



SUWANNEE VALLEY 4CS

HEAD START / EARLY HEAD START



**As per Head Start Grant Application Instructions with Guidance
Version 3.01,**

**Suwannee Valley 4CS Annual Report is made available to the Public
via the
Suwannee Valley 4Cs website:**

<https://sv4cs.org/>

<https://sv4cs.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Annual-Report-for-FY-2024-Final.pdf>



SUWANNEE VALLEY 4CS

HEAD START / EARLY HEAD START



ANNUAL REPORT FY 2024

MISSION STATEMENT

To advance early childhood school readiness and family self-reliance by providing comprehensive services in a healthy, safe, nurturing, high quality learning environment that promotes education, professional development, family-community engagement and program excellence.



Committed to Providing Quality Comprehensive Services to Children and Families



Suwannee Valley Community Coordinated Child Care, Inc.

P. O. Box 2637 · Lake City, FL 32056-2637

(386) 754-2222 · Fax (386) 754-2220

Michele Ward, Executive Director

Board of Directors

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Dr. Tom Logan, Vice President
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Representative
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The staff of Suwannee Valley 4Cs is pleased to present our Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2024. As the grantee for HEAD START and EARLY HEAD START programs in Columbia, Hamilton, Lafayette and Suwannee counties, it is our privilege to share information with you regarding our programs.

From its inception in 1965, the purpose of the HEAD START program has been to promote school readiness by enhancing the social, physical and cognitive development of children through the provision of health, educational, nutritional, social, and other services.

Suwannee Valley 4Cs HEAD START offers a high quality early childhood program and access to comprehensive services for children, birth to age 5, of low income families.

Suwannee Valley 4Cs is committed to providing a high quality educational experience to every child. Research shows that children have a great capacity for learning during the years before they enter Kindergarten. Head Start children need and deserve the most effective early education possible.

We extend our appreciation to the many community members and parent volunteers who enhance our program services. We would also like to thank our Board of Directors and Policy Council for their generous commitment of time and service.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Ward
Executive Director



A United Way Participating Agency





Suwannee Valley 4Cs

ANNUAL REPORT

OCTOBER
2023

SEPTEMBER
2024



Information in this annual report is provided in accordance with the HEAD START for School Readiness Act of 2007 and includes the following:

- *Public and Private Funds*
- *Budget Information*
- *Number of Children & Families Served*
- *Average Monthly Enrollment*
- *Percentage of Eligible Children Served*
- *Federal Monitoring Review Results*
- *Financial Audit Results*
- *Percentage of Children Receiving Medical/Dental Exams*
- *Parent Involvement Activities*
- *School Readiness Goals and Kindergarten Preparation*

Findings from the most recent Community Assessment may be viewed online at sv4cs.org.

SUWANNEE VALLEY 4Cs believes that, supported by a high quality early childhood program and access to comprehensive services when needed, every parent has the potential to raise successful, happy and healthy children.

We believe that an environment that values and respects each family’s culture and strengths, and that supports and empowers families in areas of need, will produce children and families that are resilient, self-sufficient and successful.

We believe that our role is to provide a safe, healthy, nurturing environment in which each child can develop at his or her own rate, supported by developmentally appropriate materials and activities, and to provide support and empowerment to parents as they fulfill their role as their child’s primary and most important teachers.



HISTORY OF HEAD START

The Federal HEAD START program was launched in the summer of 1965 as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s “War on Poverty”. It was an eight-week summer program for low-income preschoolers designed to give them a “head start” in school and life. Since the beginning, it has been a comprehensive program that includes early childhood education, health and nutrition, social services, and parent education, and empowers parents to participate fully as decision-makers and effective advocates for their children and their community. In 2023, HEAD START served 778,420 children nationally.

Suwannee Valley 4Cs Funded Enrollment by County 2023 - 2024

County	Columbia		Hamilton		Lafayette	Suwannee
Location	Lake City	Ft. White	Jasper	Jennings	Mayo	Live Oak
HEAD START	74	17	17	17	17	72
EARLY HEAD START	72	-	24	16	-	48

Suwannee Valley 4Cs Enrollment Information 2023-2024

	HEAD START	EARLY HEAD START
Total Funded Enrollment	214	160
Total Number of Children and Families Served (Cumulative Enrollment)	277	254
% Average Monthly Enrollment	87%	85%

