, Established Condition	4

The chart shows children who qualify in each category. Some children are counted in multiple categories because of their eligibility. 51 children are eligible under developmental delay but they may be counted under another category as well. 26 children are at-risk for medical or biological and 8 are eligible under at-risk for environmental. The at-risk for environmental includes the CYFD referrals to Part C. 7 children have an established condition meaning there was a medical diagnosis for eligibility.

Table 17. Eligibility Category of Children with an IFSP - Provided by R9 Developmental Services

Region 9 Head Start & Early Head Start Data

EHS Transition Data

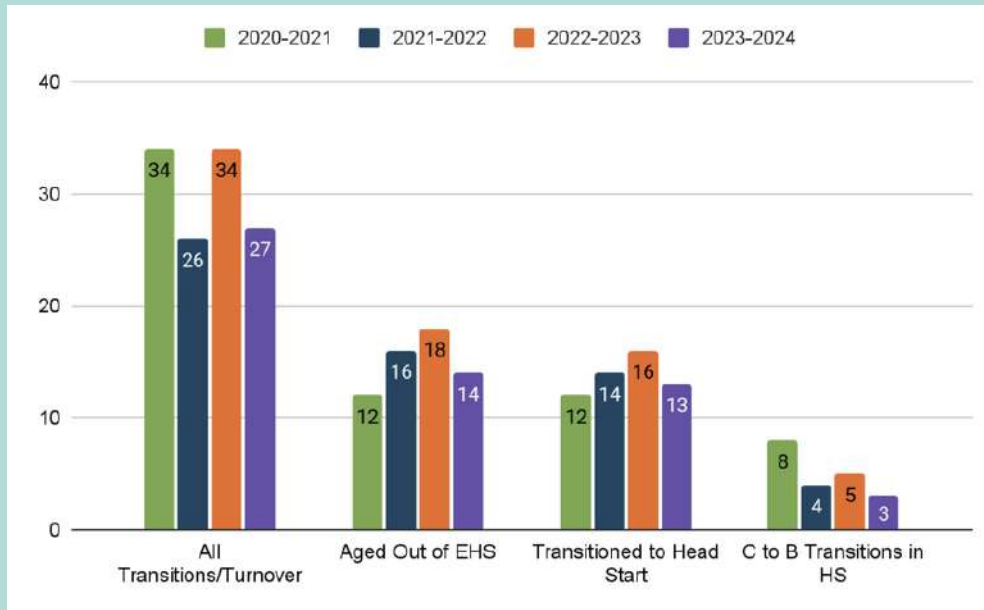


Chart 25. Transition/Turnover Data for R9 Head Start/EHS with Children who Transitioned to Head Start and Part C to B.

The chart above shows the number of transitions and turnover at Early Head Start each year, the number of those who aged out of the program, the number of children who transitioned to Head Start once they aged out, and the number of children who were receiving Part C services and who qualified for Part B services by school year. SY 2020 and 2022 had the highest amount of transitions. In 2022, 18 children aged out of EHS with 16 who went to Head Start. Over the four school years shown above the majority of the Early Head Start children who age out of the program transition to Head Start with some of the children transitioning from Part C to Part B.

Early Head Start & Head Start Disability Data

EHS Children with IFSPs

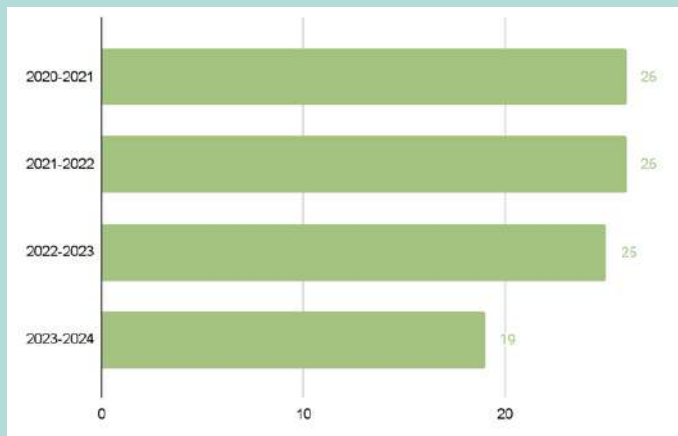


Chart 26. Number of EHS Children with IFSPs over 4 years

Head Start Children with IEPs

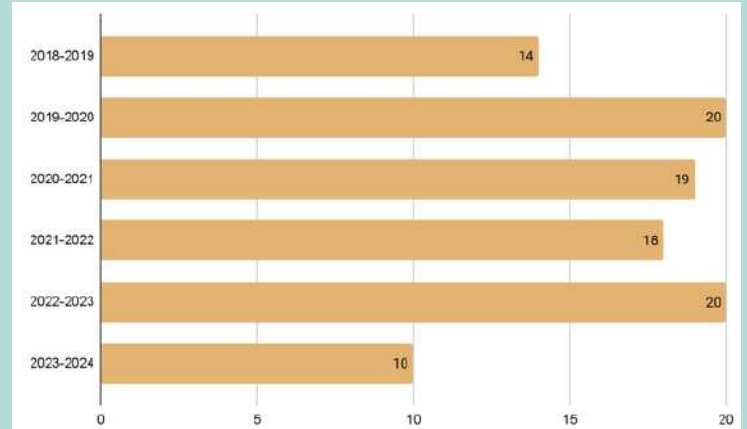


Chart 27. Number of Head Start Children with IEPs over 6 years

The number of Early Head Start children with IFSPs decreased from 2022-2023. From 2020 to 2022 the amount of EHS children with IFSPs stayed about the same across three school years. In 2019, the number of Head Start children with IEPs increased from the year before. This year the number of IEPs decreased from the previous school year. In 2023, the primary disabilities were as follows: 4 speech impairment, 1 autism, and 5 developmental delays.

Disabilities Resources for Children & Families

- LEAs (Ruidoso School District and Capitan Municipal School District)
- Region 9 Developmental Services (NMFIT and Early Intervention Program)
- Lincoln County Medical Center
- Children's Medical Services
- Nezy Care



IDENTIFIED NEEDS

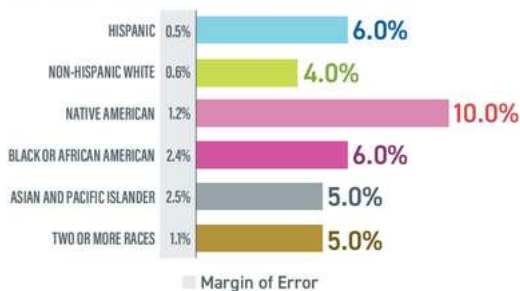
Health

New Mexico ranks 44th in the nation for overall child well-being and health.⁴⁷ Unfortunately, this statistic is alarming to know that our state is one of the top 10 worst states when it comes to health and child well-being. The good news is that the health outcome ranking for Lincoln County is 6 out of 32, with "1" being the county with the best health. Lincoln County Medical Center conducted a community survey and the top 5 gaps or needed resources in our area were: mental health/substance abuse treatment, social services, parks/sidewalks/walking trails, public transportation, and doctor's offices.⁴⁸

Pregnancy & Birth

- In 2022, only 2.1% of all live births in Lincoln County were births to women who received no prenatal care.⁴⁹
- Lincoln County Medical Center delivered 219 babies in 2021, and 205 babies in 2022.⁵⁰
- In 2021, 13.9% of babies born in Lincoln County were born at a low birth weight.⁵¹
- Resources available to pregnant women in Lincoln County:
 - Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
 - Life-Way Pregnancy Resource Center
 - Families First
 - Income Support Division (Medicaid)
 - Prepared Child Birth Classes
 - R9 Home Visiting

Children without Health Insurance—BY RACE AND ETHNICITY (2017-2021)



Source: Population Reference Bureau analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021. Note: Higher margins of error indicate less statistical reliability due to small sample sizes.

Chart 28. Children without health insurance by race & ethnicity in New Mexico. Provided by NM Kids Count Data Book 2023.

Health Insurance

In 2022, New Mexico continued to have a low rate of children without health insurance at 6%. During the pandemic, the state's policies provided continuous Medicaid coverage for children and families without having to reapply annually. The policies and requirements for Medicaid coverage returned to normal in 2023 which has caused a high level of disenrollment. The number of children without health insurance may increase in the 2023 data. 9% of low-income children (younger than 19 years old) in Lincoln County don't have health insurance.⁵²

The chart shown here shows children without health insurance by race & ethnicity in New Mexico. The highest percentage of children without health insurance are Native American. 8% of the youth in Lincoln County who are enrolled in Medicaid are Native American.⁵³ The Mescalero Apache Tribe offers free medical services to its members through the Indian Health Services located on the reservation.

