

**Gaa-waabaabiganikaag**  
**Nation Head Start**  
**Program**  
**Annual Report**  
**2024-2025**



Director: 218 935-6257

# White Earth Nation

*To preserve, promote and enhance our quality of life*



# The White Earth Nation Head Start & Early Head Start



Our mission is to provide leadership in creation and implementation of quality services and programs for children and their families to maximize their potential as productive and contributing member of society. While ensuring that every child is treated with kindness, respect, and comfort and is encouraged to acquire developmental skills in a nurturing environment facilitated by Head Start Staff.

# About Head Start

Head Start is a federal program that promotes the school readiness of children ages birth to five from low-income families by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development. The program provides comprehensive services to enrolled children and their families, which include health, nutrition, social, and other services determined to be necessary by family needs assessments, in addition to education and cognitive development services. Head Start services are designed to be responsive to each child and family's ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage.



# The Head Start Principles

Establishes learning environments for children, parents and staff

- Parents are believed to be the primary educators and nurturers of and advocates for their children
- Recognizes that the members of the Head Start community have roots in many cultures
- Understands that the empowerment of families occurs when program governance is shared
- Embraces a comprehensive vision of health for children, families and staff
- Respects the importance of all aspects of an individual's development
- Builds a community in which each child and adult is treated as an individual, at the same time, belonging to the group is reinforced
- Fosters relationships with the larger community
- Develops an uninterrupted continuum of care of education and services
- Each service is responsive to each child and family's development, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage and experiences
- Strives for excellence and quality in program management

The White Earth Head Start Programs strive to provide the best quality of comprehensive services to children, expectant parents, and families of early childhood aged children. Head Start is offered to all areas of the White Earth Reservation. Program options are:

**Classroom/Center-base:** 3 to 5-year-old children

The classroom/ center-base option is available to children ages 3 to 5 years old. Students are transported to one the 6 centers when they reside near or within the communities of Mahnomen, Naytahwaush, Pine Point, Rice Lake, Waubun/Ogema, or White Earth/Callaway. Each classroom is staffed with a lead teacher, assistant teacher, and family service advocate who assists families with various needs and goals.

**Home-base & Early Head Start:** Prenatal and birth to 3-year-old children

The home-base/Early Head Start option is available in all areas of the White Earth Reservation with services provided to expectant parents and children ages birth to three years old with a home visitor providing a weekly visit and 2 monthly socializations.

**Services provided are in the areas of:** *Education, Parent Involvement, Health, Safety, Nutrition, Family Partnerships, Mental Health, Disabilities, Multicultural, Literacy, Transition and Transportation.* We provide activities, interaction, and interventions that assist children to develop and grow cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically in nurturing, supportive environments.

**All family's services with preference given to:** Homelessness, low-income families, White Earth Band Enrolled Members/ Descendants, other Native Americans, children with disabilities and other special needs, etc., per a selection point system.



# Parent Involvement

The White Earth Head Start Programs believe that parents and caregivers are the children's most important teachers and we support them in their roles. In our efforts to develop the best possible programming, we encourage parents to become partners in our Head Start Programs. We offer opportunities for parents and caregivers to enhance their understanding of their child's educational experience by participating in Policy Council, Parent Committee, special interest groups, socializations, and Parent/Child activity events. We also encourage parent/caregiver involvement by requesting their assistance to become active classroom volunteers or substitutes, assist on field trips, attend workshops, conferences, in-services, training, and Head Start screenings, etc.

We conduct monthly parent meetings, Policy Council meetings, and parent/child activity sessions. Our Home Base option offers two socialization sessions per month while in session. We also collaborate with other program entities and programs on the reservation and together organize family events such as Festival of Fathers and Week of the Young Child. We inform parents of various activities in the communities, group meetings, and events.

The White Earth Head Start Programs are based on Parent Involvement. We believe that making a good Head Start program requires many people working together, sharing their talents, knowledge, and energy to provide our children with the best quality of early education and care.

We feel that on-going frequent family contact utilizing various forms of communication with families helps our parents/caregivers support their children in accomplishing school readiness to continue in their educational endeavors.