	HEAD START	EARLY HEAD START
% Income Eligible	24%	31%
% Receiving Public Assistance	68%	63%
% Foster / Homeless Children	3%	3%
% Over Income	5%	3%

Suwannee Valley 4Cs Location Information

Head Start

(serving children 3-5 years old)

Ft. White Learning Center
305 SW Dortch Street
Ft. White, Florida 32038

Live Oak Learning Center
843 SW Marymac Street
Live Oak, Florida 32064

Jennings Learning Center
1432 Turrett Avenue
Jennings, Florida 32053

Mayo Learning Center
1432 Turrett Avenue
Mayo, Florida 32066

Lake City Learning Center
258 SW Columbia Avenue
Lake City, Florida 32025

Early Head Start

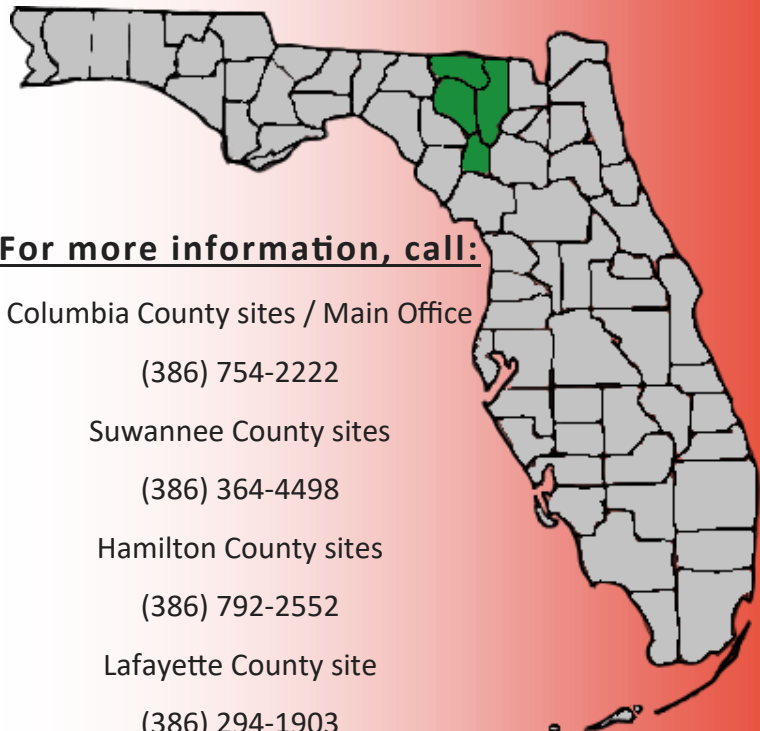
(serving children birth to 3 years old)

Azalea Park First Class
405 SW Walker Avenue
Live Oak, Florida 32060

Jennings Learning Center
1432 Turrett Avenue
Jennings, Florida 32053

Jasper Learning Center
1583 3rd Street NW
Jasper, Florida 32052

Lawton’s Place
878 NE Jackson Avenue
Lake City, Florida 32055



For more information, call:

Columbia County sites / Main Office

(386) 754-2222

Suwannee County sites

(386) 364-4498

Hamilton County sites

(386) 792-2552

Lafayette County site

(386) 294-1903

<http://www.sv4cs.org>

HEALTH, DISABILITIES AND NUTRITION SERVICES

H EAD START recognizes that every child must be healthy and well nourished to learn and grow to his or her full potential. Access to preventative health services are central to Head Start’s comprehensive array of services.

Early in the enrollment process, SUWANNEE VALLEY 4CS staff works with families to ensure they have an ongoing accessible source of health care - a “medical home.” Community partners help in this process. Our staff assists the family in making use of all available health resources and insurance.

SUWANNEE VALLEY 4CS program focuses on each child’s basic health needs as well as the healthy behaviors and practices that can prevent illness and enhance a child’s lifelong well-being. We recognize the importance of identifying and addressing health problems early in a child’s life so that learning and development is not hindered. Our program ensures children are up-to-date on a schedule of age appropriate preventative and primary health care which includes medical (up-to-date immunizations), dental and mental health.

In accordance with federal performance standards, screenings (dental, hearing, vision, speech, language) and risk assessments (anemia, lead, tuberculosis) are performed early in the school year to identify any health, developmental, sensory and behavioral concerns. Parents are notified of screening dates and invited to be present with their child. If follow-up is indicated, parents are advised and provided assistance in arranging for this care.