R9 Head Start/EHS Health Data

Types of Health Insurance

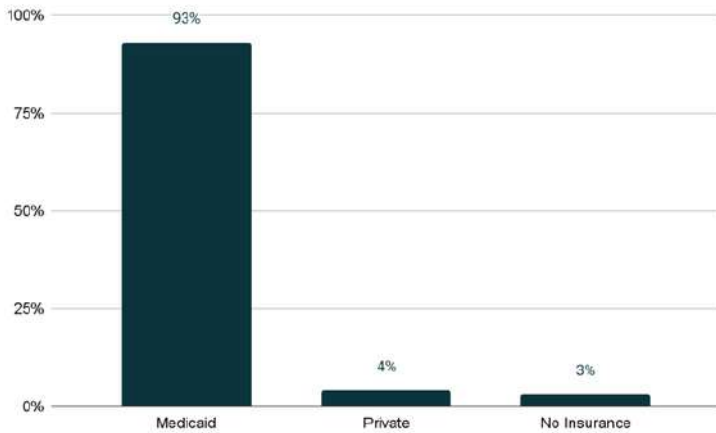


Chart 29. Types of Health Insurance Percentages for Head Start & EHS Children 2023-2024.

Health Care & Up to Date

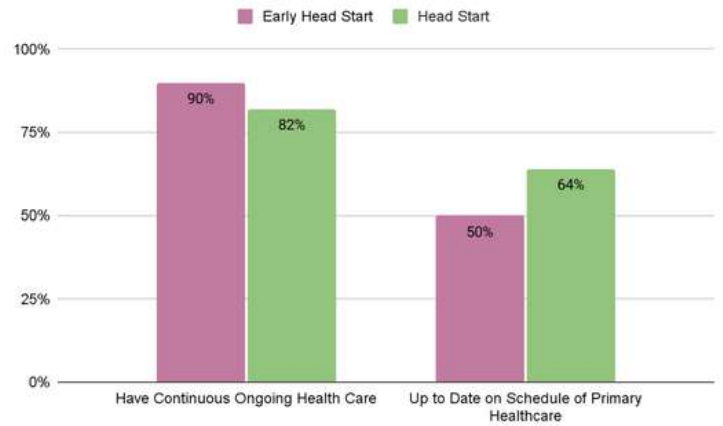


Chart 30. The percentage of children from EHS and Head Start who have continuous health care and who are up to date on the EPSDT schedule for primary healthcare.

97% of all Head Start and Early Head Start children had health insurance by the end of enrollment in 2024. The majority of Head Start & EHS children have Medicaid with only 3% without insurance. Chart 30 shows the percentage of children who have continuous ongoing health care (a medical home) and the percentage of children who are up to date on the state’s EPSDT schedule for primary and preventative healthcare requirements.

The percentages are low for children in Head Start who are up to date because for them to be considered “up-to-date” they have to have the following screenings completed by a physician or the program: physical exam, vision screening, hearing screening, blood pressure, and height & weight. If a child is missing one of those screenings or it has expired within 12 months they will not be counted as up to date in our Child Plus Database. Most of the doctors in the area don’t complete all screenings during the child’s physical exam and then the program is responsible for getting the screenings completed with our equipment or by having a nurse come to the site.

The percentages for Early Head Start are low because to be considered “up-to-date” in EHS, the child has to have had all their well-child checks completed and turned into the program. The program has a hard time getting this data because sometimes parents don’t take them for every well-child check or we don’t receive the exam information from the doctor or parent.



Weight

Many external factors influence childhood obesity, such as socioeconomic status, food insecurity, and community infrastructure. Nearly one-in-four school-aged children in New Mexico live in poverty, making New Mexican children more at risk for obesity than children in other states.⁵⁴ According to the NM Kids Count Data Book 2023, 33% of youth (age 12-17) are overweight or obese in Lincoln County.⁵⁵

The chart shows the percentage of students who were overweight and obese by race & ethnicity in New Mexico in 2022. The pink depicts the percentage of children who were overweight, and the orange is the percentage of children who were obese. This data is based on Kindergartners in New Mexico in 2022. Children of color are at a higher risk for being overweight and obese based on the chart.

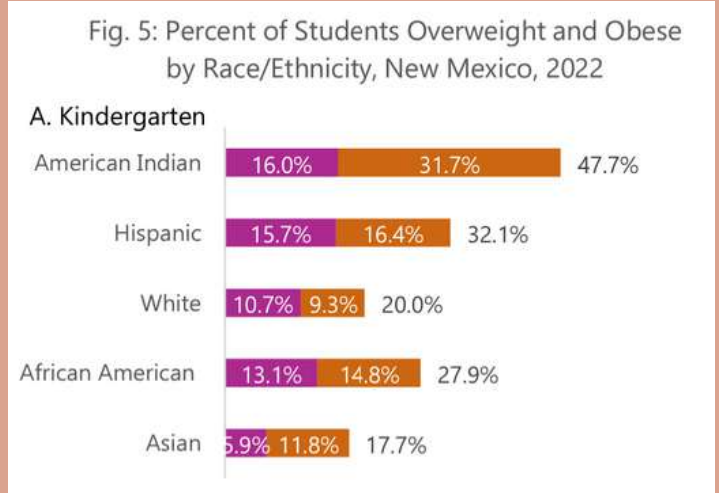


Chart 31. Provided by NMDOH - The Weight of Our Children

R9 Head Start Body Mass Index (BMI) Data

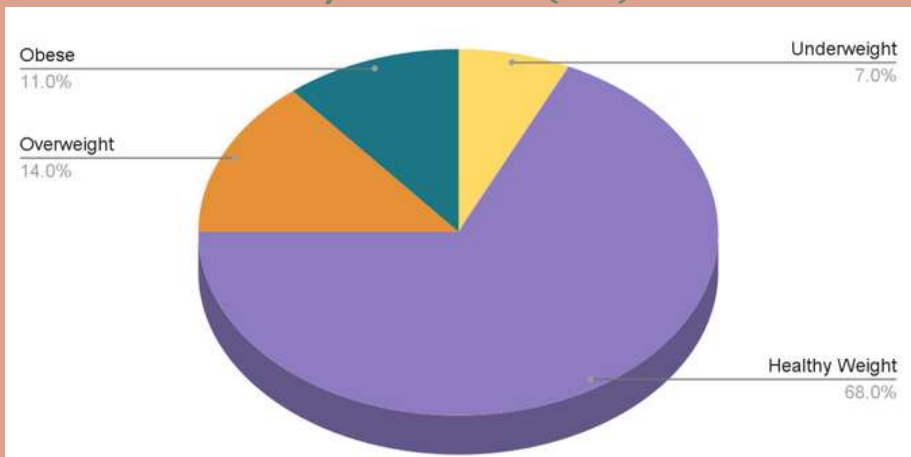


Chart 32. Body Mass Index (BMI) percentages for Head Start children 2023-2024

According to the chart, 25% of Head Start children were overweight or obese by the end of the 2023 school year, with 68% at a healthy weight.

The chart shows the percentage of children in Head Start and EHS who were up to date on the required immunizations by the end of the school year. The 2023-2024 data was as of March 2024 so some children may get up to date before the end of the school year. Early Head Start data was consistent across the 5 years, but Head Start's percentages decreased over the 5 years.

Head Start/EHS Immunizations

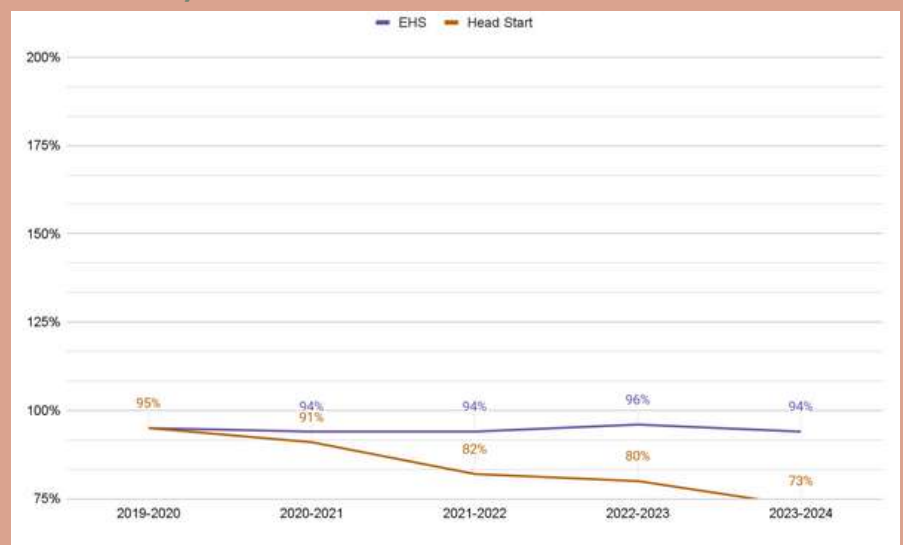


Chart 33. Percent of children from Head Start & EHS who were up to date on immunizations over the last 5 years.

Dental Care

Unfortunately, there is limited data on dental care for children in New Mexico. The state has an Office of Oral Health but the data available is from 2018 and only includes adults 18 years and older. In our research, we found that the issues across the state are that many New Mexicans live in areas where there is a shortage of dental care professionals and about 50% of children with Medicaid have difficulties finding a provider in their area.⁵⁶ This rings true for Lincoln County. In Ruidoso, there aren't any providers who accept Medicaid. There used to be one provider but he lost his license due to malpractice. There is one provider in Carrizozo, NM that accepts Medicaid, but the majority of our families drive to Roswell, NM, or Alamogordo, NM (both about an hour away) where there are more providers who accept Medicaid and specialize in children's dentistry.