## **Population Served** (as of 5/30/25)

**Prenatal to 5-year-olds**

**Average Monthly Enrollment**

**HS 104 EHS 27 Funded Enrollment**

**Total Children and Families Served**

**131** (as of 5/30/25)

(TBD as end of program year not completed at this time) **% of children received**

**Medical Exams**

(TBD as end of program year not completed at this time) **% of children received**

**Dental Exams**



# Curriculum

- The Head Start and Early Head Start use the *Frog Street Curriculum* for its primary curriculum. Through the use of this curriculum, we are able to address our program's missions, philosophy, goals, and objectives for children in all aspects of their development.
- Daily plans are balanced to include individual, small group, and large group activities.
- Indigenous Knowledge (Cultural) and multicultural lessons are implemented into the curriculum; this allows a child to be recognized individually. We are using *Time-to-Sign* which implements both Ojibwe language and American Sign Language into daily curriculum.
- Additional curriculums and resources will be utilized for individualization of the areas to meet the specific needs of each child. This would include, but is not limited to: *Time-to-Sign*, *Second Step*, *Partners for a Healthy Baby*, *S.P.A.R.K.*, and other locally designed elements.

# Areas of Development

Children learn academic subject and social skills through play and activities in these areas of development:

- **Multicultural** – Children will learn about their culture, other cultures, and be introduced to the Ojibwe language.
- **Social-Emotional Learning** – Regulating emotions and behaviors, manage feelings, develop a sense of self-worth, knowledge of self, getting along with others, negotiate issues, and take turns.
- **Physical** – (Fine motor skills) Small muscle control, hand-eye coordination, using scissors, and writing materials, playing with toys (gross motor), large muscle control, running, jumping, dancing, balancing, and outdoor play.
- **Language/Cognitive** – Speaking and conversations, peer interaction, problem-solving, expanding vocabulary, follow directions, increase memory skills, make choices, storytelling, singing, and rhyming.
- **Literacy** – Explore books, identifying name, use letters, letter sounds, rhyming, print concepts, foundation for emergent reading and writing skills.
- **Math** – Understanding and developing skills in patterning, sorting, classifying, measuring, comparing, graphing, estimating, counts, numbers, and shapes.
- **Science and Technology** – Exploring the environment, discovering growth and change, observe, make discoveries, predict, testing ideas, use tools and technology to perform tasks.
- **Creative Arts** – Explore visual arts, music, expression, dance and movement, drama and language.



**Observation/Assessment:** To help track children's growth and progress throughout the year both Head Start and Early Head Start utilize *Teaching Strategies*. This observation and assessment computer system allows teachers to input observations of a child's progress and track their levels of development throughout our program. These reports are then shared with parents at conferences to help plan and set individual goals for the child.

- **Parent/Family Input in Education:** Parent input is an important part of the education and curriculum in Head Start. We encourage families to review and sign lesson plans and give their ideas and input as to what they want to see included for their child's education.
- The White Earth Head Start Program's goal is to support the learning and development of children toward school readiness in the areas of **Social and Emotional Development, Language Development, Communication, Literacy, Multicultural, Ojibwe Culture, Cognition and General Knowledge, Physical Motor Development and Health, as well as Approaches to Learning.**
- As a result of participating in the White Earth Head Start, staff will implement activities and services to help children in gaining and developing school readiness skills. These goals are aligned with the Head Start and Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF) and the State of Minnesota Early Learning Guidelines. These skills will look different based on the different times during the first five years of life including young infants, older infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Learning experiences are individualized according to each child's developmental level and will move them forward in their school readiness.
- The White Earth Head Start has created school readiness goals for 0-3 years and 3-5 years. Copies of the school readiness goals will be distributed during the school year. Additionally, we use and recognize the *White Earth National Kindergarten Readiness Guide* to support children and families with key kindergarten readiness concepts that was put together through a reservation-wide effort. Parent's input will again be key in the learning process as teachers work on setting goals for children to attain these skills. Make sure to voice your ideas for your child!