With a federal requirement of at least 10% of funded enrollment of children with disabilities, SUWANNEE VALLEY 4CS makes a special commitment to recruit young children with disabilities and provide an enriching and inclusive learning environment.

Nutrition and physical activity components are integrated into the curriculum to help promote lifelong healthy habits. Nutritious meals and snacks are served “family style” in each classroom. Opportunities are provided for parents to meet with nutritionists, attend nutrition workshops and receive referrals to local community nutrition resources when indicated.



233 (92%)
Early Head Start children
Up-to-date on a schedule of preventative
& primary care

249 (97%)
Head Start children
Up-to-date on a schedule of preventative
& primary care

253 (91%)
Head Start children
Who received a preventative dental exam



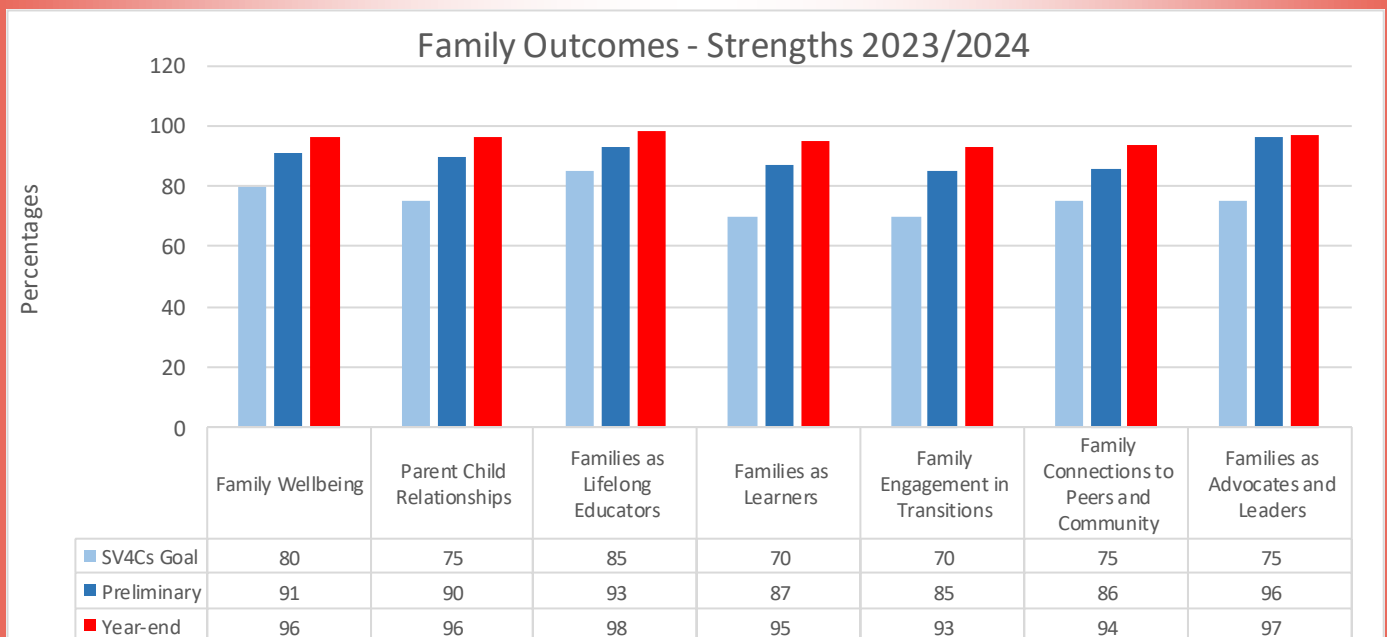
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT is an interactive process through which Suwannee Valley 4Cs staff and families, family members, and their children build positive and goal-oriented relationships. It is a shared responsibility of families and professionals that requires mutual respect for the roles and strengths each has to offer. Family engagement means doing

with—not doing to or for—families. At the program level, family engagement involves parents’ engagement with their children and with staff as they work together toward the goals that families choose for themselves and their children. It also involves families and staff working toward goals to improve the program. Head Start and Early Head Start staff work together with families, other professionals, and community partners in ways that promote equity, inclusiveness, and cultural and linguistic responsiveness. Children are at the heart of meaningful family engagement. They are the inspiration for positive, goal-oriented, parent-provider relationships.