Only 77% of Head Start children have continuous ongoing dental care, and 59% have received preventative dental care in the 2023-2024 school year. This is partly due to a lack of dental professionals in our area and families may not have transportation to travel out of town to a dentist. The other reason is that parents just choose not to take their child to the dentist at this age. Not all children at Early Head Start are age eligible for a dental exam, but do receive dental screenings/oral exams (visually) at their well-child checks or by the nurse who helps our program with screenings.



Head Start/EHS Dental Care Data

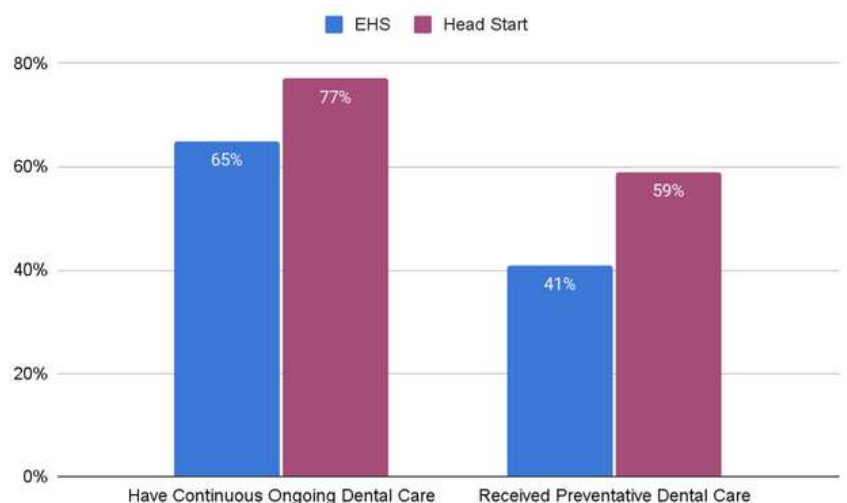


Chart 34. Percent of children from Head Start and EHS who had continuous dental care (dental home) and who received preventative dental care in the 2023-2024 school year.

Health Resources for Children & Families

- Lincoln County Medical Center
- Capitan Medical Clinic
- Carrizozo Dental Clinic
- Children's Medical Services
- Families First
- Public Health Office
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Region 9 School-Based Health Clinic
- Lion's Club - Ruidoso (vision screening)
- Ruidoso Walk-In Clinic
- Presbyterian Services
- BCA Pediatrics

Health Care

The population ratio to primary care physicians in Lincoln County is lower than other counties in New Mexico at 2,170 people for every 1 provider, and this trend is getting worse over time.⁵⁷ In the 2020 community assessment, there were 1,827 people for every 1 provider. 90% of Early Head Start children and 82% of Head Start children have a “medical home” or continuous ongoing healthcare by a provider. Some children are undocumented so they don’t qualify for Medicaid and therefore can’t get a primary care physician. And other children or families have not established a primary care physician. Fortunately, a pediatric group called “BCA Pediatrics” opened a new office in Ruidoso. There is one practitioner and many of our families have chosen them as their primary provider. Unfortunately, Lincoln County does not have very many specialists in the area. So if a child or family needs a specialist they usually have to travel to Albuquerque or Las Cruces to receive care.

Child Abuse

The rate of substantiated child abuse in New Mexico increased slightly in 2023, at 13.2 per 1,000. The continuation of the low rate after higher rates in previous years is likely related to a drop in child abuse reports as rates of chronically absent students remain historically high.⁵⁸ In fiscal year 2023, for every 1,000 children under the age of 18 in Lincoln County, approximately 14 were abused or neglected. The percentages of each type of child abuse are depicted in the table below. These percentages are of all substantiated allegations of child abuse in Lincoln County.⁵⁹

Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Physical Neglect
47%	4%	49%

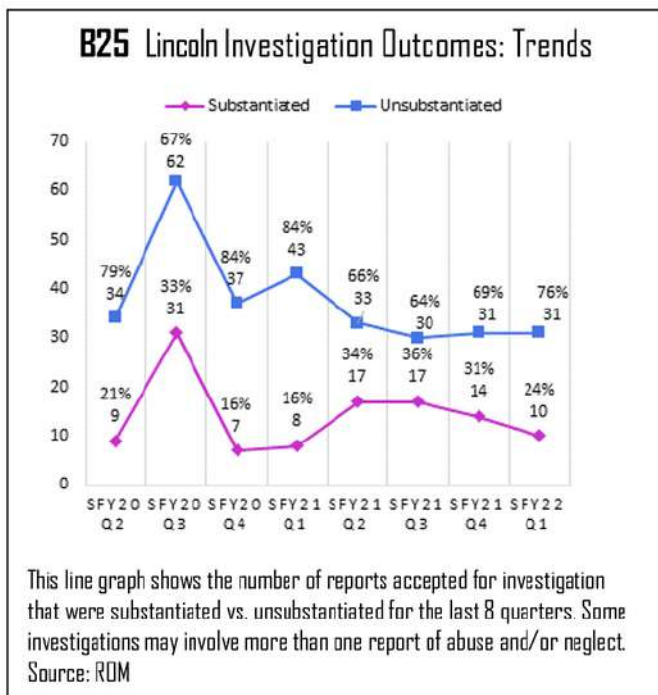


Chart 35. Substantiated and Unsubstantiated Child Abuse Reports & Investigations in Lincoln County. Provided by NM CYFD.

The NM Children, Youth, and Families Department provides the chart to the left. The comparison is between substantiated and unsubstantiated reports of child abuse in Lincoln County. In 2020, there were a total of 93 reports with 33% of them being substantiated. This is surprising as the number of reports across the state decreased during the pandemic. According to the chart, there are more unsubstantiated reports of child abuse than substantiated. CYFD also reported that in 2022, there were 0.2% in child protective custody.⁶⁰

57 - Presbyterian Healthcare Services CHA 2023
 58 - NM Kids Count Data Book 2023
 59 & 60 - NM CYFD 360 Quarterly Report, FY2022, Quarter 1

Mental Health

Mental Health encompasses adult, youth, and child mental health in our community. COVID-19 had a huge impact on mental health among adults and children. During this time most parents were expected to work, maintain a household, and homeschool their children (when schools were closed). Children who were born during the pandemic may not have had as much social interaction as other children, and a lot of childcare centers remained closed during this time. The Governor of New Mexico shut down the whole state at one point and many parents lost their jobs or experienced economic hardships which added to the mental health issues in our community.



Overall, behavioral health metrics for youth have gotten worse over the last few years in Lincoln County. There appears to be a correlation between the rise in youth feeling sadness and hopelessness and the rise in substance use (tobacco and alcohol).⁶¹ Because youth mental health indicators are worsening and adult mental health indicators are either stabilizing or improving, work in Lincoln County around behavioral health should focus on building youth resilience and improving the overall quality of life for all populations with an emphasis on Native Americans and Hispanic/Latino populations.⁶² Access to mental health providers continues to be a challenge in Lincoln County. In 2020, there was one provider for every 190 people in the county (population-to-provider ratio of 190:1).⁶³ Two providers in Lincoln County specialize in child mental health and counseling, Region 9 School-Based Health Center and Sierra Blanca Counseling. Children In Need of Services (CHINS) is located in Alamogordo, NM, and will take referrals from our program.

Region 9 Head Start/EHS Mental Health Referrals

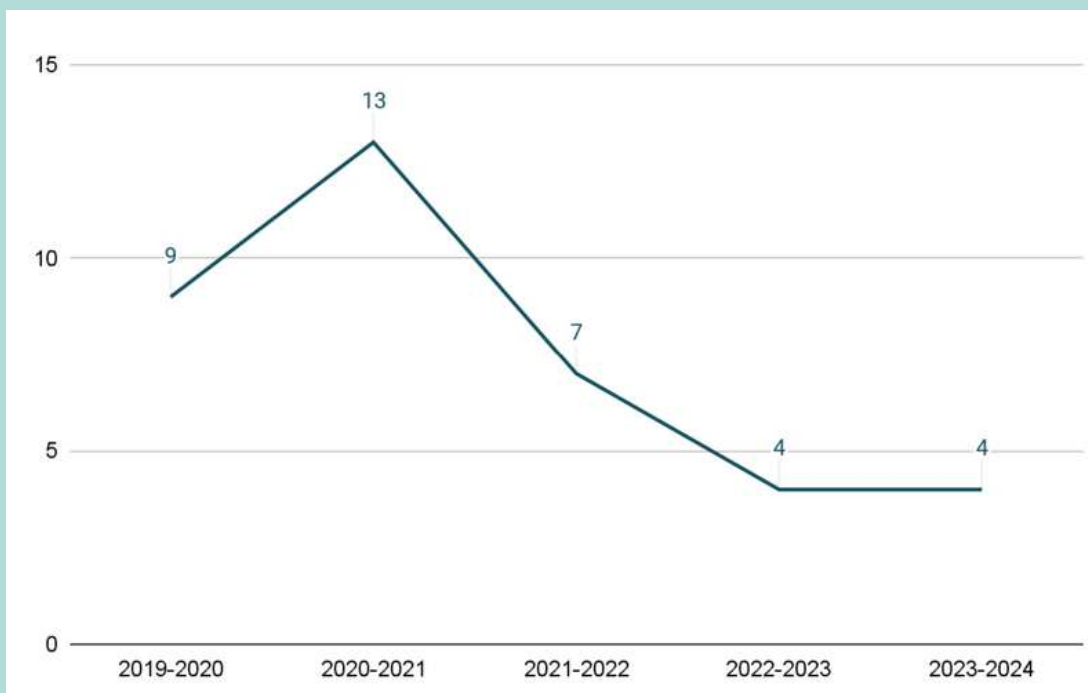
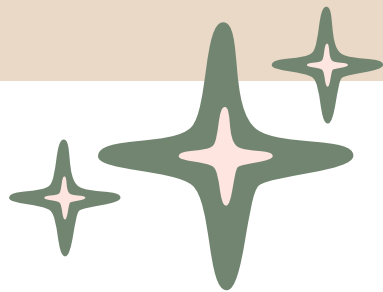


Chart 36. Number of Mental Health Referrals from 2019 - 2024 by Region 9 Head Start/EHS.