# School Readiness Goals for Infants & Toddlers

The most rapid period of growth and development occurs during the infant and toddler years. The foundations for school readiness begin in pregnancy and continue for the first three years. For infants and toddlers, school readiness refers to the developing capacity of children to self-regulate; develop close secure personal relationships with adults and peers; demonstrate curiosity in, pay attention to, and explore people and objects in the environment; demonstrate a sense of self-confidence; and communicate effectively. This developing capacity depends on the child having good health and receiving proper nutrition. This all happens within the context of close, nurturing, culturally responsive relationships with parents, caregivers, extended family and community.

## Social and Emotional Development

- Children will build and engage in positive relations and interactions with adults.
- Child will show emotional connection and attachment to others.
- Children will begin to develop personal awareness and relationships with peers.
- Children will begin to express and manage some of their feelings, emotions, and behaviors (self-regulation) through facial expressions, sounds, or gestures.
- Children will show an ability to cope with stress by seeking ways to find comfort in situations or with others.
- Children will begin to learn and internalize simple routines, rules, and directions.
- Children will show confidence in increasing abilities and independence.
- Children will begin to develop and demonstrate a positive sense of self, competence, and an identity that is rooted in their family and culture.

## Language Development, Communication, & Literacy

- Children will demonstrate receptive and expressive language skills and communication strategies in their home language for a variety of purposes.
- Children will use sounds, signs, gestures, or actions to express their needs and wants.
- Children will understand and begin to use oral language, gestures, or words for conversation and communication.
- Children will listen with interest to language of others and respond to verbal communication in various ways.
- Children will show interest in hearing the sounds and rhythms of language and songs.
- Children will begin to learn and demonstrate how print works.
- Children will engage and show interest with stories, books, pictures, and other print materials.



## Approaches to Learning

- Children will demonstrate interest, curiosity, and eagerness in exploring the world around them.
- Children will demonstrate persistence in learning and discovery.
- Children will learn to use words to describe what they are thinking and doing.

## Multicultural

- Children will use Ojibwe language and begin to develop their Ojibwe vocabulary.
- Children will participate in Ojibwe cultural activities.
- Children will participate in activities to learn about other cultures.

## Cognition and General Knowledge

- Children will use all the senses to investigate their environment to discover what objects and people do, how things work, and how they can make things happen.
- Children will begin to develop and demonstrate the ability to remember and connect new and known experience and information.
- Children will experiment and use a variety of strategies to solve problems and use objects in new ways.
- Children will learn and attend to learning concepts such as colors, shapes, patterns, or pictures during daily routines and experiences.

## Physical Motor Development and Health

- Children will develop control and coordination of large muscles of the body, arms, and legs for movement, navigation, and balance.
- Children will develop control and coordination of small muscles of the hands or feet for manipulation and exploration with objects and people.
- Children will learn and begin to demonstrate healthy and safe habits.
- Children will express physical needs verbally or nonverbally and respond when physical needs are met.
- Children will participate in physical care routines and begin to develop self-help skills.

# School Readiness Goals For 3-5 Years Old

The White Earth Head Start Program's goal is to support the learning and development of children toward school readiness in the areas of **Social and Emotional Development, Language Development, Communication and Literacy, Multicultural and Ojibwe Culture, Approaches to Learning, Cognitive Development, and Physical Development and Health**. This is done by providing learning experiences for children and families through curriculum, activities, teaching strategies, relationships, exploration, and assessment.



### Social and Emotional Development

- Children will build, engage, and maintain positive relationships and interactions with adults.
- Children will build, engage, and maintain positive relationships and interactions with other children.
- Children will develop socially appropriate behavior with peers and adults, such as cooperating, helping, sharing, and taking turns.
- Children will learn to follow classroom rules, routines, and directions becoming part of the group.
- Children will express and regulate some of their feelings, emotions, and behaviors appropriately (self-regulation).
- Children will explore and describe their emotions and those of others.
- Children will experiment and show confidence in their own abilities increasing their own independence.
- Children will develop and display a sense of self and a strong identity that is rooted in their family and culture.

### Language Development, Communication, and Literacy

- Children will comprehend increasingly complex and varied vocabulary and understand non-verbal and verbal cues.
- Children will listen and demonstrate an understanding to stories, directions, and conversations.
- Children will use language for a variety of purposes and to communicate needs and wants through use of home language.
- Children will initiate, ask questions, and respond in conversation with others.
- Children will engage in storytelling, retell stories or information from books through conversation, artwork, or drama.
- Children will understand that books are read front to back, one page at a time, and have basic characteristics such as title, author, and illustrator.
- Children will recognize letters of the alphabet and name those, especially those in their name.
- Children will begin to associate sounds with letters and words and discriminate between sounds in letters and words.
- Children will use scribbles, shapes, pictures, and letters to represent thoughts or ideas, and begin to write.

