Dear Friends,

This past year, Denver Great Kids Head Start (DGKHS) and its delegate agencies shared many successes. Our funded enrollment is 1,344 Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS) children and their families with a service area of the entirety of the City and County of Denver. As a grantee/delegate model, slots are allocated as follows: Catholic Charities (231 HS, 8 EHS), Clayton (208 HS, 16 EHS), DPS (350 HS), Family Star (46 HS, 8 EHS), Mile High Early Learning (321 HS), Sewall (60 HS), VOA (96 HS).

While the challenges presented by COVID-19 eased, DGKHS continued to provide delegate agencies and families with PPE, food boxes, cleaning supplies, sanitizer, technology supports, at-home learning materials, and community resources offered through its establishment within the City and County of Denver. With funding from the City and County of Denver, DGKHS distributed 150 gift cards at a value of $200 each to enrolled families to support COVID/Inflation relief.

DGKHS distributed a family outcomes survey to enrolled families to gauge the effectiveness of DGKHS programming. We are proud to have received responses from 823 families. Of these families, 90 percent rated DGKHS programming as “very helpful” for their child. Eighty-two percent rated DGKHS programming as “very helpful” for their family.

On behalf of the Office of Children’s Affairs, I am proud to present our 2021 - 2022 Denver Great Kids Head Start Annual Report to our governing body, DGKHS Policy Council, seven delegate agencies, numerous community partners, and the citizens of Denver.

Sincerely,

Al Martinez, Ph.D.
Denver Great Kids Head Start Executive Director
Program Overview

As a grantee/delegate model, slots are allocated as follows: Catholic Charities (231 HS, 8 EHS), Clayton (208 HS, 16 EHS), DPS (350 HS), Family Star (46 HS, 8 EHS), Mile High Early Learning (321 HS), Sewall (60 HS), VOA (96 HS). Total funded enrollment is 1,344 Head Start and Early Head Start children and their families with a service area of the entirety of the City and County of Denver. DGKHS is administered by a governing board comprised of representatives of the key components of City operations, including: Mayor, City Council, Auditor, Executive Director of the Office of Human Resources, and Chief Financial Officer.

Comprehensive services continue to be supported by contractual services through Denver Health and Hospital Authority (health and mental health), Sewall Child Development Center (supplemental disabilities), Nutrition Consultants (nutrition), and the Marion Downs Hearing Center (hearing and vision screenings). The vision of DGKHS is to: Prepare Head Start children to enter kindergarten confidently with the social, physical, emotional, and cognitive skills and competencies necessary for continuing school success.

Through committed partnerships with staff, the governing board, community organizations, and parents, DGKHS ensures that all enrolled children and their families have a solid foundation for school readiness and are fully prepared for kindergarten.

Program Highlights

This past year, DGKHS and its delegate and vendor agencies continued to adapt programming and supports to meet the challenges presented to children, families, and staff through COVID-19. Staff and agencies followed guidance and protocols established by the City and County of Denver, the Office of Head Start, and Denver Health. Delegate agencies continued to support children and families with basic needs and emergency assistance. To support and enhance outdoor learning environments and safety, DGKHS allocated approximately $126,000.00 for playground inspections and purchased recommended surfacing and equipment upgrades.

DGKHS continues to make significant progress in data management and the use of data for continuous program improvement to support children and families. Delegate agencies upload comprehensive individual child data monthly from their unique data systems into a City supported Sharepoint file, ensuring privacy and data security. Data is aggregated and analyzed through grantee and individual delegate agency dashboards utilizing PowerBI. Dashboards have also been established to analyze TS GOLD checkpoint data, disabilities data, and mental health data.

Significant efforts have been made to ensure full enrollment. DGKHS invested in social media and upgraded it’s website to support recruitment of both families and staff. Current staff were interviewed for one minute videos sharing why they love their job. These videos are posted on our website with links to delegate agency job postings. Survey Monkey forms are connected to our website for families to inquire more information regarding enrollment. These forms also connect families to the closest and most appropriate program and option.

Approximately forty percent of DGKHS children are Dual-Language Learners. To ensure the successful inclusion of all children in programming and to maximize developmental opportunities, DGKHS continues to partner with the Bueno Center at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Through the Literacy Squared approach established by the Bueno Center, staff receive ongoing training, coaching, and support to ensure they have the skills to fully support Dual Language Learners. This work is fully supported by the DGKHS School Readiness DLL Director, who is fully bilingual with decades of direct classroom and district management.
School Readiness

High quality playgrounds and outdoor learning environments provide opportunities for physical health and development and foster social/emotional learning. With over $126,000.00 in ARP funding, DGKHS invested in playground inspections and purchased necessary surfacing, structures, and playground equipment. We are confident that this investment will have positive impacts on the healthy development and safety of enrolled children.