The chart depicts the number of mental health referrals that Region 9 Head Start and Early Head Start provided to children & families in the last 5 years. As you can see, the number of referrals increased during the first year of the pandemic. It has slowly decreased over the years but we are also focusing more on social-emotional skills and learning in our classrooms, and providing parent training in our Conscious Discipline curriculum.



Community Mental Health Data

The community mental health data is provided by the two providers that our program has partnerships with, Region 9 School-Based Health Center and Sierra Blanca Counseling. School-Based Health Center provides counseling to children in Lincoln County and has a nurse practitioner to conduct primary care visits.

Region 9 School Based Health Center

On average, the School-Based Health Center (SBHC) sees 70 students per month for counseling services throughout Lincoln County schools. They received 265 referrals overall for mental health this school year (2023-2024) with 197 of them from Ruidoso, about 75% of all referrals. On average, the nurse practitioner sees about 45 patients per month.

The chart shows the percentage of each reason for referral to school based health center. This data is from all school districts in Lincoln County. The main reason for referral was for emotions at 40.5%, and the second highest percentage of referrals was for substance abuse at 28.2%.

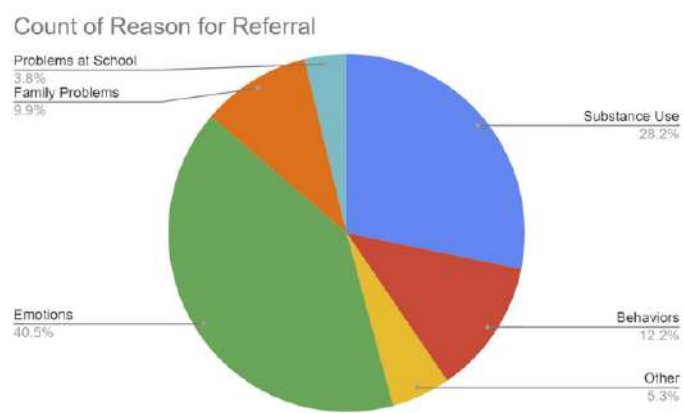


Chart 37. Provided by SBHC and Apex

Type of Visit by Primary Diagnosis	2023-2024			2022-2023	
	Site #	Site %	State %	Site #	Site %
Primary Care Visits	348	45%	64%	305	28%
Well-Child Checks (w/o Sports Physicals)	7	2%	14%	12	4%
Sports Physicals	244	70%	12%	228	75%
Reproductive Health Visits	1	0%	16%	6	2%
Acute Care Visits	96	28%	58%	59	19%
Behavioral Health Visits	433	55%	31%	788	72%
Dental Visits	0	0%	0%	0	0%
Missing Visits	0	0%	5%	0	0%

Table 18. Provided by SBHC and Apex

SBHC User Age	2023-2024			2022-2023	
	Site #	Site %	State %	Site #	Site %
0 to 3	1	0%	2%	7	1%
4 to 14	148	43%	45%	244	50%
15 to 19	168	49%	42%	206	42%
20 and over	26	8%	12%	32	7%

Table 19. Provided by SBHC and Apex

The two tables show data from the SBHC Apex system for the 2023-2024 and 2022-2023 school year. The first table shows the type of visit by primary diagnosis with behavioral health at 433 visits in the 2023-2024 school year. The number of visits decreased by 45% from the 2022-2023 school year. Primary care visits were the second highest type of visit to the clinic which increased from the 2022-2023 school year.

The second table shows the age groups that were served each school year with ages 15 to 19 at the most and ages 4 to 14 second.

Sierra Blanca Counseling

Sierra Blanca Counseling, LLC is a Private Practice nestled in the beautiful mountain town of Ruidoso. They are a close-knit group of therapists who strive to offer the very best in mental health counseling. Many therapists at Sierra Blanca Counseling are trained in EMDR and use this effective modality to help members of the community, including Medicaid recipients as well as local first responder organizations. As of April 2024, Sierra Blanca Counseling served 47 families and 12 children under the age of five.

Total Children Served Under Age 5	2-Year-Olds	3-Year-Olds	4 Year Olds	5-Year-Olds
12	3	1	5	3

Table 20. Information provided by Sierra Blanca Counseling

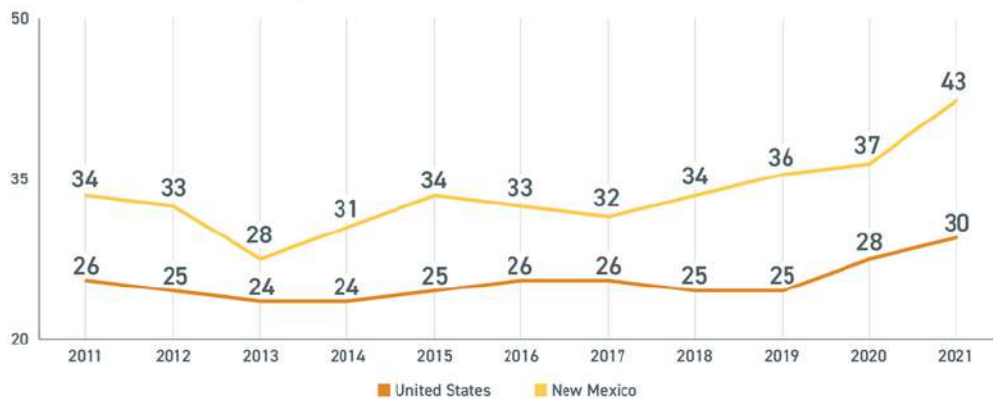
Drug & Alcohol Use

New Mexico consistently has the highest alcohol-related death rate in the country and ranked sixth nationally for drug overdose deaths in 2021. Substance use disorders (SUD) remain a problem in New Mexico, as alcohol- and drug-related deaths increased rapidly during the pandemic.⁶⁴ The rate of teens abusing alcohol and drugs has remained the same after improving significantly over time, from 10% in 2009-2010 to 5% in 2018-2019.⁶⁵ Teen binge drinking has also decreased over time. 13.1% of youth (ages 12-17) in Lincoln County binge drink.⁶⁶ According to “Yelp”, there are about 10 marijuana dispensaries in Ruidoso alone. This has significantly increased since marijuana became legal in New Mexico. About 32.3% of high school students in Lincoln County have reported marijuana use at least once in the past 30 days (2019) which has most likely increased over the last 5 years.⁶⁷ Lincoln County ranks in the top 5 highest counties in NM for youth cocaine use, youth heroin use, and youth methamphetamine use.⁶⁸

Death Rates

New Mexico’s child and teen death rate is 43 deaths per 100,000 children and teens. Rates among Hispanic, Native American, and White children in New Mexico are significantly higher than the national average.⁶⁹ Child (ages 0-14) death rates for Lincoln County were not available but teen (ages 15-19) death rates per 100,000 teens in Lincoln County was 273.5 deaths in 2022.⁷⁰

Child and Teen Death Rates (per 100,000)—BY YEAR (2011-2021)



Source: Population Reference Bureau, analysis of data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Multiple Causes of Death Microdata Files for 2011-2021

Chart 38. Provided by NM Kids Count Data Book 2023

New Mexico Health & Human Services 2022 Data for Lincoln County⁶⁷

- COVID-19 Deaths per 100,000 was 204.4
- There were 163 alcohol-related deaths
- There were 32 drug overdose deaths
- There were 91 suicide deaths
- 62% of suicide deaths in Lincoln County were among white men



64 - Legislative Finance Committee Progress Report “Addressing Substance Abuse Disorders”, August 24, 2023

65-66, 69 - New Mexico Kids Count Data Book 2023

67-68 - New Mexico Substance Use Epidemiology Profile, August 2022

70 - 2022 Data Book: Health and Human Services

IDENTIFIED NEEDS

Nutrition

Although New Mexico’s rate of child food insecurity and households receiving SNAP have improved, both are higher than the national average and reflect our state’s major challenges around hunger. Although families continued to face economic difficulties in the wake of COVID-19, New Mexico saw a decrease in the percentage of households receiving SNAP benefits from 2021 to 2022 as pandemic-era benefits and rules expired.⁷¹

- 66 women in Lincoln County are served by the WIC program⁷²
- 12% of families with children under 18 years of age in Lincoln County receive food stamps/SNAP benefits⁷³
- The rate of child food insecurity in Lincoln County in 2021 was 19%⁷⁴
- 18,645 food backpacks were delivered during SY21-22 by the Food 4 Kids Backpack Program

Early Head Start has a higher percentage of families who receive WIC benefits because of the age groups they serve. Early Head Start and Head Start have about the same percentage of families who receive SNAP benefits. The chart below shows the percentage of students from each school district who qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Hondo has the highest percentage of students who qualify while Corona has the lowest percentage.

