



## **ALABAMA COUNCIL ON HUMAN RELATIONS, INC.**

### **Annual Report for March 2017-February 2018**

#### **FROM THE CEO**

As we had expected, the fiscal from March 2017 through February 2018 was a busy period. New Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) went into effect on November 7, 2016. Staff continued reading, discussing, and developing plans to implement fully the new standards at ACHR. Some of the changes in the standards include: more stringent pre-hire background checks, rechecks for employees every five years, more specific safety and other training requirements for all staff, specific standards around tracking and following up on child attendance, and a requirement to develop a research-based coaching system for teachers and home visitors. Additionally there is a requirement to increase the number of hours for Head Start children from 800 to 1,020 per year (50% of children by 9-1-19 and 100% by 9-1-2021).

We had a Federal Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Review in February 2017 and received the results in this period. Three CLASS assessors observed and rated 23 of 28 Head Start Classrooms using the required tool. Results indicated ACHR classrooms met the required minimum scores in all three domains and in two of these three domains had exemplary scores.

Beyond Expectations sponsored a food backpack program that provided supplementary food backpacks for children to take home for the weekend on Fridays, when children may be most vulnerable to hunger. ACHR's Marian Wright Edelman Center in Hurtsboro was a Distribution Center for the program, serving 40 families.

Last year, to help meet the increased child days, "duration" funds were offered to the programs. ACHR applied for the maximum offered, which was 40% of our children and was awarded the grant. This year we completed the first year with 169 children attending 204 program days compared to children who attended 160 days. The children who participated in the duration program held at Darden Center in Opelika began the program year in July of 2017 and remained in school until the beginning of June 2018. The extra 44 days increased their class hours from 800 to 1,020 hours. Staff chose to increase days rather than hours because not having the mandatory nap period in a day greater than 5 hours increase children's instructional time.

In expectation of having children on Darden playgrounds during the warmest part of the year, new electric water coolers and special water-play systems were added to both of the Darden HS playgrounds. Challenges of having the duration grant included less leave time for HS teachers at Darden between program years. Re-planning and careful scheduling of these changes to the various agency schedules will include the period for staff training.

New Performance Standards and Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) will require staff to receive safety training on a series of 12 specific topics. In Alabama, for staff involved with children receiving CCDF funds (sliding fees for daycare children) the only outside certificate producing training can provide that training. ACHR added two training days (March/April) and so staff could meet the almost immediate deadline for the required

training to cover immediately all staff in both HS/EHS and daycare. Management staff then added a day to HS/EHS group training calendar to shift the timing of the training in the future to our usual pre-service time.

In 2017-18 ACHR-CDP entered into a more extensive partnership with East Alabama Mental Health (EAMHC) to offer mental health consultation to our program and services for our children, families and staff. Children with the most needs received services through a variety of EAMHC programs including the ABC Program (small group treatment for children with challenging behaviors) and the Special Deliveries Program (a home-visit model; visitors work with parent and child on behavior, social emotional issues, and parenting). ACHR-CDP Staff received services through mental wellness activities and both staff and parents received individualized counseling or referral as requested.

In addition to our partnership with EAMC, ACHR has an Interventionist/Behavior Specialist (I/B Specialist) to help with screening, identifying, referring, and follow-up for children with special needs and children with challenging behaviors. Both our I/B Specialist and the EAMHC's Mental Health Specialist were able to attend a seven-day intensive Conscious Discipline training along with some of our Education staff during the summer. Since then they have worked together to spread Conscious Discipline to ACHR staff, EAMHC, and other schools and programs. For the first time, they offered the Conscious Discipline Parenting Curriculum to HS/EHS families. As an alternative, or in addition to Conscious Discipline, parents were invited to attend the Triple P Parenting classes offered by the Family Resource Center in Opelika. Overall ACHR staff and EAMHC increased the range and effectiveness of our mental health services. We look forward to continuing and refining this work in the next program year.

The increase in children with challenging behaviors over the past ten years has been dramatic. The more training staff attends, and the more they observe, the more they realize that many of our children have experienced or are experiencing toxic stress and/or trauma. We began introducing classroom staff to the concepts of Conscious Discipline in 2004 and began implementing it about three years later, so this is about our 10<sup>th</sup> year with at least part of our classrooms using that curriculum in addition to High Scope. In our experience, Conscious Discipline has helped many children learn to self-regulate and be able to better focus on learning activities. As a result of our positive experience, our intention is to spread knowledge and practices of Conscious Discipline to all levels of staff to enable them to be a part of our "school family."

For some children, the school family is the consistency of a safe place in which they can learn social, emotional and problem-solving skills that lead to positive relationships, self-regulation, and success in school and in life. For this reason, ACHR held its first staff-wide onsite Conscious Discipline three-day training at Southern Union Community College in March of 2018. It was a great team-building event that gave an overview of some of the foundations of Conscious Discipline that all staff can implement.

Alongside our existing professional training and support for education staff in 2017-18, ACHR began implementation of Practiced Based Coaching (PBC) for a selected group of teachers and home visitors. Three experienced staff members attended training in PBC and then added intensive coaching duties to their jobs. One works with HS teaching staff, one

with EHS teaching staff, and one with Home Visitors. Intensive coaching is provided to help education staff learn more about implementing quality teaching and learning and how to examine their use of specific strategies to assist young children in reaching their school readiness goals. Participants worked with coaches to identify their goals and action plans and worked together to help staff make progress toward their goals through modeling, video, observation, thoughtful conversations, and encouragement. Participants reported the process to be helpful to their professional growth. Most wished they could spend even more time with their coaches.