Parents enter relationships with staff on their children’s behalf, and they deepen these relationships with their children in mind. They know their children better than anyone—their temperaments, personalities, strengths, vulnerabilities, talents, and special needs. They know their own cultures and what they want to transmit to their children. When parents share their knowledge, they improve Suwannee Valley 4Cs practices and program quality.

Head Start and Early Head Start staff create authentic partnerships with parents when they convey their eagerness to welcome parents’ expertise and their readiness to share the care. Parents can believe in the partnership when they feel the passion we share with them—for the quality of the child’s everyday experiences, for supporting the parent-child relationship, and for laying the foundations early for a thriving future.

Head Start and Early Head Start staff and community agencies build partnerships that honor and are responsive to the languages and cultures of the families they serve.





Parents are their child’s first and most valuable teacher. As a partner and advocate in their child’s education, parents are encouraged to assist their child’s teacher in setting school readiness goals and engage in curriculum-oriented at-home activities supplied by Suwannee Valley 4Cs.

At the beginning of each school year, during parent orientation, parents are encouraged to partner with the program by participating in parent workshops, Center Parent Committee meetings, Self-Assessment meetings, and by serving on the Policy Council or Health Services Advisory Committee.

Suwannee Valley 4Cs works closely with each family in the family partnership process to identify needs, interest, strengths, goals and services / resources that support family well-being that includes family safety, health and economic stability.



Parent and Family Activities included...

- Regular Parent Meetings
- Parenting Curriculum
- Policy Council Meetings
- Policy Council Orientation and Trainings *including ERSEA, Health Services, Family & Community Engagement, Education and Child Development Services, Program Governance, Fiscal*
- Parent Conferences
- Parent Orientation
- Parent/Child Take Home Curriculum Activities
- Health Services Advisory Meetings
- HS/EHS Transition Activities
- Self-Assessment Meetings (Program)
- Home Visits
- Meet Your Teacher Day
- Health Screening Events
- Community Job Fairs
- Community Health Events
- Community Baby Showers

PARENT WORKSHOPS...

- Budgeting and Financial Literacy
- Car Seat Safety
- Child Growth & Development
- Child Safety from Abuse
- Community Resources
- Domestic Violence Awareness
- Family Literacy
- First-time Home Buyer Class
- Healthy Living
- Nutrition
- Pediatric Oral Health
- Safe Baby Sleep, Healthy Infants!
- Stress and Mental Wellbeing
- Substance Abuse Awareness
- Tobacco Products, Effects of
- Transition to Kindergarten
- Transition from EHS to HS
- Work Readiness

Parents were assisted with...

- Case Management Services
- Crisis Intervention
- Community Resources
- Continuing Education
- Domestic Violence Intervention
- Family Goal Setting
- Food, Shelter, Clothing
- HEAD START Job Opportunities
- Housing Assistance
- Job Counseling / Training
- Leadership Opportunities
- Literacy / ESL Programs
- Medical / Dental Services
- Parenting Skills
- Substance Abuse Services
- Transportation
- Utilities Assistance

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT



SUWANNEE VALLEY 4CS **HEAD START / EARLY HEAD START** programs are designed to provide all children with a safe, nurturing, engaging, enjoyable, and secure learning environment, in order to help them gain the awareness, skills, and confidence necessary to succeed in their present environment, and to deal with later responsibilities in school and in life. Each child is treated as an individual in an inclusive community that values, respects, and responds to diversity. The varied experiences provided by the agency support the continuum of children's growth and development, which includes the physical, social, emotional, cognitive and language development of each child.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS, ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICES INCLUDE:

- ◆ Curriculum that offers various experiences and is grounded in best early childhood practices
- ◆ A variety of teaching techniques that allow for flexibility
- ◆ Maximizing children's teachable moments
- ◆ Planning activities for all developmental areas and curriculum domains
- ◆ Encouraging children to express their feelings and negotiate conflict
- ◆ Parent involvement in curriculum planning
- ◆ Staffing to keep child to staff ratios low
- ◆ Implementing curriculum / transition activities that ensure maximum developmental continuity for the children



SUWANNEE VALLEY 4CS addresses the child within the context of the family and partners with the parent, the child's first teacher, in providing the child's education. Parents support their child's education and development through assisting in the development of plans for progress and goal setting and using curriculum-oriented home activities with their child. Teachers conduct a minimum of two home visits and two (HS) or three (EHS) parent conferences each year. Home visits and parent conferences are valuable in building positive, respectful and productive relationships. Home visits are unique to Head Start and provide opportunities for making connections between home and school, identifying learning opportunities in the home environment and focusing attention on family strengths, interests and goals.