Families Who Receive SNAP & WIC, 2023-2024

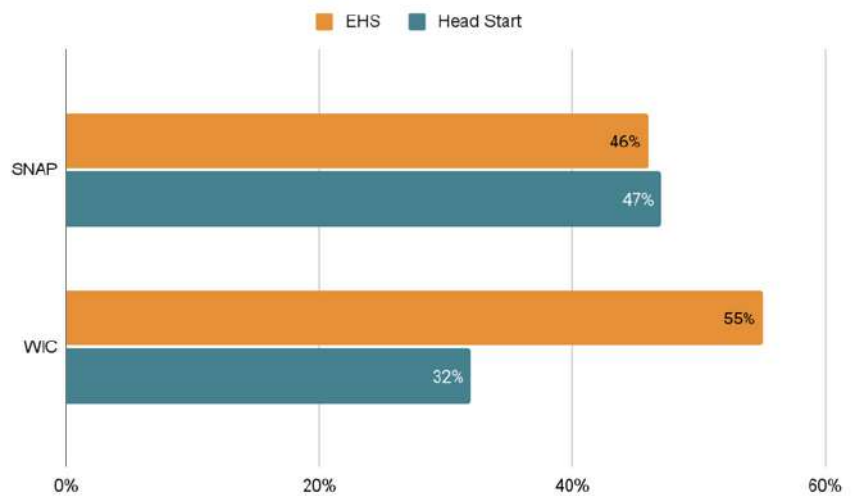


Chart 39. Percentage of Families from Head Start & EHS who receive SNAP and WIC Benefits in 2024.

Percentage of Children who Qualify for Free or Reduced-Price Meals by School District

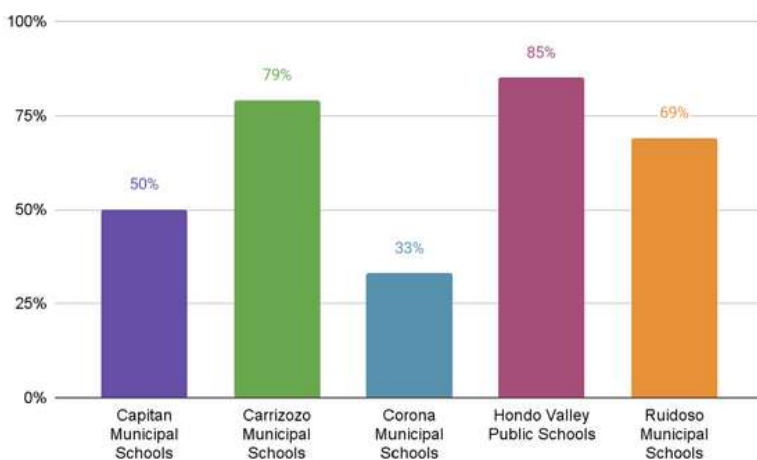


Chart 40. Percentage of students who qualify in each school district for free or reduced-price meals.

Nutrition Resources for Children & Families

- Food 4 Kids Backpack Program
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- SNAP Food Program
- Local Churches with Free Meals
- Capitan Mobile Food Pantry
- River Crossing Ministries
- Lincoln County Food Bank
- Food Wagons
- Ruidoso Community Center

IDENTIFIED NEEDS



Housing

New Mexico ranks 26th in the nation for high housing cost burden on children and families. Lincoln County ranks 11th out of the state with 32% of households renting with high housing costs burdens. Ruidoso has the highest rental costs and the average cost to purchase a home is approximately \$400,000. The homes that cost less are smaller and typically aren't move-in ready. The highest purchase prices are in Alto, NM because it is a country club area.

The table below shows the average monthly rent for an apartment, the average monthly rent for a 3 bedroom/2 bath house, the average cost of purchasing a home, and the number of low-income housing options in each area. Hondo's average cost of purchasing a home is as high as Ruidoso's because most houses for sale in the Hondo Valley come with a large piece of property. There are only 4 low-income housing options (apartments) in Ruidoso & Ruidoso Downs, and 1 in Carrizozo. Families can apply for HUD housing and possibly qualify for a home in the area but the low-income apartment complexes take income and determine rent on a sliding scale. 1,231 recipients in Lincoln County received LIHEAP assistance in 2021. During the 2023 school year, Head Start & EHS served 6 families that were considered homeless.

Service Area	Average Monthly Rent for an Apartment	Average Monthly Rent for a 3 bedroom/2 bath House	Average Cost of a 3 bedroom/2 bath House	Number of Low-Income Housing Options
Lincoln County	\$1,000	\$1,825	\$330,000	4
Ruidoso	\$1,250	\$2,500	\$400,000	2
Ruidoso Downs	\$750	\$1,800	\$275,000	2
Carrizozo	\$510	\$1,700	\$280,000	1
Capitan	N/A	\$1,300	\$300,000	0
Hondo	N/A	Unknown	\$400,000	0

Table 21. Cost of Housing in Lincoln County and the cities within the county.

According to the 2020 U.S Census, approximately 54% of homes are vacant (vacation homes or not sold) in Lincoln County. There are about 2,500 short term rentals within Lincoln County according to VRBO and AirBNB. Ruidoso and the surrounding areas are a major tourist destination especially during the summer months and winter months. There is horse racing at the local race track and casino from May-September, and the ski season is November-March. Many people have vacation homes so they can come during those times of the year, or rent it out through VRBO, AirBNB or one of the local short term rental businesses in town like Condotel.

In 2022, the village of Ruidoso experienced a horrendous forest fire (The McBride Fire) with hurricane type winds. The fire burned more than 6,000 acres and over 200 homes. Many families lost their homes and were displaced for awhile. Some folks who had vacation homes/condos opened their homes to the displaced families. Albertsons had employees who lost their homes and the company paid for a hotel room until they could find a place to live. The community came together to help the families in need by gathering donations (food, water, clothing, etc.) and funds to help get them back on their feet.

Housing/Utility Resources for Families

- Ladera Apartments
- Camelot Place Apartments
- La Tierra Courtyard Homes
- Inspiration Heights Apartments
- LIHEAP Energy Assistance Program

75 - New Mexico Kids Count Data Book 2023
 76 - NM Health and Human Services Report
 77 - R9 PIECE Coalition Community Needs Assessment



Transportation

Public transportation is very limited in Lincoln County. Z-Trans is the only public transportation and they provide services in Ruidoso, Ruidoso Downs, Mescalero, and Carrizozo. The villages of Capitan, Hondo, and Corona are on an appointment basis. 4.7% of households don't have a vehicle in Lincoln County.⁷⁸ In 2019, the Head Start program provided

bus services to 56 children in the program. Throughout the last 4 years the number of children who utilize the bus services has decreased but enrollment has also decreased. In 2023-2024, the program provided transportation services to 24 children with two bus routes (AM and PM).

Percentage of How Residents Commute to Work

The majority of Lincoln County drive alone to work, while 13.6% work from home. None of the households used the public transportation available to get to work on a regular basis.