In May 2017, our ten-year partnership with Lee County Schools (LCS) ended. Pre-K in Alabama has begun to allow children with disabilities to participate, which is as it should be, so LCS decided to partner with their new Pre-K classrooms to serve children with special needs alongside children who are typically developing. This change caused two big changes at ACHR's Head Start program.

First, there was a space crisis for more than 50 HS children who had attended HS in LCS space. At one time, there was room in our centers for those children, but as the partnership grew, of course the space was adapted for other needs. We then had to decide whether to reclaim the space and move those functions elsewhere, find space elsewhere, or consider some other solutions. Of course, this decision took research, planning, and time. We considered placing classrooms outside our centers, perhaps in Sunday school rooms, and staff went hunting. However, converting available space to make it suitable would have been costly, and there was no assurance of being able to use the space long term. In addition, the number of Pre-K classrooms grew in our area, with thirteen classes each in Lee and Russell Counties. Many four-year-olds who are Head Start eligible attend those classes. We serve predominately three-year-olds in rural Russell and according to our Community Assessment, that will be true in Lee County soon. Classrooms with predominately three-year-olds can serve 17 children; if predominately four-year-olds the same room can serve 18 or more. That means we can serve fewer children in the agency as a whole.

At the same time, our Community Needs Assessment showed a need for additional affordable, quality infant-toddler care because care for that age group is limited and often expensive. Our center based EHS slots in Opelika are always full. In Lee County, only about 20% of the need for infant-toddler care at an affordable cost is met. After careful consideration of our options and the need in the community going forward, the staff, Policy Council and Board decided to request to convert a number of HS slots to EHS slots. The request was included with the E/HS Continuation Grant submitted in November of 2017. The process is long, so a final decision did not arrive from Washington during the 2017-18 program year.

Meanwhile, the lack of space caused our enrollment to seem low during part of this period because we had nowhere to serve our full number (424) of HS children. Additionally, because LCS has full time space available for preschool children who have disabilities, almost all of them attend classes in schools in Lee County, though many are Head Start-eligible (which is one reason the partnership started more than ten years ago). The change has reduced the number of children in our Head Start program who have disabilities by 20 to 25 children, and will continue to do so.

Each year, in addition to the routine cleaning and maintenance, there are major projects that must be completed to maintain our facilities to meet standards. During this period, Darden Center received a new coat of interior paint and an updated intercom system. King Center had an electrical issue caused intermittent power outages that affected office operations, our energy and weather programs as well as some Head Start classrooms. Auburn Electric has a wonderful community outreach. When their staff is not fully busy with work, they are encouraged to help non-profits do whatever the agency needs, even painting and yard work. This year they helped trace that electrical problem. Their findings along with information from another group suggested the problem was the need for another “ground” which they installed. We are very appreciative of their efforts.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Alabama Council on Human Relations, Inc. is a private non-profit organization, funded exclusively for, educational and eleemosynary (charitable) purposes that partners with persons and agencies in the community, on behalf of the low income population. The goal of ACHR is to serve those persons with low incomes and the promotion and implementation of programs that improve economic conditions, education and racial relationships for all people, resulting in increased self-sufficiency and overall improvement in their quality of life.

### **AGENCY DESCRIPTION**

ACHR, incorporated in Montgomery in 1954, has provided Head Start (HS) services in Lee County since 1965 and in much of Russell County since 1992. ACHR has provided Early Head Start in both counties since 1998. In addition to HS and EHS, ACHR administers other programs, including the Alabama Coalition Against Hunger (ACAH), the Child and Adult Care Food Program (serving daycare homes in multiple counties), housing counseling (also multiple counties), VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance), and LIHEAP (Low Income Heating Assistance Program), which offers energy counseling and assistance with payment of energy bills. ACHR also offers low-income housing at 11 housing complexes in seven counties, and is a Community Housing Development Organization. ACHR is the designated Community Services Block Grant program provider for Lee County.



ACHR’s Early Head Start (EHS) program, which started in 1998, is an essential part of the agency’s overall program. It is widely recognized that the years from conception to age three are vital to growth and development. Staff in both the EHS classroom program and in the EHS Home visit program provide EHS families with suggestions enrich their child’s development and to ensure a support system for both the child and primary caregiver.

ACHR has three centers offering services to children, two in Lee County and one in rural Russell County. Darden Center in Opelika is the largest center, with 11 HS classrooms and

five EHS classrooms, as well as a school-aged class serving 18-20 school-aged children (mostly siblings of HS/EHS children or former HS children) who come to the center for before and/or after school and for summer care.

The Darden campus includes Darden on the Hill. That area houses the Sunshine Shop where staff accept, store and display donated goods for easy access by HS/EHS families. There is office space for EHS home visitors and a socialization area for the 64 home-based infants, toddlers and pregnant women/teens served by the home visitors in Lee County.