SCHOOL READINESS

Suwannee Valley 4Cs School Readiness Goals are broad statements that articulate high expectations for the progress children will attain by the end of the school year to be ready to succeed in kindergarten. The goals encompass social and emotional development, language and literacy, physical development and health, approaches to learning and cognitive development including math and science.

Suwannee Valley 4Cs School Readiness Goals are aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, Florida Early Learning and Development Standards (Birth – 4), Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Standards (Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for 4 yr olds), Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment indicators and local education agency expectations.

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

In order to achieve our established school readiness goals Suwannee Valley 4Cs has developed the following strategies for high quality teaching and learning:



- Use of evidence-based curricula (HS-Creative Curriculum for Preschool; EHS-Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos) and assessment (Teaching Strategies GOLD) align with school readiness goals;
- High quality teacher-child interactions to support children's

emotional and intellectual growth on a daily basis;

- Well organized learning environments, stimulating and purposeful materials and management skills that promote social-emotional development, guides appropriate behavior, and promotes active engagement in learning activities; and,
- Staff proficient in teaching the curriculum and school readiness skills within daily activities in a manner that is developmentally appropriate, meaningful to children and promotes skill acquisition and positive outcomes.

MEASURING PROGRESS THROUGH FORMAL ASSESSMENTS

Formal assessments are conducted three times each year for Head Start children; four times a year for Early Head Start. Individual data is reviewed with parents, and together with the child's teacher, parents develop a plan for progress and set goals for their child. Aggregate and individual data is reviewed and analyzed by component staff members in Child Outcomes meetings for each classroom after every assessment period. Recommendations from parents and the Child Outcomes meetings are used to implement progress plans and set goals for individual children and classrooms. Recommendations for overall program improvement based on group data are presented to the Policy Council and Board of Directors for approval. Assessment results for the Four-year-old group, comparing Fall and Spring are provided on the next page. Comparison data is shared with parents (through the Family Focus newsletter), and is presented at Policy Council and Board of Directors meetings.



The charts on the following page represent the Fall and Spring outcomes for all children and for 4-year-olds as a group compared with Suwannee Valley 4Cs School Readiness (SR) goals. School Readiness (SR) goals represent the expected levels of achievement by the end of the school year.