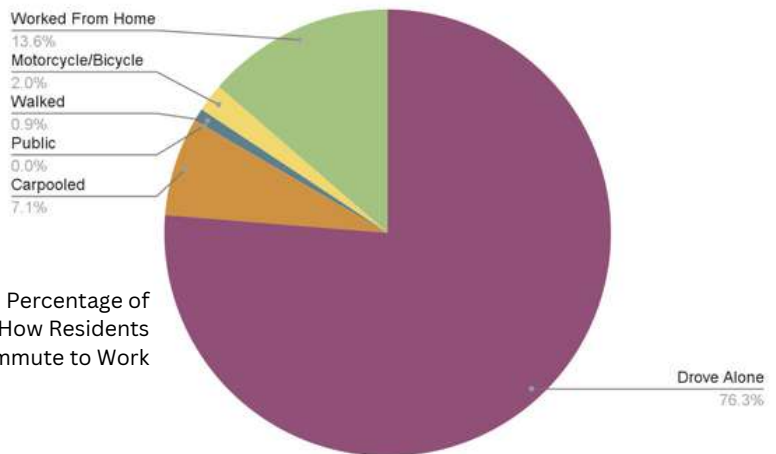


Chart 41. Percentage of How Residents Commute to Work

Family Needs Assessment Data

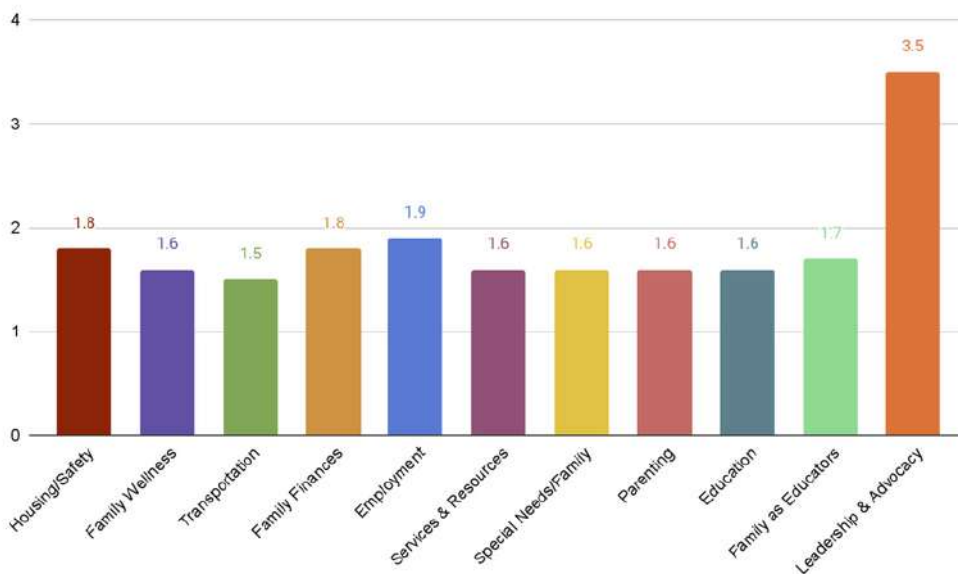


Chart 42. Head Start/EHS Family Needs Assessment Scoring Data

Every year the program completes a family needs assessment with each family. The scoring is from 1 to 5 with 5 being the family has a crisis or high need. There are 11 areas that families are assessed in and scored based on a conversation between parents and staff. The highest need for families is leadership & advocacy. The next highest need is employment, with housing & safety as the third area of need.

78 - Presbyterian Community Health Assessment 2023
 79 - U.S Census Bureau American Community Survey 2022
 77 - R9 PIECE Coalition Community Needs Assessment

STAFF INPUT

Throughout the school year, we provided opportunities for staff to give input on program strengths and areas that need improvement. At the beginning of the year, each program did a "NOISE" activity similar to a SWOT analysis. NOISE stands for needs, opportunities, improvements, strengths, and exceptions. The exceptions column includes things that we are already doing from the other 4 columns - even just a little bit.

At mid-year, our program conducted a data walkthrough training where all the staff had the opportunity to review data from each service area and provide input on the strengths, weaknesses, connections (with other data), and program improvements. All the input gathered was used for self-assessment and program planning.

NOISE Analysis 				
N	O	I	S	E
 Needs	 Opportunities	 Improvements	 Strengths	 Exceptions
More Staff/Reliable Staff	Field Trips	Playground	Provide Support & Resources	Reliable Staff
Mutual Understanding/ Increase Staffings	More PD	Teacher Desks	Professional Development	Consistency in Policies
Staff Being On Time	Community	Security	PFCE Activities	Reliable Bus Driver
More Subs	Staff Bonding	Active Shooter Training	Capitan Parent Meetings	Professional Development
Consistency In Policies	Grants	Staff Gym	Ruidoso Bus Service	Field Trips
More In-Kind	Canva Account	Bathroom in Each Classroom	Dedicated Staff	Parent Training (Conscious Discipline)
Reliable Bus Driver	Parent Trainings	Big Laminating Machine	Accommodate Families	Teacher Desks
Building	Teacher Retreat	New Books - English & Spanish	Waitlist (EHS)	New Books
School Family Bonding	Safe Space for Teachers	Communication	Meal Service	Communication & Collaboration
Hatchboard Training	Team Bonding Nights	Collaboration	Free Program	Positive Intent
Incentives for Parent Involvement	Staff Wellness Opportunities	Positive Intent	Connect Home & School	Empathy
Parent Meetings	Staff Incentives	Empathy	Bilingual	Consistency with Conscious Discipline
		Positive Outlook	Communication	
		Consistency with Conscious Discipline	Staff Qualifications	
		Form a School Family Song	Care For Children	
			Staff Schedule	
			Flexibility	
			Conscious Discipline/School Family	
			Creative/Innovative	

Key Strengths

Strengths Based on Data Walkthrough

- Teachers are keeping track of incident reports
- Teachers are completing college coursework and furthering their education
- The meals and snacks are diverse and children get to try new foods
- We provide transportation and have cameras on the bus now
- Staff receive stipends and there is good communication from management
- Early Head Start is fully enrolled with a waitlist and we have NM PreK funds now
- We meet the 10% disabilities enrollment requirement and have inclusion for all children in our classrooms

Key Weaknesses

Weaknesses Based on Data Walkthrough

- Coaches need more time in the classroom and for one-on-one staffings
- We need more doctors/dentists in town that take medicaid
- Staff need more training in Disabilities
- We don't have a bus driver in Capitan
- Salaries
- Need a building for both programs
- Well Child Checks are difficult to obtain from parents and doctors - low WCC data in Child Plus
- The programs are not conducting parent meetings on a consistent basis



Program Improvements

Program Improvements from Data Walkthrough

- Mental Health provider to provide services on-site for children in the program
- Improve the playgrounds
- Staff need more training on Health & Safety requirements (incident reports, policies, etc.)
- Increase parent involvement and accountability from parents
 - Training for parents in disabilities and behaviors
- Have a dedicated staff trainer for new staff hired after the beginning of the year
- We need our own kitchen to prepare meals and snacks in our new building
- Increase our non-federal share and in-kind
- Offer more training on disabilities for staff and parents
- Have a safe space for kids to decompress outside of classroom in the new building
- Early Head Start teachers need more birth to three training - specifically in Conscious Discipline and TS GOLD

The main topic of discussion among staff is the need for a new building and a facility that can accommodate both programs with a commercial kitchen, teacher workspace, office space, etc. The program has submitted a 1303 application asking the Office of Head Start for \$10 million to build a new facility. Region 9 Education Cooperative will contribute up to \$2.5 million for the new facility along with other possible funding sources to make this goal happen. It has been a program goal for over 5 years and will continue to be a goal until the building is complete. Parent and staff training were at the top of the needs improvement list. Staff complete pre-service training and have been provided Conscious Discipline, Zumbini, and online training. We will consider the feedback to improve in this area and provide more training.

Overall, the staff has good input into the needs of our program and community. They are very knowledgeable about the community's needs and hear parents' concerns regularly. We will use this data, self-assessment, and community assessment to develop our 5-year goals and for program planning.

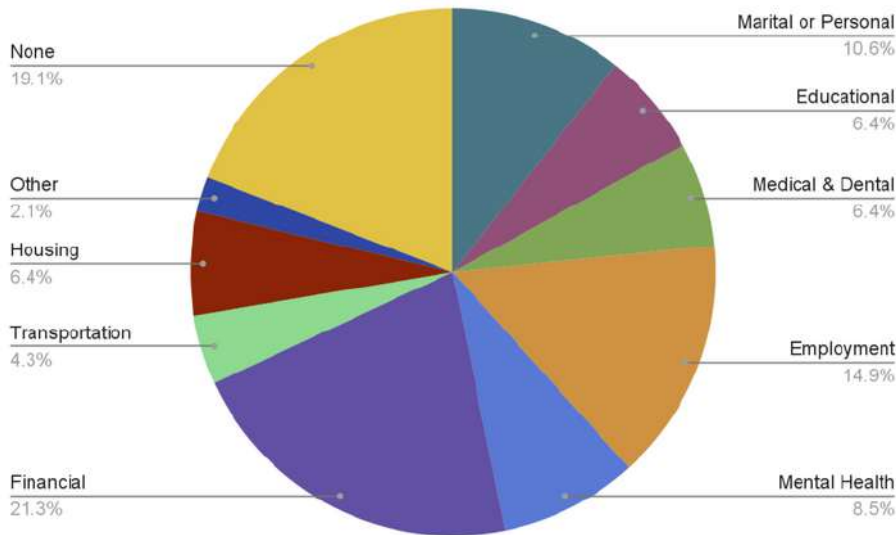


COMMUNITY SURVEYS

The program surveyed all Head Start and Early Head Start families. Other survey data is included from the Presbyterian Healthcare Services Community Needs Assessment.