The Frankie B. King Center houses the ACHR Main Office provides space for administrative, fiscal, secretarial, and other agency support and eight Head Start classrooms serving children and families in Auburn and eastern Lee County. There are offices for services including Energy Assistance, Housing Counseling, Day Care Home Provider program and Weatherization for Lee County. The Marian Wright Edelman Center, located in Hurtsboro in rural Russell County, houses four HS and three EHS classrooms, as well as offices and socialization space for home visitors for 24 EHS infants, children and/or pregnant women.

In addition to these centers, there are some auxiliary facilities, such as a garage to service agency buses and other vehicles.

## **HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START**

### **NUMBERS FUNDED/SERVED**

As we have stated, our grant year runs from March to February. Now that we have both EHS and the HS duration grant and run classes well over 200 days, our school year runs from July to June. It is a challenge to reconcile those two periods. We have based the data in this section on the HS reporting system for school year July 2017 to June 2018.

The ACHR-CDP was funded to serve 424 Head Start (HS) and 152 Early Head Start (EHS) children in 2017-18. The Head Start program served 424 HS children (ages 3-5 years) during the early part of the year, and 369 HS children after the partnership with Lee County Schools ended in May. At any given time, EHS center-based classrooms had space for 64 infants and toddlers (ages 4 weeks to three years) who were the children of parents working or in school and another 88 children and/or mothers-to-be served in a home-based setting. Home Visitors visited each home-based parent and child once a week and together with the parent, provided the full array of EHS services. In addition, mothers and children who were in the home visit program were invited and encouraged to come for a “socialization” visit once every two weeks. The parents had small group meetings and learned from each other, outside speakers and other community resources; the toddlers began to learn to play with other children. ACHR provided transportation to these events to those who needed it.

During school year 2017-18, due to the normal drops/adds, HS served 421 preschoolers in 382 families. Twenty-four children were in the program fewer than 45 days and others not

much beyond that. In spite of our best efforts to foster good attendance, attendance was right at 85.45%. A big wave of flu hit our program in the winter months. Children cannot learn when they are not present, so we will continue to focus this coming year on encouraging parents to send their children regularly. According to the Community Needs Assessment, among the various programs available, including Pre-K, most of the need for preschool services was met in rural Russell County and approximately 70% of the need was met in Lee County.

During the same period, EHS served 31 pregnant women and 193 infants and toddlers in 171 families. No infants/toddlers were in the program fewer than 45 days. Attendance was a 91%. According to the Community Needs Assessment, the number of infants and toddlers served was approximately 65% in rural Russell County but only about 20% of the need in Lee County.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Medical/Dental

During the last school year all of the children who were enrolled more than 45 days received medical screenings and, if needed, follow-up; 95% of children (including those enrolled fewer than 45 days) were up-to-



date on receiving age-appropriate preventive care at the end of the year; 448 HS-aged children (86% of all those enrolled at any time) and some of the older EHS children received dental exams and preventative care. Last year, Dr. George Liles, a pediatric dentist in Auburn, worked with our children but was unable to come to the center to do dental exams. Many of our children had already been seen in his office. We have a staff member who is a speech/language pathologist and can and did do dental screenings to meet the 45-day

requirement. Dr. Liles saw many of those children later at his office and provided treatment for the children who needed it. Most of the children truly love him. For several years, children at the smaller centers have been provided dental services by two dentists in Tuskegee unless their parents prefer to take them to another dentist.

Staff successfully encouraged many HS parents to take their children for follow up appointments for dental treatment and some took their children for dental exams. Staff will continue in this effort, which more firmly establishes an ongoing “dental home” for the children and is part of each parent’s role as a life-long educator of their children. Because of the combined efforts of the dentists, the children’s parents and our staff, 100% of the children who needed dental treatment received it.

## Preparing Children for School

For more than 35 years, the ACHR-CDP has used the HighScope Curriculum in its efforts to have children ready for school. This approach takes each child at his/her level and works to build knowledge and skills using the child's interests and strengths. All learning areas required by Office of Head Start as outlined in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework Ages 0-5 (HSELOF), including Social Emotional Development, Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development, Approaches to Learning, Cognition, and Language and Literacy are embedded in children's everyday activities. This research-based curriculum approach is developmentally appropriate and is tailored for children ages birth through five years.



In addition to regular activities at the center, resource visitors come to classrooms to enrich children's experiences. Parents, professionals, and community helpers are among those who volunteer their time to make presentations and share experiences with the preschool children. Classroom staff members take children on field trips to visit businesses/community resources such as police and fire departments, museums, farms/stables and other sites around our area and Auburn University. It is amazing what pre-school children can learn from these visits and field trips and how much fun they can have in the process. Teachers talk with the children before the visit, during the visit, and after the visit to stretch children's knowledge and vocabulary.

We encourage parents to do much the same thing with their own children as part of our school readiness parent program called RAGS (Reading, Activities and Growth for Success). Teachers send home RAGS activity sheets with suggestions of ways parents can help their child to grow in a particular focus that supports some of the classroom activities that week.