## Multicultural and Indigenous Knowledge

- Children will demonstrate an understanding of cultural differences and diversity.
- Children will use Ojibwe language and develop their Ojibwe language vocabulary.
- Children will participate in Ojibwe culture activities.
- Children will participate in activities to learn about other cultures.
- Children will use sign language and develop their sign language vocabulary.

## Approaches to Learning

- Children will show an interest in varied topics and activities, an eagerness to learn, creativity, and independence in their interactions with activities and materials.
- Children will approach experiences with flexibility, imagination, inventiveness, and use a variety of strategies to solve problems.
- Children will generate ideas, suggestions, and/ or make predictions.
- Children will seek or accept help or information and ask questions when needed.
- Children will demonstrate persistence when working with materials, activities, and information to follow through on an activity or task.
- Children will think about events and experiences and will learn to use and apply this knowledge to new situations.

## Cognitive Development

- Children will use math regularly and in everyday routines to use number concepts to count, compare, measure, relate, identify problems, and problem solve.
- Children will use their senses, observation, and hands on interactions, ask questions, and make predictions to gain a better understanding of information and activities in their surroundings.
- Children will demonstrate knowledge of physical properties and characteristics of objects, materials, and living things.
- Children will use tools and technology to perform tasks and investigate materials and the environment.
- Children will use their skills to recall recent and past events.
- Children will demonstrate knowledge about self and understanding of people and how they live.
- Children will be able to explore and participate in variety of creative and art experiences including visual arts, musical concepts and expression, dance, and movement as well as drama through action and language.



### Physical Development and Health

- Children will demonstrate control and coordination of large muscles of the body, arms, and legs for movement, navigation, and balance.
- Children will demonstrate control and coordination of small muscles of the hands and feet for such things as using utensils, self-care, building, writing, manipulation, and exploration.
  - Children will learn and practice health and safe habits.
- Children will demonstrate increasing independence with basic self-care skills.

# Transition

Transition is the opportunity for the parent and child to become familiar with the next educational placement that the child will be entering. The transition team discusses the overall child including health status, developmental level, and family goals, outcomes, and concerns. The home visitor will take the child prior to their third birthday to visit the Head Start classroom and the child may be enrolled in the ECFE summer programming. A child transition from Head Start to Kindergarten starts the first day they are in the Head Start classroom. Teachers prepare students and families for elementary education by discussing with the parents the child's developmental levels, gains made, and concerns to work on at home to ensure their child will successfully transition into kindergarten.

# Budget & Expenditures

90CI000139-01 | 01: 09/01/2024-8/31/2025 | Non-Competing Year Two Summary (includes COLA)

Program Type	Funded Enrollment	Federal			Non-Federal Share	Non-Federal Percentage	Total Budget
		Program Operations	TTA	Total			
AIAN Head Start	123	\$1,678,664	\$16,798	\$1,695,462	\$403,027	19.21%	\$2,098,489
AIAN Early Head Start	38	\$608,942	\$11,495	\$620,437	\$179,206	22.41%	\$799,643
<b>Total</b>	161	\$2,287,606	\$28,293	\$2,315,899	\$582,233	20.09%	\$2,898,132

# Most Recent Review Results

- Focus Area 2 (FA2) monitoring completed successfully in April 2021.
- Leadership/Governance/Management System review completed in April 2021 with no area of noncompliance.
- Comprehensive Services/School Readiness review conducted in April 2021 with no area of noncompliance.
- Environmental Health and Safety monitoring review conducted in April 2021.
- Fiscal/ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance) review conducted in April 2021 with no area of noncompliance.
- The financial audit of the White Earth Tribal Council Fiscal Year that ended September 30, 2023, indicated no significant finding or no deficiencies with the White Earth Nation Head Start Programs
- Focus Area 1 (FA1) monitoring completed in March 2025.