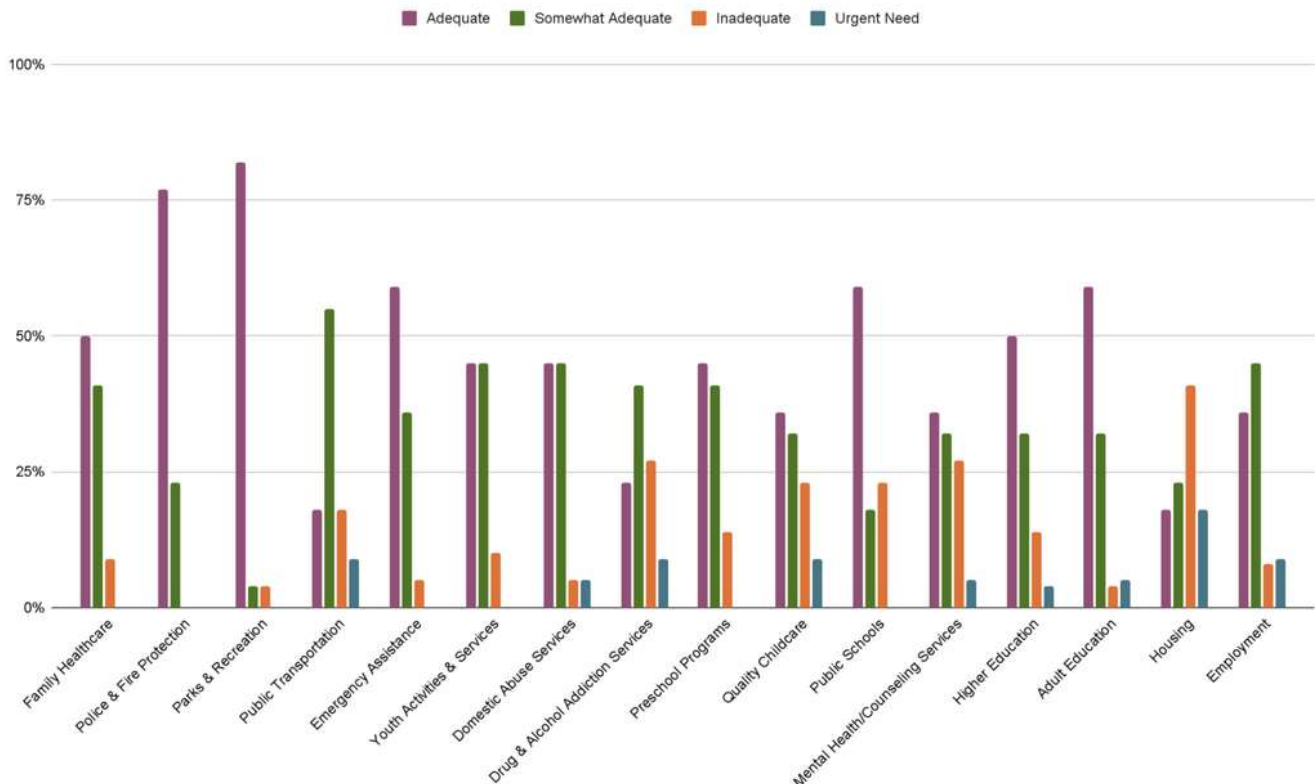
Region 9 Head Start/EHS Parent Survey Results

My Family's Biggest Stressors This Year Were:



19% of the families didn't have any stressors during the school year, but those that did the top stressors were financially related. The next highest stressor among Head Start/EHS families was employment.

How Would You Rate the Following Areas in Our Community?



The survey question above is "How would Head Start families rate the areas in our community?". Families felt the most adequate areas were parks and recreation and police & fire protection. Families felt that the areas that had an urgent need were housing, employment, quality childcare, drug & alcohol addiction services, and public transportation.

What Do You Think Is the Biggest Issue in Our Community?

- Not enough staff for schools
- More things for kids to do
- Drugs and mental health
- The cost of living to income ratio
- More childcare or after-school programs
- Childcare
- Too many short-term rentals and not enough long-term rentals that aren't super expensive
- Housing
- Lack of jobs
- Summer daycare
- Substance abuse
- Lack of resources
- Dental for kids
- Help and resources for the elderly who struggle financially

More than one family said that housing was an issue in our community. Multiple families mentioned childcare, daycare, summer childcare, and after-school programs as an issue. Drugs and substance abuse were also mentioned more than once.

What Do you Like Most About our Community?

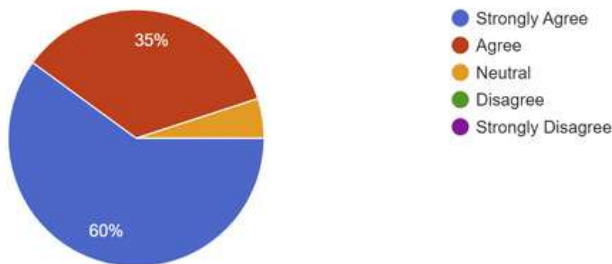
- Tight-knit
- People are very friendly
- Everything
- The feeling of community we have
- Variety of resources
- It's a small united community
- Everyone is so friendly and welcoming
- Small and quiet community, feeling of family
- We like how welcoming everyone is to us and if you need help, someone is willing to give it
- Closeness and support
- The school and people
- Friendliness
- Help and resources
- The small intimate feel. Neighborhoods are safe for children to play.
- I like that our city works hard to keep out town looking nice, clean, and updated while still keeping some of the old fashion charm.
- Events!



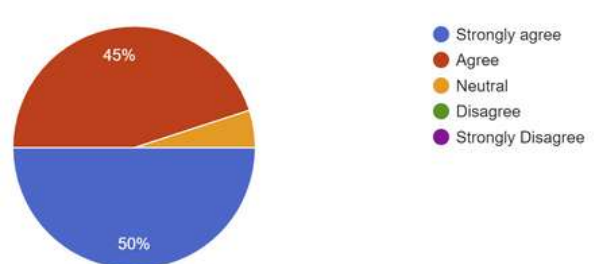
Strengths of Region 9 Head Start & Early Head Start

- Staff are very attentive to my child's goals
- I really appreciate all the programs that are offered and how much my child enjoys going to school
- Friendly, consistent, involved, and great with my daughter
- Staff are kind and caring, they are involved with the children and are knowledgeable
- Very friendly, communicative, and extremely helpful
- They make the children feel welcomed and loved, and children love to go to school
- Conscious Discipline, working with the child's strengths and improving on their weaknesses
- The teachers communicate and listen to the parents
- We are very grateful for the Head Start program, they have wonderful teachers and staff
- The teachers are wonderful and you can tell they care a lot about the children
- I'll never take my son anywhere else, I will cry when he turns five because I don't trust anybody else.
- We love Ms. Robin and Mrs. Rosa!
- Love every one of these ladies, they are wonderful
- The ladies involved with Head Start are absolutely amazing and always make sure my child and the family have what we need and always communicate what's next or what's needed. I feel very lucky for them to be in my child's life.
- I'm so thankful for all the wonderful staff who teach and take care of my son. I feel that overall he is safe and loved there, and that is all I could ever ask for.

I am Satisfied with the Region 9 Head Start/EHS Program

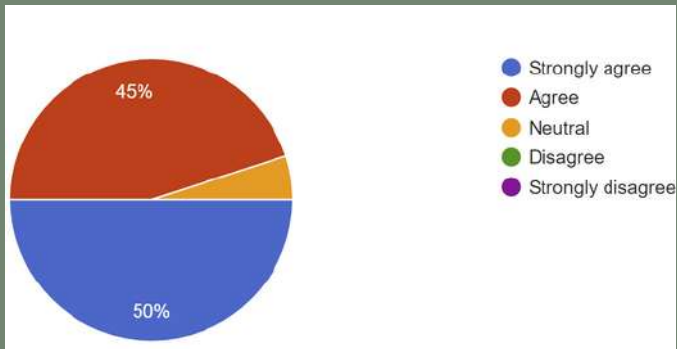


I receive information in a timely manner

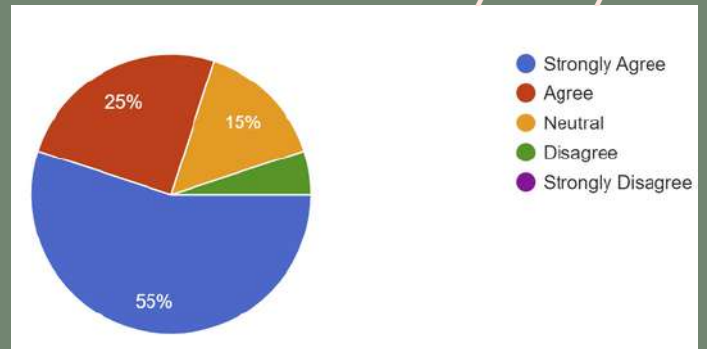


Word Cloud Generated by Parent Answers to the Question - "What are some strengths of the program?"