The activity sheets can help parents change a routine visit to the grocery store from an event that is frustrating for parent and child into a learning "adventure" that helps increase vocabulary, sentence length, ability to follow directions, or to increase math skills or self-regulation. The same child who was bored and crying can be enlisted to help find a can of green peas for dinner and the box with the big "K" on it for breakfast. We suggest that when parents have their

child with them at the store, that they take a few moments to say things like: "The peas are in a can with a *green* label. Can you find it?" "Look one shelf *higher*." "Good

find!” “Please put it *in* the cart.” Of course, as a child gets better at this game, we encourage parents to make the skills progressively more challenging. (“Please put the can *in* the cart *beside* the corn and beans. Now we have *three* cans.”) Repeated over a several visits, these “adventures” make a difference in a child’s skills including those needed for school readiness.

Teachers make frequent observations of children and place them into each child’s Child Observation Record to track the child’s progress towards school readiness goals and to know when to help a child stretch for the next level. In addition, classroom staff focus on children’s social skills and self-regulation in an effort to have the children ready to fit into a kindergarten classroom. As described when discussing our partners, we are pleased to be partnering with Children’s and Family Services, a department of East Alabama Mental Health in this effort. Additionally, during the past several years ACHR has been training staff to implement the Conscious Discipline approach within our classrooms and spreading the approach to home visitors. The program has provided staff new ways to improve classroom management and assist children in developing self-regulation and other skills that help them to be connected, cooperative, and helpful members of a classroom family.

### **ACHR-CDP SCHOOL READINESS REPORT for PROGRAM YEAR 2017-2018**

ACHR CDP’s school readiness goals were developed using Office of Head Start (OHS) requirements, the HSELOF, curriculum guidelines, alignments with state standards for four-year- olds/Alabama Early Learning Guidelines, local school expectations, and staff and parent input. School readiness goals are statements that articulate knowledge and skills needed by infants/toddlers prior to preschool and for preschool children prior to entering kindergarten. These goals address social and emotional development, language and literacy, perceptual, motor, and physical development, approaches to learning, and cognitive development including general knowledge, mathematics, and science.

At ACHR, progress towards school readiness goals is measured through the HighScope Child Observation Record (COR) known as the *COR Advantage* assessment tool, and through teacher skill tracking logs, photographs, and data collection such as samples of children’s work.

The COR Advantage is a seamless birth-through-kindergarten assessment tool. Categories and items on the COR align with state standards, Common Core standards and the HSELOF. Head Start and Early Head Start teachers as well home visitors use this tool. Because the tool is seamless, it allows for scoring all children, whether typically developing, with special needs, or exceptional.

Classroom staff and home visitors collect data on an ongoing basis to determine how well children are progressing across the required OHS five essential domains: Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development, Social and Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning, Language and Literacy, and Cognition and General Knowledge including mathematics and science. To the extent possible, staff assess dual language learners in the child’s home language across all domains by communicating with parents/translators, and assessing the children’s increasing proficiency in learning English.



Teaching staff/home visitors gather and monitor the continuous progress of each child through means such as anecdotal notes, skill logs, portfolios, writing and art samples,



formal observations by other professionals, parental input through family contacts and joint goal setting, service provider reports, photographs, videos, and Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) progress reports. Children show gains in the COR Advantage by moving to the next skill level of each objective. Possible scores for each objective are the same, ranging from 0-7.

Assessment data is used to develop lesson plans and activities for all children and individualized instruction and activities for each child throughout the year. ACHR has set scoring goals for child outcomes for 1-year-olds, 2-year-olds, and 3-year-olds in EHS, and for three and four-year-olds in HS. Staff aggregate the data by program option and program level three times per year – approximately November, March, and June. At each point, the education leadership team studies the child outcome averages across domains for the total program to identify any school readiness areas where children are not progressing as expected. Next, the team looks at the distribution of scores to examine the variability of children's progress. Subgroups of children (e.g., grouped by age, gender, home language, IEP status) are compared for disparities so that if any exist the program can work to help these children in ways that may result in furthering their school readiness.

At the midpoint analysis, progress towards school readiness goals is assessed and reported to teaching staff, program administration, the school readiness advisory committee, parent policy council/parents and the ACHR board. Time is used to assist teachers/home visitors in understanding their data and how they can maximize children's progress moving forward. The school readiness advisory committee meets to discuss the program's progress towards school readiness goals and to advise the program on school readiness issues from many perspectives.

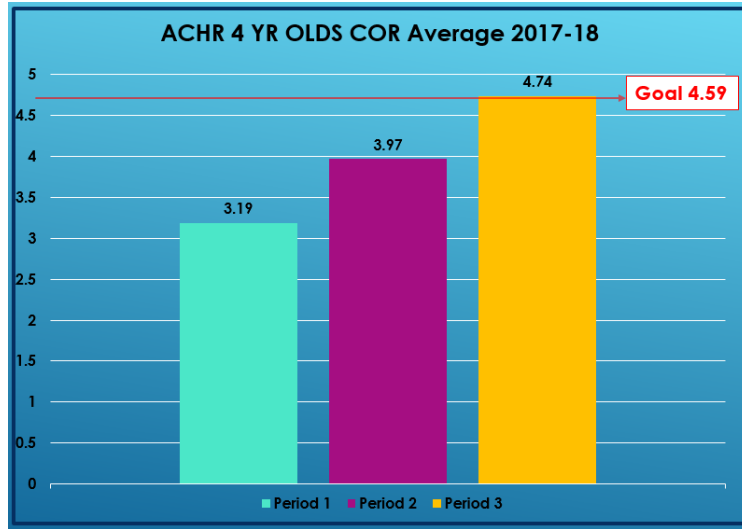
Education team members assist teaching teams in analyzing this classroom data using classroom level COR reports and other indicators. The teaching teams use the analysis to refine their planning process for each child and groups of children, and as a guide to set professional goals. COR reports are also used as part of the process for determining staff's group and individual professional development needs.