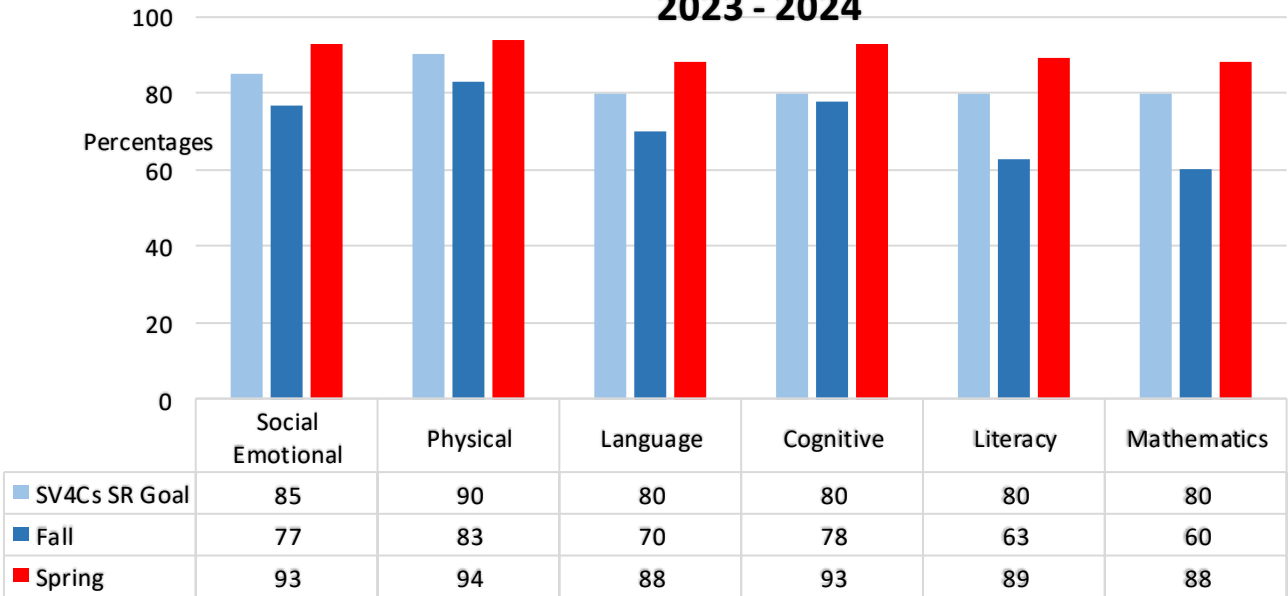


School Readiness Outcomes

Gains in children achieving developmental benchmarks

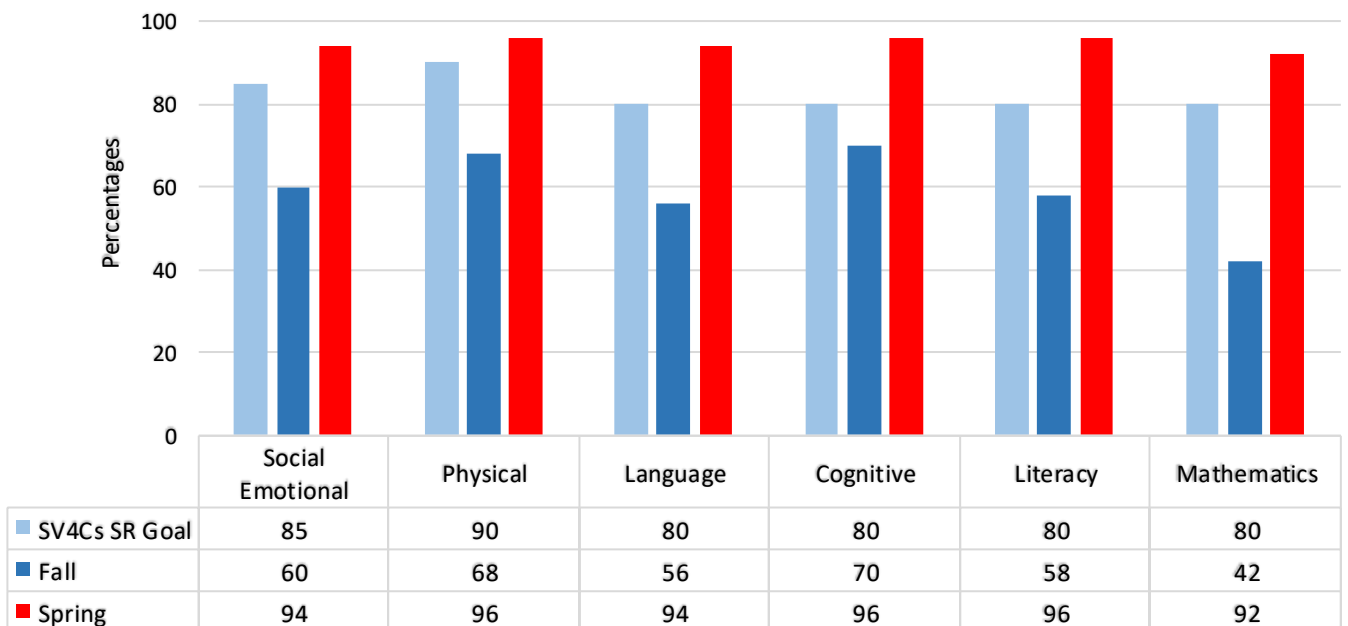
Child Outcomes - All Age Groups

2023 - 2024



Child Outcomes - Preschool 4 Year Olds

2023 - 2024



Goals Exceeded! For the 2023-2024 school year, 4-year-olds transitioning to Kindergarten exceeded SV4Cs School Readiness goals.

CLASS: CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT SCORING SYSTEM



The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®) is an observation instrument that assesses effective teacher-child interactions in infant, toddler and preschool classrooms and settings. The CLASS was designed to create a common metric and vocabulary that could be used to describe various aspects of effective teaching across children’s school experiences.

CLASS® dimensions are based on developmental theory and research suggesting that interactions between young children and caregivers are a primary way of supporting children's development and learning, and that effective, engaging interactions form the foundation for all learning in early childhood classrooms.

Suwannee Valley 4Cs’ Education Leadership and Support Team are all trained and certified CLASS observers in order to provide high quality support, guidance and training for teachers. Certified CLASS observers conduct classroom observations rating each dimension on a 7-point scale, from low to high.