DGKHS staff attended collaboration meetings at delegate agencies, which are cross-content planning meetings that review growth and development of all children in classrooms. These meetings review assessment data, child observations, and family input to ensure that all children develop to their full potential. DGKHS School Readiness directors also maintained CLASS (Classroom Assessment and Scoring System) reliability and conducted CLASS observations to support bi-lingual classrooms.

According to the 2020 Community Assessment Update, approximately 37 percent of children in Denver live in families where a language other than English is spoken. To respond to the needs of children who are dual language learners, DGKHS has established a partnership with the Bueno Center at the University of Colorado, Boulder to provide professional development on multicultural, multilingual and biliteracy education.

Full year TS GOLD outcome results are shared below.

Child Assessment
Percentage of Children At or Above Age Expectations

Coaching

All delegate agencies have implemented a research-based coordinated coaching strategy. DGKHS tracks monthly coaching logs to ensure that all staff have appropriate coaching support. DGKHS also provides opportunities for coaches to meet and share strategies and gives technical assistance to coaches to increase competencies. This year, coaching was provided to staff virtually as appropriate.

CLASS

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is a tool used by the Office of Head Start to measure the quality of teacher-child interactions, which directly relates to positive learning outcomes for children. Three domains are measured on a scale from 1 (low) to 7 (high) including Emotional Support, Classroom Instruction, and Instructional Support. All DGKHS classrooms assessed during 2021-2022 scored higher in Emotional Support and Classroom Instruction, and near the national mean and higher in Instructional Support. DGKHS classrooms are scored two times per year, and DGKHS content area staff are CLASS reliable observers.
DGKHS maintains Memoranda of Understanding with Denver Public Schools to ensure seamless transition of children into Head Start and subsequently to kindergarten. All enrolled children received a DPS ID number, tracked through the completion of comprehensive child data templates. Regular meetings continued between DPS ECE leadership and DGKHS staff to share updates related to summer programs, planning for in-person learning, and kindergarten transition. DGKHS provided all families enrolled materials to support in-home learning, PPE, cleaning supplies, and food resources.

**Teacher Qualifications**

DGKHS continues to surpass requirements for teacher qualifications. Of the total teachers (lead and assistant teachers) staff held the following qualifications:

- **82 percent** hold a BA or advanced degree
- **15 percent** hold an AA degree

Additionally:

- Ongoing staff development opportunities are held during professional development days and weeks within our programs.
- Staff receive training to increase their knowledge and skills so they can provide high quality comprehensive services.
- Individualized professional development plans are on file.
- During 2021-2022 Erikson Math Collaborative training was attended by 10 coaches and 37 teachers and teacher assistants.
- During 2021-2022 a total of 31 staff participated in the Literacy Squared Training with CU Boulder Bueno Center.

DGKHS staff plan and provide training in Head Start 101, Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) overview, and Family Engagement. DGKHS staff are also reliable in the CLASS, have taken the Family Development Credential course, and are trained in Conscious Discipline.
Office of Head Start Review Events

DGKHS completed the FA2 review event in 2020-2021. DGKHS was fully compliant in all areas. For more detailed information on these review events please visit our website at: www.denvergov.org/childrensaffairs.

Content Area Highlights

Parent, Family and Community Engagement

Recruitment efforts have been our priority to ensure full enrollment. We continue to work with GO Big Productions on three marketing campaigns:

- Staff Recruitment- the Office of Children’s Affairs/DGKHS website has been updated with links to delegate agency job board postings, and one minute video interviews of staff sharing why they love their job are displayed.
- Child Recruitment- commercials were made in English/Spanish that are posted on various Social Media outlets for recruitment of EHS/ HS families. These ads are linked to a Survey Monkey that then maps the closest sites to the family and links them to the closest delegate and appropriate program option.
- Financial Literacy Campaign- three commercials were made in English/Spanish that are linked to a Survey Monkey for families to receive financial coaching and financial navigation through our partnership with the Office of Financial Empowerment and Protection.

Nutrition

DGKHS has contracted with Paula Peirce, Nutrition Consultants to provide CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) consultation, monitoring, as well as staff and family nutrition education and support for over 20 years. Throughout this duration, DGKHS determined through competitive bid supported by the City’s purchasing department that Nutrition Consultants was the most qualified vendor. This year, Paula decided to retire. She will continue to support our community with specific consultation as needed.

DGKHS has made great effort to shift this scope of work to provide more individual support for children and families by contracting with Denver Health Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Our WIC Dietician will also continue to monitor and provide CACFP consultation. DGKHS is excited to see how this new partnership will benefit our children, families, and our partners!
Culture of Wellness in Preschools Program
Culture of Wellness in Preschools (COWP) aims to promote healthy eating and physical activity for Head Start children, families, and staff in an effort to prevent early childhood obesity. The COWP activities implemented during this past year include Physical Activity, Nutrition Education, Workplace Wellness, Parent Wellness (includes Parent Wellness Workshop series), Family Fun workshops, and Text2LiveHealthy and Policy, System and Environment change follow-up. Policy, Systems and Environment change uses a strategic planning process to make environment and policy changes focused on healthy eating and active living.