After the last aggregation/analysis period is completed, the results for the program year are discussed by the school readiness advisory committee and shared with stakeholders and families. The results are also a part of the program's annual self-assessment process. The ACHR education and administrative teams use the results to plan for continued program operations, possible program improvements, professional development needs, and possible

purchases of resources to support specific school readiness goals for the upcoming program year.

**School Readiness Results for Head Start 2017-2018: 4-5 YR Olds**

- The average beginning COR score for all typically developing 4-5 yr. old children was 3.19
- The mid-point COR scores had moved up, indicating growth. Overall, the ACHR score for 4-5 yr. olds went from 3.19 to 3.97.
- At the end of the school year, the COR scores had moved up even more. The average score for all ACHR 4-yr old children was 4.74, indicating that, on average, HS children had exceeded ACHR’s school readiness goal of 4.59.
- Between September and May, ACHR 4-5 yr. old children’s overall developmental score levels increased 42%  
 As per HS philosophy, *we take children from where they are and help them to move forward toward our school readiness goals.* Our data show that we are doing that.



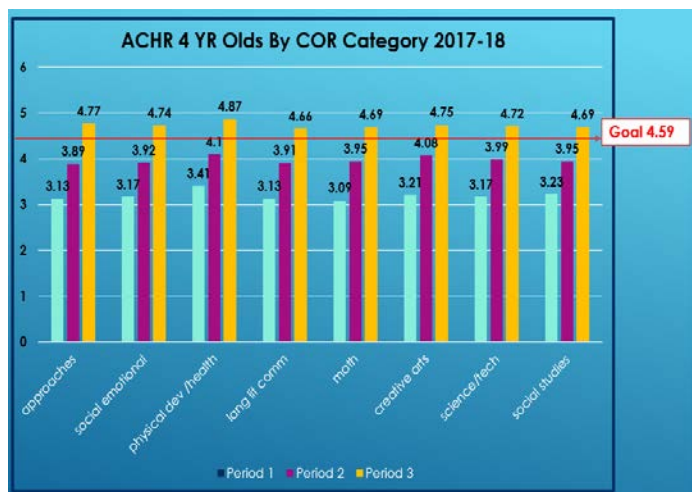
ACHR’s goal for children going on to kindergarten is an average of a 4.59. In 2017-2018 program year, these children attained an average 4.74 or 3% above the goal.

**Head Start School Readiness Achievement: 4-5 year olds by COR Advantage Categories**

HS exceeded its school readiness goal of 4.59 in all eight COR Advantage Categories by achieving an average of 4.74 and categories exceeding their individual goals by 3-8%.

4-5 yr. old children’s COR Advantage category scores indicated gains in all categories at each collection point.

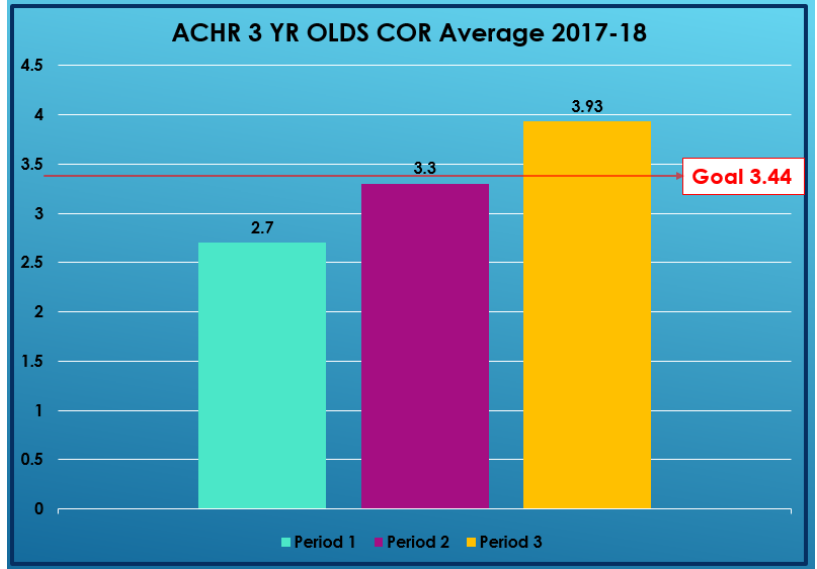
- Approaches to learning
- Social/Emotional Development,
- Physical Development and Health
- Language/Literacy/Communication
- Mathematics
- Creative Arts



- Science and Technology
- Social Studies

**School Readiness Results for Head Start 2017-2018: 3 Year Olds**

- The average beginning COR score for all typically developing 3-4 yr. old children was 2.7.
- The mid-point COR scores had moved up, indicating growth. Overall score for 4-5 yr. olds went from 2.7 to 3.3.
- At the end of the school year, the COR scores had moved up even more. The average score for all ACHR 3 yr. old children was 3.93, indicating that, on average, HS children had exceeded ACHR’s school readiness goal of 3.57.