Score	Range	Description
1-2	Low	Low quality or lack of teacher-child interactions. Classrooms in which there is poor management of behavior, teaching that is rote, or that lack interaction between teachers and children.
3-5	Mid	Classrooms that show a mix of effective interactions with periods when interactions are not effective or are absent.
6-7	High	Highly effective teacher-child interactions are consistently observed throughout the observation period.

USING CLASS DATA TO GUIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & PROGRAM PLANNING

Suwannee Valley 4Cs utilizes the CLASS scores for professional development and program planning. The CLASS observer provides teachers with direct feedback about their actual classroom practices. Teachers are given an objective and concrete measurement of areas of strength and weakness as well as improvements over the course of the year. CLASS allows our program to identify system wide strengths and develop plans for training and assistance in areas of weakness.

The following table compares Suwannee Valley 4Cs results with national grantee-level domain scores.

Office of Head Start CLASS® Descriptive Statistics National Distribution of Grantee-Level Domain Scores for 2020 (on a 7 point scale for each domain)				
Domain	Suwannee Valley 4Cs Spring 2024	2020 National Averages (Mean)	Office of Head Start Quality Thresholds	Office of Head Start Competitive Thresholds
Emotional Support	6.75	6.03	6.00	5.00
Classroom Organization	6.35	5.78	6.00	5.00
Instructional Support	4.66	2.94	3.00	2.30

VPK AND KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION

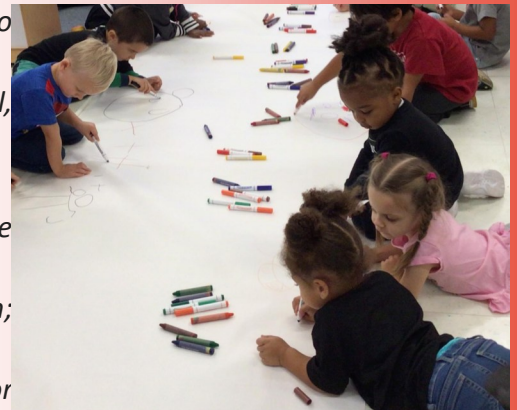


Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK), created to prepare 4-year-olds for Kindergarten, is a state-funded program coordinated in our service area through the Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Gateway. Kindergarten transition begins early in the school year at Suwannee Valley 4Cs.

Throughout the program year, teachers share information with parents during informal daily communication, parent conferences and home visits regarding their child's progress to ensure they are prepared for a successful transition to kindergarten. Parents with children transitioning to Kindergarten are provided with the "Head Start to Kindergarten" Fall Transition Booklet; and "Get Ready for K through Play." This informational booklet is given to parents in Fall of the child's preschool year. The booklet highlights topics such as the importance of daily routine, attendance, preparing for parent conferences, developmental milestones for their 4 year old, kindergarten readiness skills, and easy to do activities for the

child at home. In the Spring, the Education Team holds "Transition to Kindergarten," workshops at each center. A local school Kindergarten teacher or representative attends the workshops to answer parent's questions, provide pertinent information, and ease concerns for a smooth transition. Parents are provided with a Transition Activity bag that includes school readiness activities and tools for continuation of learning over the summer along with an informational booklet, "Suwannee Valley 4Cs Head Start to Kindergarten Transition Booklet; Getting Ready for Kindergarten." that shares information regarding...

- *Importance of Attendance;*
- *Tips for parents to help their child make the change from Head Start to Kindergarten;*
- *Documentation information (e.g. birth certificate, shot record/physical, etc.) the parent will need to register the child for kindergarten;*
- *Registration dates, times, school location;*
- *Information the parents can use to be an advocate for their child in the public school system;*
- *Skills their child will be expected to know when entering kindergarten;*
- *and,*
- *Activities the parent and child can do at home to prepare them for kindergarten.*



Collaboration between Head Start and local public school Kindergarten teachers to ensure continuity of curricular objectives has been very successful. Suwannee Valley 4C's Director of Education meets with local Kindergarten teachers annually, when possible. This meeting allows school system staff to review Suwannee Valley 4Cs transition booklets provided to parents and make any changes or additions. At the end of each school year, our program provides the receiving Kindergarten teacher individual child portfolios that consist of assessment data, behavioral, and an informational form that shares the child's temperament, guidance strategies and how the family wants to be involved in the school. The feedback from local teachers on the collaboration, our program and staff has been overwhelmingly positive.