A total of 62 classrooms received at least 12 Nutrition Education lessons (each containing a physical activity component as part of the lesson).

A New Toddler Steering Committee focused on new nutrition education lessons for toddler classrooms. Three new pilot lessons were created and delivered to three Denver Great Kids Head Start classrooms.

A total of 72 parents participated in Parent Wellness Workshops.

Both parents and children increased their healthy eating and physical activity after the parent wellness workshops. The following outcomes had statistically significant changes (improvements).

Children (ages 3-12 years):
• Drinking fewer sugary beverages (like fruit punch, fruit drinks, sweet tea, or sports drinks)
• Drinking more water per day
• Eating more fruit per day
• Eating more vegetables per day

Parents (ages 18+ years):
• Eating more fruit
• Drinking more glasses of water per day
• Watching fewer hours of television daily

Mental Health and Social Emotional Development
The Denver Health Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Team has been the contracted mental health vendor for DGKHS for thirteen years. Head Start performance standards require that programs provide access to an early childhood mental health consultant to assist programs in identifying strategies that support children with mental health and social-emotional concerns, while supporting home and school environments in doing the same. DGKHS has continued to be impacted by the unpredictable nature of COVID-19 and ECE workforce challenges. DGKHS adopted a hybrid model of virtual and in-person consultation that follows all precautions and guidelines.

Child and Family Focused Consultation
Child and family-focused consultation was provided to 147 children and families and a total of 1682.50 hours dedicated to improving the social and emotional development of Head Start children. Consultants provided 788 caregiver consults, 733 teacher consults and 230 administrative consults for all children served.

Classroom Focused Consultation
Classroom focused consultation was provided to 9 Head Start classrooms and 32 head start staff. Consultants provided 176 teacher consults and 57 administrative consults for all classrooms served. The Denver Health Early Childhood Mental Health team dedicated 294 hours of consultation services to increase classroom staff knowledge of children social emotional development and improve the overall mental health climate of Head Start classrooms.

Programmatic Consultation
Relationship-based reflective processing (RRP) was provided to 24 Head Start staff members. A total of 174 sessions over 186.75 hours were provided in efforts to meet the growing mental health needs and to increase staff wellbeing.

The Denver Health Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Team provided 8 virtual and in-person staff development trainings to 182 (duplicated) staff, along with 28 virtual trainings/workshops for 120 (duplicated) parents. The team spent approximately 250 hours preparing and presenting trainings to increase knowledge of mental health and social-emotional development, positive discipline strategies, decrease stigma, and build on the utilization of evidence-based early childhood social-emotional theories.

During the spring of 2022, the team provided a three-part series on conscious discipline for caregivers, remote delivery of Circle of Security Parenting, and training to approximately 100 early childhood education staff on caregiver and teacher burnout. For foster parents, we continue to provide support through our foster care group.

Disabilities
DGKHS contracts with Sewall Child Development Center for supplemental disabilities services to ensure that all programs and services are fully inclusive, evaluations for suspected disabilities are conducted on-site, direct services to support children with disabilities are integrated into the regular classroom, and parents have the training and support necessary to build skills to advocate for their children. DGKHS served 194 children (14% of cumulative enrollment) with a variety of disabilities including: health impairment, speech/language, orthopedic impairment, autism, intellectual disabilities, and non-categorical/developmental delay.
Enrollment and Attendance

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<th>MONTH</th>
<th>HS ENROLLMENT NUMBER</th>
<th>EHS ENROLLMENT NUMBER</th>
<th>ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGE</th>
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<tr>
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</table>

*Prior to full program start date.

Note: The DGKHS operating capacity to serve children decreases over the summer months when not all classrooms are open and the percentage for these months reflects the operational capacity. During 2021-2022, DGKHS served approximately 31 percent of the eligible population with OHS funded slots as determined by the community assessment.

Analysis of attendance shows that the primary reasons for absence were: parent choice/appointments followed by illness.

Financial Audit

Please refer to the City’s most recent completed audit and combined Annual Financial Reports which can be found at: www.denvergov.org/controller.
Governing Board
Mayor of Denver, Honorable Michael B. Hancock
City Council, Amanda Sawyer
Denver City Auditor, Timothy M. O’Brien, CPA
Chief Financial Officer, Brendan Hanlon
City Controller, Beth Machann
Office of Human Resources, Executive Director, Karen Niparko

Denver Great Kids
Head Start Staff
Al Martinez, Ph.D., Head Start Executive Director
Christopher Auer, MA, PMP, Quality Assurance and Operations Director
Nisa Bukhari, MBA, Management Analyst
Angelita Guerrero, DLL School Readiness Director
Liane Martinez, MA, School Readiness and Disabilities Director
Mary McNeill, Family Services Director
Lila Medina, Fiscal Administrator
Lori Medina, Health Services Director
Caridad Nevarez, Staff Assistant