



Riverside Early Head Start

A SERVICE OF RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY CARE

Annual Report 2025

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Mission Statements

Riverside Community Care Mission Statement

To make a difference in the lives of individuals, families, and communities through innovative and compassionate community-based behavioral healthcare and human services.

We believe that—

- Excellence is critical in everything we do.
- Quality care should be available to all.
- A diverse and respectful workforce is essential.
- Technology is critical to improving access and expanding our impact.
- Public policy advocacy in behavioral healthcare and human services is our responsibility.
- **Hope is a foundational element of our work.**

Riverside Early Head Start Mission Statement

To promote the health, well-being, social-emotional growth, and cognitive development of young children and to support the self-empowerment of families.

Riverside Early Head Start Program Goals 2022–2027

The program will *partner with expert organizations* to build sustainable economic and training pathways which strengthen *family well-being, economic mobility, and financial literacy*.

The program will recruit, retain, and develop qualified staff to serve and promote industry *Trauma Informed Care, Inclusionary, and Diversity best practices, which support measurable improvements to children and families' social-emotional, cognitive, and physical well-being*.

The program will continue to *develop, structure, and utilize* strong management systems (and processes) to ensure *measurable, responsive, and individualized* outcomes for children and families.

The program will *partner with the community and enrolled families* to foster *environments and shared learning experiences that support developing and employing* child development domain capacity and appropriate school readiness support within *home and community environments*.

Director's Corner

Dear parents, community members, and partners,

As we reflect on the past year, it is impossible to do so without acknowledging how profoundly challenging 2025 was for both our staff and the families we serve. It was a year marked by significant strain — emotionally, professionally, and personally. Many of our staff navigated increased demand while supporting families facing heightened uncertainty, stress, and complex needs. At the same time, the families in our program encountered growing barriers, including economic hardship, instability, and limited access to consistent support.

Through it all, the resilience and dedication shown by our staff were extraordinary. They continued to show up each day with compassion, flexibility, and unwavering commitment to our mission, even in moments when resources were stretched thin and the work felt especially heavy. Likewise, the strength and perseverance of the families we serve have been both humbling and inspiring.

We recognize that surviving a difficult year is not enough. As we move forward, we are intentionally shifting our focus toward recovery, sustainability, and stronger support systems for everyone in our community.

This year, Riverside Early Head Start is committed to strengthening staff support and well-being, deepening family engagement and responsiveness, expanding access to resources, fostering stability and consistency, and centering community voice:

While these challenges are ongoing, with the continued support of agency leadership, Riverside Early Head Start remains committed and determined to continue serving the community in a way that is more sustainable, more responsive, and more supportive for everyone involved.

Thank you for your continued partnership, trust, and commitment to this important work.

With gratitude,

Emilie Laforest
Program Director

Financial Statements

Total Amount of Public and Private Funds Received (A)

Department of Health and Human Services, Administration of Children and Families:
Office of Head Start:

Annual Grant Award: \$1,635,781.00
Cost of Living Adjustment: \$37,714.00

Department of Early Education and Care, State Supplemental Grant:
Head Start State Collaboration Office:

Annual Grant Award: \$161,001.00

Budgetary Projections & Expenditures (B)

Description	Total Budget Federal	20% Non-Federal Share	Actual Expenditures
A. Personnel	\$1,044,783	\$94,784	\$909,783
B. Fringe Benefits	\$199,914	\$16,707	\$188,996
C. Travel: T&TA	\$4,000	\$0	\$8,659
D. Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0
E. Supplies	\$42,796	\$0	\$51,472
F. Contractual	\$29,216	\$6,840	\$15,665
G. Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0
H. Other	\$148,250	\$248,347	\$238,242
Other T & TA	\$26,931	<u>\$35,596</u>	<u>\$52,379</u>
I. Total Direct Charges	\$1,495,890	\$402,274	\$1,465,196
J. Indirect Charges	<u>\$177,605</u>	<u>\$16,100</u>	<u>\$188,176</u>
K. TOTALS	<u>\$1,673,495</u>	\$418,374	\$1,653,372
Federal Funding	\$1,673,495		\$1,653,372
NFS Match	<u>\$418,374</u>		<u>\$264,192</u>
Totals	<u>\$2,091,869</u>		<u>\$1,917,564</u>

Program Cumulative Enrollment (C)