During the 2023-2024 school year, Suwannee Valley 4Cs Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) services were provided to 36 children extending services to 5:00 p.m. for participating children.

SV4Cs FINANCIAL INFORMATION

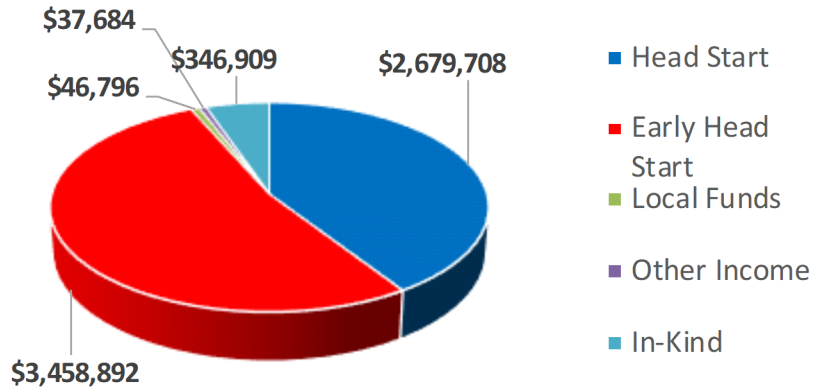
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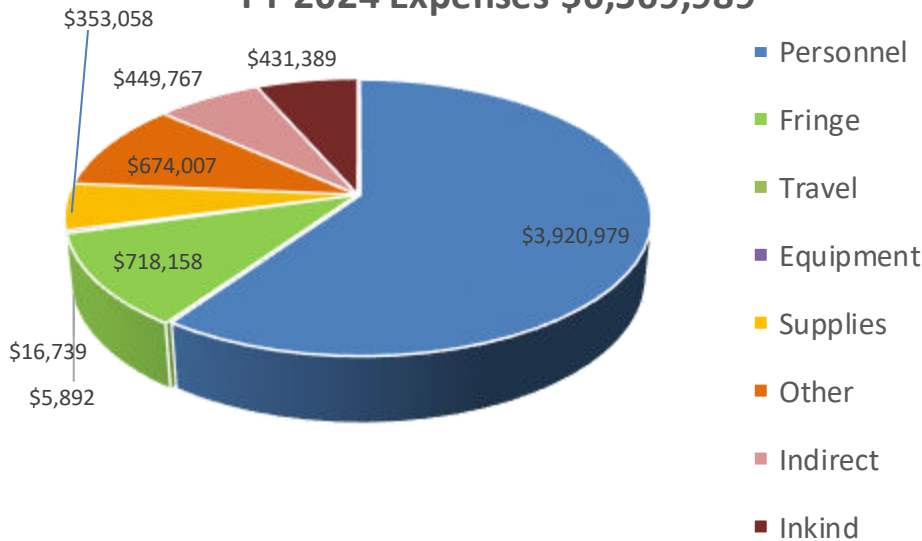
SUWANNEE VALLEY 4Cs received public and private funds to support our program. The following is a breakdown of the revenues received.

Head Start	\$	2,679,708
Early Head Start	\$	3,458,892
Local Funds	\$	46,796
Other Income	\$	37,684
In-Kind	\$	346,909
	\$	6,569,989

FY 2024 Revenue \$6,569,989



FY 2024 Expenses \$6,569,989



Independent Audit

In addition to our regular agency reviews and internal monitoring, an independent audit is conducted annually.

The most recent audit was conducted by James Moore & Co. for the period ending September 30, 2024. This audit reflected full compliance with applicable standards and regulations - no findings.

A complete copy of the audit is available upon request.

SV4Cs FY 2025 Proposed Budget Information

	<u>Head Start</u>	<u>Early Head Start</u>	<u>Total</u>
Personnel	1,543,555	2,425,911	3,969,466
Fringe Benefits	338,254	462,243	800,497
Travel	3,986	7,371	11,357
Supplies	78,772	91,181	169,953
Other	367,760	415,046	782,806
Indirect	189,065	275,918	464,983
In-Kind	172,024	60,441	232,465
TOTAL	<u>2,693,416</u>	<u>3,738,111</u>	<u>6,431,527</u>

External Reviews

Federal Review by the Secretary of Health and Human Services



The most recent federal review of SUWANNEE VALLEY 4Cs HEAD START and EARLY HEAD START programs was the Focus Area Two Review conducted in the December 2023 with no findings.