



Investing in our Neighbors Improving Lives Strengthening Communities

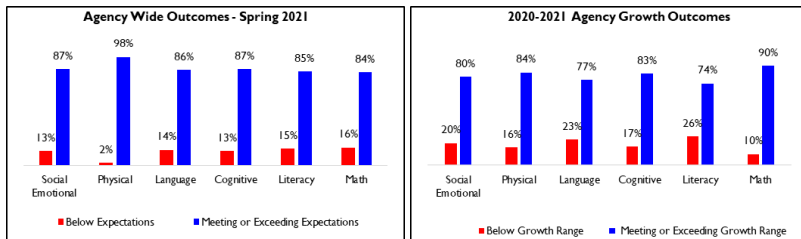
SENCA HEAD START...MOVING FOWARD!

Submitted by: Angela Antholz, Head Start & Deputy Director

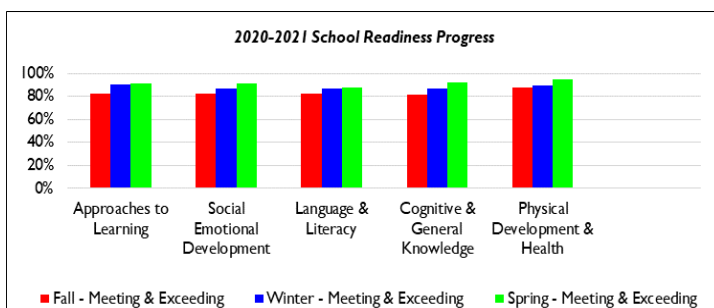
SENCA Head Start is a comprehensive child development program which serves children from age 3 to 5 and their families. Head Start is a child-focused program with the over-all goal of increasing school readiness of young children in low-income families. Comprehensive child development, school readiness, and family support are provided and have a direct impact on their future success.

During the 2020-2021 school year, 160 children and 143 families received comprehensive services. Health services ensured that 96% of all children were up-to-date on well-child care. Twenty-two percent (22%) of enrolled children received special education services. Overall, SENCA Head Start has saw 88% of children ending the year meeting or exceeding ALL expectations versus 77% at the beginning of the year.

While children made great strides, the gains are not as high as in previous years. This is more than likely directly related to the need to close centers due to COVID-19, several families who had children participate in virtual learning only, and a larger than normal number of very young students. While final outcomes were lower than anticipated, 81% of children met or exceeded the expected growth rate for their age.



SENCA Head Start has established school readiness goals to ensure services are provided that will help children be successful as they move to public school. Progress on these goals is tracked over the course of the five-year project period, with the program currently in year two. The following graph outlines progress towards these goals this past year.



Improving Lives Generation after Generation



As a young child, Shelby lived in Falls City and was a student in the local SENCA Head Start program. "When I was a child, I remember going to school and being so excited for all the things we got to experience. To this day I remember seeing the dentist, riding the bus, playing in the sand and water tables, and playing with the huge 'click together' blocks building play houses. Those activities, and the people that were employed at Head Start, made me look forward to school every day."

After growing up and having children of her own, Shelby contacted the Falls City Head Start Center to see if she was eligible to enroll her son into the program. From her own personal experience as a Head Start student, Shelby thought Head Start might be the best way of helping increase his social and intellectual skills. After applying and meeting program guidelines, Shelby's son was enrolled into the Falls City Head Start program where he has been able to create his own special memories for two years. "I am so glad that my son has had the chance to have the same Head Start experience that I have," shares a grateful Shelby.

When COVID 19 changed all of our lives, and our world in 2020, Shelby's business, like so many others, was negatively impacted. As a result, Shelby became unemployed and looking for work. Then as if by fate, in December 2020, an employment opportunity with SENCA was brought to her attention. It was then that Shelby knew this was a position that she would be able to give her "all" to.

Shelby's experience, as both a student as well as a parent within the Head Start program, helped create Shelby's interest in going to school and building good relationships within the southeast Nebraska community she calls home. Today, Shelby is the Fiscal Officer for SENCA. As a result of the positive influences provided by SENCA and the Head Start program, Shelby has become a better parent, has created a savings account for her children and has built a strong foundation for her family for years to come.

For more information regarding
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