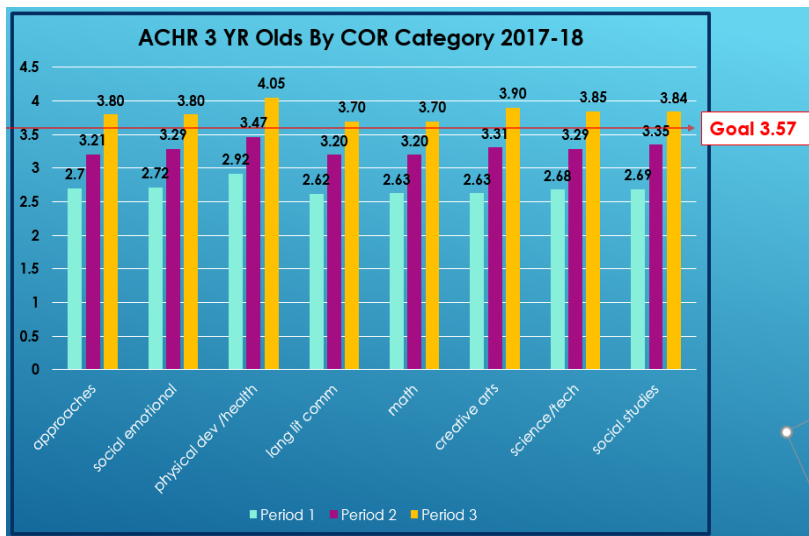
- Between September and May, ACHR 3 yr. old children’s overall develop-mental score levels increased 42%.

ACHR’s goal for the three year old group is an average of a 3.57.

In 2017-2018 program year, these children attained an average 3.93 or 10% above the goal.

**Head Start School Readiness Achievement: 3 year olds by COR Advantage Categories**

HS exceeded its school readiness goal in all eight COR Advantage Categories by achieving an average of 3.93 and categories exceeding their individual goals by between 4-10%.



3 year old children’s COR Advantage category scores indicated gains in all categories at each collection point.

- Portfolios of 3 year old children’s work samples and photos from across the year were completed and given to parents at the last parent-teacher conference.

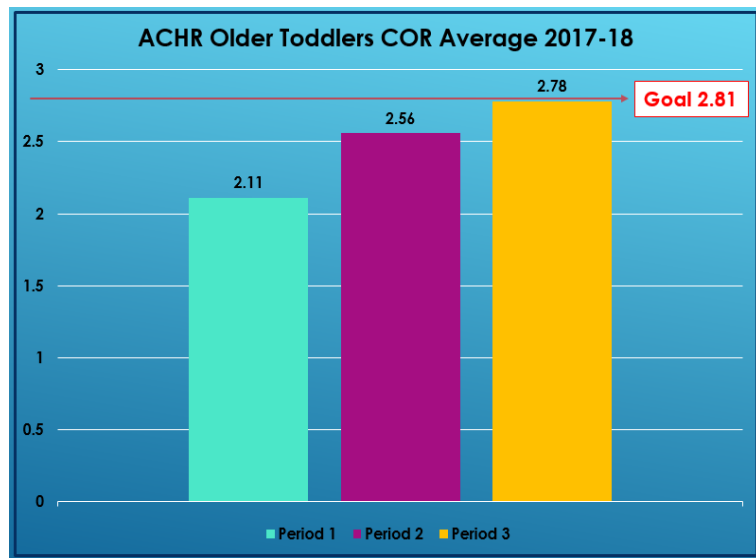
- Two developmental summary reports from ongoing assessment were created and shared with parents in HS. This included a mid-year and end- of-year report using COR Advantage information and software.

### School Readiness Results for Early Head Start 2017-18: Older Toddlers

The process used for gathering, analyzing, and using developmental growth data in EHS is the same as that used in HS. The COR Advantage is the primary tool for tracking ongoing infant-toddler growth and development. The principal goal is for children to be progressing steadily and to be ready to transition into preschool after turning three years old.

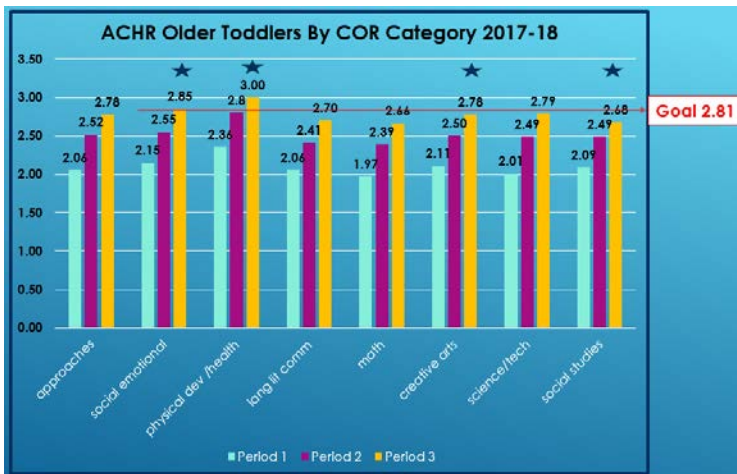
Children in EHS showed steady growth in 2017-2018. Below is a sample of the older toddler group and their progress during the periods of 2017-2018.