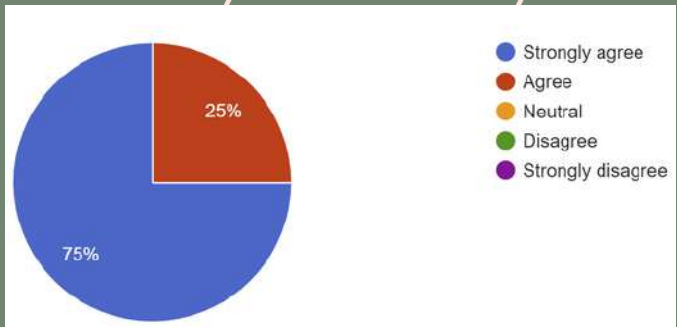
I Feel That the Facilities are Clean and Safe



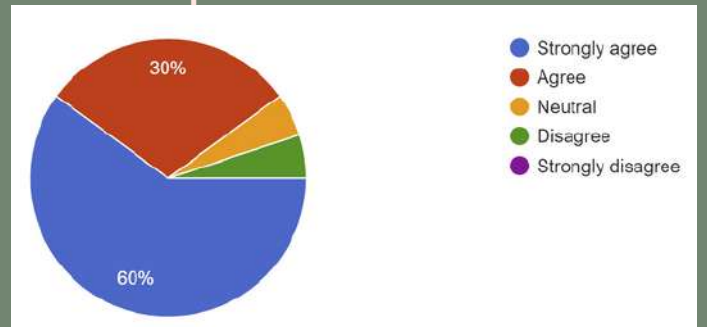
The Current Program Schedule Meets the Needs of My Family



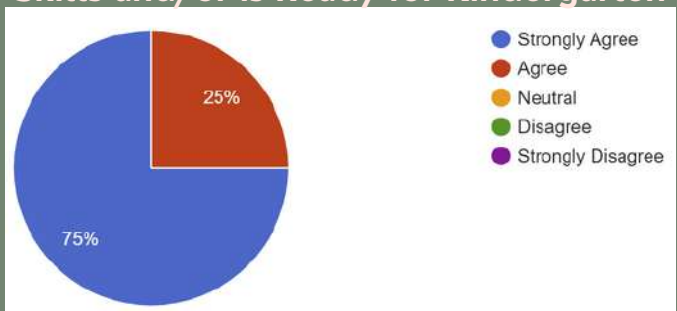
Staff are Welcoming & Courteous to My Child and Family



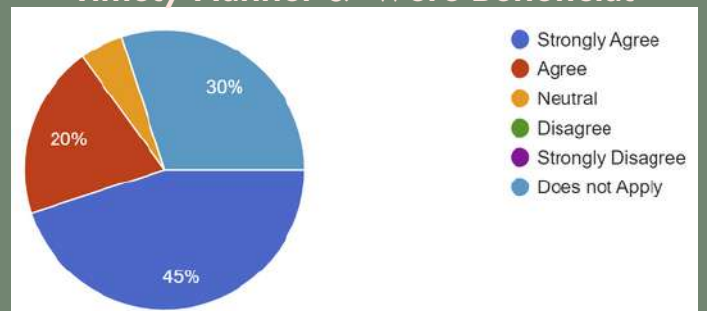
My Child's Teacher Discussed My Child's Development and Goals With Me



I Believe My Child Has Learned New Skills and/or is Ready for Kindergarten



Disability Services Were Developed in a Timely Manner & Were Beneficial



Parent Input on Improvements the Program Can Make

- Extended hours
- More education for staff on food allergies
- More after-school programs
- More specific instructions on what parents can be a part of in the school
- New facility PLEASE
- Order more food for each room
- Staying open during the summer months. Childcare is very hard to find
- Summer programs
- The number of days off
- To change the schedule and stay open past 4:30
- Sometimes my daughter arrives very hungry because some days she doesn't get enough food
- Would appreciate daily updates on how my child is eating, diapers and sleeping, etc.

Presbyterian Healthcare Services Survey Results

Presbyterian engaged our community in three main ways: community data indicator forum, community survey, and community assets and gaps forum. Below are the results from the community survey.

Forum participants provided input on what they believe is the most pressing public health priority that should be addressed in the next three years in Lincoln County.

What is the top health priority now and in the next three years?



Participants had various answers to the question, but the words that are the largest means that multiple participants said the same thing. The top three are access to specialist care, mental health, and suicide.

Figure 6. Source: PHS Community Health Mentimeter.

The survey participants provided perceived assets that exist in the community that make people be healthy.

Lincoln County - Survey Responses		
COMMUNITY ASSETS	NUMBER	PERCENT
Doctor's offices	39	30.5%
Parks/sidewalks/walking trails	37	28.9%
Social services (housing, food assistance)	27	21.1%
Mental health/substance use treatment	23	18.0%
Other	2	1.6%
Total	128	100.0%

Table 4. Community Survey. Presbyterian 2022.

Lincoln County - Survey Responses		
GAPS/NEEDED RESOURCES	NUMBER	PERCENT
Mental health/substance use treatment	31	19.7%
Social services (housing, food assistance)	29	18.5%
Parks/sidewalks/walking trails	27	17.2%
Public transportation	24	15.3%
Doctor's offices	22	14.0%
Grocery stores near you	21	13.4%
Missing	3	1.9%
Total	157	100.0%

Table 5. Community Survey. Presbyterian 2022.

Survey respondents provided input on needed resources that can help the community be the healthiest it can be. Mental health and substance use treatment and social services were identified by most people as being gaps in the community, consistent with the findings from the last question. This is followed by parks, public transportation, and doctors' offices. Other responses included health coaches and nutrition counselors.



Lincoln County - Survey Responses		
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TOPIC AREA	#	%
Access to healthcare	90	42.7%
Substance abuse	47	22.3%
Behavioral/mental health	43	20.4%
Suicide	29	13.7%
Other	2	0.9%
Total	211	100.0%

Table 7. Source: Presbyterian Community Health Community Survey, 2021.

The top three topic areas that people in Lincoln County indicated were of concern to them pertaining to behavioral health were access to healthcare, substance use, and behavioral/mental health.

Survey respondents provided feedback on the community issues they are very concerned about. Distribution among the community issues presented were fairly even, with environmental health, housing, and climate rising to the top of the list

Lincoln County - Survey Responses		
SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH	#	%
Environmental health (including climate change)	78	39%
Housing	38	19%
Personal/interpersonal safety	31	16%
Food security	29	15%
Transportation	19	9%
Other	4	2%
Total	199	100.0%

Table 9. Community Survey. Presbyterian 2022.

Lincoln County - Survey Responses		
HEALTHCARE ISSUES	#	%
Healthy eating	47	32.2%
Active living	39	26.7%
Vaccinations	35	24.0%
Maternal/child health (pregnancy, birth)	23	15.8%
Other	2	1.4%
Total	146	100.0%

Table 15. Community Survey. Presbyterian 2022.

Survey respondents provided feedback on the healthcare issues they are very concerned about. Most people said healthy eating and active living were most important in this category, followed by vaccinations.



TESTIMONIALS

Region 9 Head Start and Early Head Start parents (past and present) were asked if they would like to share their testimonials regarding their experience with Head Start or Early Head Start and how it's impacted their families. Below are two testimonials from teachers who have been or are currently Head Start/EHS parents.

Corina Morales, Region 9 Early Head Start Lead Teacher

The Region IX program has helped my family and me tremendously, and we grew with Region IX ourselves. My daughter went to Head Start, and I was in the home visiting program because I was pregnant. My daughter loved school, and always talked highly of her teacher Ms. Shay. Home visiting helped me find a home in Ruidoso, and helped me with so many resources after I had my son. My son failed his hearing test at birth, and I told my Home Visitor, and she pointed me in the direction of getting him services to help him with his speech.

As for me, Region IX has been one of the best companies I ever worked at, and it made me want to become an early childhood educator. They helped me get my CDC and a scholarship to further my education into an associate's degree. Region IX will always be our water because it helped my family grow into what we are now.



Erica Cardiel, Region 9 Head Start/PreK Lead Teacher

My first child was in the Head Start program 11 years ago. During that time, I worked as a substitute teacher and eventually moved up as a permanent Bus Aid to earn an income. My experience with the program was pleasant, the program helps low-income families and helps with the children's education. It also provides free food for the children, and school supplies for the classroom. These things helped me while my son was enrolled. Years later I had a daughter, and she went to the Early Head Start program. When she attended Early Head Start I was able to take on more, and I became a teacher's assistant for Head Start. When my daughter moved up to the Head Start program I had the experience to become a Lead teacher for Head Start. During this time I've attended college classes and earned my CDC, and I am a few semesters away from earning my Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education. As a mother, I really liked the Head Start program and I know that the program gives many job opportunities to many people. These past 10 years working for Head Start have provided me with many opportunities and have helped me grow as a person and as a mother.

Appendices

Region 9 Head Start/EHS Parent Survey Questions

My family's biggest stressors this year were (check all that apply): *

- My child's disabilities
- Marital or Personal
- Educational
- Medical and Dental
- Employment
- Mental Health
- Financial
- Transportation
- Housing
- Other
- None - We didn't have stressors this year

Please list some of the program's strengths *

Your answer _____

Please let us know some improvements we can make as a program. *

Your answer _____

Other Comments About Our Programs

Your answer _____

What do you believe is the biggest issue in our community? *

Your answer _____

What do you like most about our community? *

Your answer _____

Region 9 Head Start/EHS Parent Survey

How would you rate the following areas in our community (Please rate with one answer for each row)? *

	Adequate	Somewhat Adequate	Inadequate	Urgent Need
Family Health Care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Police & Fire Protection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parks & Recreation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public Transportation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emergency Assistance (Food, Clothing, Etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth Activities and Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Services for Victims of Domestic Abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Services for Drug & Alcohol Addiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programs for Preschool Children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality Child Care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public Schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mental Health Services/Counseling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities for Higher Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities for Adult Education (ESL classes, GED Classes)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employment Opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Region 9 Head Start and Early Head Start would like to thank all of those who provided information included in the community assessment. We are especially grateful to our parents, staff, and community partners for sharing their time and opinions in surveys and focus groups. We appreciate our staff members who gathered and analyzed data. We would also like to acknowledge the many research organizations listed at the beginning of the document whose work on data collection and analysis made this community assessment possible. Thank you to all of our community partners for sharing your valuable knowledge and expertise with our program to help in our assessment.





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