- The average beginning COR score for all typically developing older toddlers was 2.11.
- The mid-point COR scores had moved up, indicating growth. Overall, the ACHR score went from 2.11 to 2.56. Then in the third and last period scores moved up to 2.78
- Between June of 2017 and May 2018 older toddlers overall developmental score levels increased 32%.



ACHR’s goal for older toddlers who will go on to HS or preschool is an average of a 2.82. In 2017-2018 program year, these children attained an average 2.78 or 98.6% of the goal.

### Early Head Start School Readiness Achievement by COR Advantage Categories:



EHS Older Toddlers 2017-18 exceeded the School Readiness goal for 5 of 8 COR categories by between 1-7%. The other 3 categories were 92-97% to goal with Language, Literacy & Communication being the lowest.

The COR Advantage category scores for Older Toddlers indicated gains in all categories at each collection point.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Parents are very important to us - and to their children's readiness for school. Parents elected by other parents to serve on the Policy Council give input to our program in many ways. During the 2017-2018 year, parents were invited to quarterly parent meetings, had at least four opportunities to visit with their child's teacher during home and center visits, and were invited to meetings on special topics.



Staff makes a special effort to work with the fathers (or “father-figures” such as uncles, grandfathers, etc.). Most months we offer a Reading with Dads event. The children’s fathers or other special men in their lives

are invited to the centers to have breakfast and always to learn something about child development or literacy and then read or do activities with their children in the classrooms. During 2017-2018, about 300 HS and/or EHS children’s fathers or father figures came to one or more special events at the centers. In addition to attending the special father activities, some came to other parent activities, such as the Family Fun Day.

## ACHR PROGRAMS OTHER THAN HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START



ACHR is the designated Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) provider in Lee County. CSBG funds assist, extend and strengthen a variety of programs and make it possible for the agency to provide services that otherwise could not be provided.

CSBG assists with funding for many programs, including housing counseling and the gardening projects described below.

ACHR’s LIFE (Learning Information about Food and Exercise) began in 2014 through CSBG funds, because of a 10% up-tick in self-reported obesity by clients completing our community assessment survey. The program was planned and implemented to help participants living with low income improve their overall health and maintain or decrease their weight. Our Registered Dietician provides weigh-ins and individualized diet counseling (including a variety of health concerns, such as diabetes). Some participants check-in by phone, others in person. As a certified fitness instructor, she also offers low-impact aerobic exercise program at Darden, Edelman and King Centers.

Other programs ACHR administers are designed to assist families living with low incomes in Lee County and, in some cases, in other areas of Alabama, include:

- **Alabama Coalition Against Hunger (ACAH)**, with a current emphasis on community gardens in Lee and Russell Counties. One of the gardens in Lee County is a collaboration with several churches and with youth involvement.
- **Child & Adult Care Food Program**, which provides training and reimbursement for qualified meals to approximately 30 day care home providers serving approximately 225 children in four counties.
- **Housing Counseling** (Department of Housing and Urban Development-Certified Housing Counseling Agency) to residents with problems with mortgages, tenant/landlord relations, etc.
- **Certified Community Housing Development Organization** has built 12 low-income housing complexes in eight counties. The grand opening for Shiloh, a project for seniors in Opelika was held in November 2017. Shiloh is our 5<sup>th</sup> complex in the Lee County area.
- **Weatherization** - assesses and then contracts to weatherize homes (including mobile homes) for homeowners who qualify.
- **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program** participant; ACHR staff and volunteers were received intensive training and served 93 families.
- **Energy counseling and assistance with energy bills** through LIHEAP, and the Alabama Charitable Trust. In this fiscal year, 3447 families received assistance through regular LIHEAP, LIHEAP crisis, and the Alabama Charitable Trust.
- **S.T.E.P.S. (Systems to Empower Parents and Students)** is a relatively new, youth focused effort, in partnership with other community groups. The goal is to encourage young people to stay in school, work to become eligible, and attend college. In October 2017, the second Scholarship Seminar and information session to the community was held. The Seminar focused on assisting students in thinking about life after high school. Twenty-five students and parents attended the seminar. Information provided included scholarship opportunities, planning for college and other life decisions. The S.T.E.P.S. Chairperson has worked one-on-one with students who requested help.

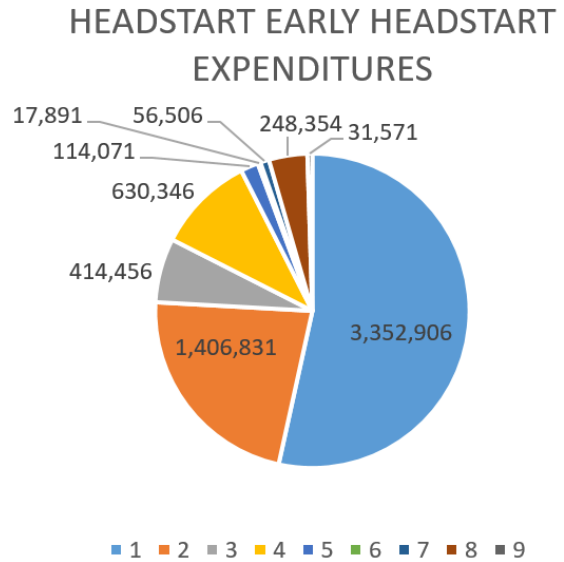


## FINANCIAL INFORMATION/FUNDING

### Head Start/Early Head Start

The Alabama Council on Human Relations, Inc. received funding from Health and Human Services in the amount of \$6,272,933 to fund its Head Start and Early Head Start programs. In addition, because Head Start/Early Head Start programs are required to have a 20% match, we must find “match” or “in-kind,” which can be goods or services donated that of benefit to the program within the community in the amount of \$1,568,234. The pie chart shows the percentages of funds spent in key areas for the HS/EHS programs.

1	3,352,906	SALARIES
2	1,406,831	FRINGE
3	414,456	OCCUPANCY
4	630,346	INDIRECT
5	114,071	SUPPLIES
6	17,891	CONTRACTUAL
7	56,506	TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
8	248,354	TRANSPORTATION
9	31,571	DUES, INSURANCE ADMIN
<hr/>		
	6,272,932	



**FUNDING FOR OTHER PROGRAMS**

Funds in the amount of \$445,892 were awarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide meals for children. The Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP), serving family day care homes in four counties received \$236,247. The City of Opelika provided \$20,000 to assist with extended day/year care for children of working parents. In combination with funding through the state voucher program and parent fees on a sliding scale, the City of Opelika funding allowed us to provide before and/or after school and summer care for approximately 100 children of mothers who were working or in school. We also received \$200,259 in funding from the Department of Health and Human Services to fund a program for this current year to operate an extended summer program for children ages 3-5.

Beyond that, we have LIHEAP funds of \$1,254,883 (most of which provides heating and cooling assistance directly to clients), Alabama Charitable Trust Funds of \$30,087 which were used to assistant clients who were not eligible for LIHEAP funding or who needed additional assistance, and CSBG funding of \$389,789 (which supplements various programs as well as providing direct services). Last year, we received \$6,751 in General Funds from the State of Alabama and weatherization funds of \$45,972 received this year.

At this writing, we expect our budget and expenditure in all grant areas for the coming year to be similar to that in the past year.

**AUDIT RESULTS**

The independent audit done by an outside Certified Public Accountant on ACHR programs for the 2017-18 year resulted in no audit findings. The most recent Head Start/Early Head

Start was favorable allowing us to remain eligible for the five-year designation. In addition, various programs including Child and Adult Care Feeding Program, LIHEAP (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program), and Weatherization were audited during this year and although there were a few things to respond to, there were no significant findings.

### IN-KIND -- DONORS AND BENEFACTORS

Federal requirements state that HS/EHS programs must match the federal grant funds on an 80-20 basis. That means that “in-kind” (donations of time, goods and funds) is essential to the continuation of the federal funding that allows ACHR to provide children and families living with low incomes Head Start/Early Head Start services. Sometimes, we



have had to push and struggle to find enough in-kind for a fiscal year. With tighter federal restrictions on what can count toward the in-kind requirements, ACHR staff have to continually look for new sources and ensure proper documentation.

During the past year, many generous individuals and companies donated goods (everything from toys to dryers) that have helped the program in various ways.

Just as important is the value of the help provided by our many volunteers. Last year, more than 800 volunteers contributed their time.

We are proud to say that we have good community partners who provide a variety of goods and services to our program. This year we continued a partnership with Auburn University’s Department of Kinesiology. The department provided a motor skills program for Head Start children at our Darden Center. This project continued helped children gain large motor skills and increase activity levels. It provided teaching staff with a deeper knowledge of how children’s specific motor skills can increase with adult assistance and opportunity. The project involved university professors, doctoral students, grad students, under grads, and creative materials.

Other partners included AU Early Childhood Education students who volunteered time in HS/EHS classrooms, the AU Nursing Department, who shared health and safety information with HS children and SUSCC nursing students who helped do heights and weights of children. The Auburn University cheerleaders provided a mini-pep rally (we are a sports-oriented area so the children love it) and AU women’s basketball participated in give back day, helping King Center with heavy work, organizing materials, and a providing mini “Tiger Walk” with children (also a BIG sports item). Many individual volunteers came to assist in other ways including helping us organize the Sunshine Shop, which provided donated goods at no cost to Head Start/Early Head Start families. Families



who had emergencies, such as those recovering from fires or storm damage, also sometimes received goods.

One of our most committed community partners, Jean-Dean RIF, celebrated 28 years of service to children's literacy. The local Kiwanis Clubs raised funds, bought children's books, and volunteered in our HS/EHS classrooms three times per year as readers - for 28 years! Soon after we started Early Head Start, they began to provide toddler books and parenting/pregnancy books to our pregnant moms – and still do. We were able to offer these same books to pregnant teens at local high schools during workshops provided by our Home-based Educator.

This year, staff placed great importance on School Readiness and on Family Partnerships. As a result, we had more parents participating in RAGS (Reading, Activities and Growth for Success) and participating more often. That meant more parent volunteer time toward in-kind. More importantly, it meant that more parents did activities with their children to support classroom learning and enhance the child's abilities. Those things should lead to stronger families and improved school readiness.

We cannot name them all, but do want to offer our sincere thanks to the many, many volunteers who have given of their time, energy and talents this year to help our children, their families and our program. It is no exaggeration to say that without their help, not only would our program not be the quality it is, we would not have a program.