During the 2024-2025 program year, REHS served *124 children*, with nearly 70% of enrolled children being under 2 years of age and under, along with *14 pregnant women*. Extensive ongoing efforts are in place to monitor and ensure success in this area. The program continues to utilize the Program Support Specialist-Home Visitor Child Development Associate (PSS-HVCDA) training created in accordance with the Head Start Performance Standards and functions to recruit and retain new qualified employees to become home visitors. This position serves as the liaison between the Riverside Early Head Start (REHS) program and families with infants or toddlers, or pregnant women to whom they are assigned. The Program Support Specialist-HVCDA is trained and has completed the required Home Visitor Child Development Associate credential requirements within the program's orientation period of 6 months and ensured appropriate credentialing of Early Head Start Home Visitor requirements.

Secretary Review and Financial Audit (D)

No formal review from the Secretary occurred during this reporting period.

Financial audit: FY25 results show a small deficit for the year, with the formal date of June 30, 2025.

Auditors: Audit by CliftonLarsonAllen LLP found no material weakness or significant deficiencies identified throughout the extensive agency audit.

A Focus Area 2 (FA2) Federal Monitoring Review was conducted in May 2025. Although the overall review was positive, two findings were identified. One finding was an Area of Deficiency in that the program did not obtain an oral health determination within 90 days of children being enrolled in the program. The second finding was an Area of Non-Compliance, where not all enrolled children obtained hearing and vision screenings at enrollment. The program has since completed and submitted its plan to address these findings. As of March 2026, the program received a letter from the Office of Head Start confirming that both findings have been corrected.

Medical and Dental Exams for Enrolled Children (E)

REHS children and prenatal families continue to receive appropriate support in accessing and securing medical, dental, immunizations, sensory and developmental services. Medical homes and access to medical coverage for all children have been identified, 73% dental homes, and 76% up to date Well-Checks.

Parent Engagement Activities (F)

In partnership with Cambridge Saving Bank, the program continues to offer a yearly 5-part Financial Literacy Training series to parents. The series prioritized parental skill building and exposure to core financial services. Training session topics included *Financial Services 101*; *Asset Building*; *Fraud Prevention*; and *Sustainable Fiscal Planning* and Job interviewing.

The Program's Policy Council members continue to actively engage with program planning and grant funding proposals. With the support and input of all, we submitted, and we were awarded ongoing funding through our 5-Year grant application.

The Program offered two Family Summer Fun events, one at the Louis A. DePasquale Universal Design Playground at Danehy Park in Cambridge and one at Grimmons Park in Somerville, to ensure accessibility and participation of families. These outdoor celebrations were well attended by children, family members, friends, and community members. The children enjoyed the water sprinkler, water toys, face painting, and snacks.



In the Fall, the program welcomed families to the second clothing swap that was hosted in partnership with Temple B'nai Brit in Somerville, which invited us to utilize their indoor space. Families, Riverside employees, and community partners donated an abundance of clothes. Families attended and were able to shop for clothes. We were also able to open it up and offer other community agencies to come and shop, continuing our partnerships and collaboration with the community.

School Readiness (G)

School readiness at Riverside Early Head Start is the ongoing process of supporting children from prenatal through age three in developing the social, emotional, physical, language, cognitive, and learning foundations needed for success in preschool and beyond. Through individualized, relationship-based services and strong partnerships with families who are recognized as children's first teachers, the program promotes healthy development and school readiness in alignment with The Head Start Program Performance Standards.

Riverside Early Head Start monitors children's development using developmentally appropriate screening and assessment tools, including the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), in alignment with the Head Start Program Performance Standards.



Comparison of the November 2024 and July 2025 DRDP assessment periods reflects stable, age-appropriate development across all domains. Minimal observable change between these assessment windows is expected, as the data represent cross-sectional group snapshots rather than longitudinal progress of the same children due to enrollment changes and transitions. Program-level school readiness outcomes, however, demonstrate meaningful progress over longer assessment periods. As shown below, most children met or exceeded school readiness expectations across all domains by Spring, with notable gains for both two- and three-year-olds in social-emotional development, physical development and health, language and communication, and approaches to learning, and cognition. In accordance with 45 CFR §1302.32 and §1302.102, assessment data are used to individualize services, partner with families on goal setting, and guide continuous program improvement to support children’s readiness for preschool and future learning.



Developmental Domain	Goal	% of Two-Year-Olds Who Met/Exceeded Expectations	% of Three-Year-Olds Who Met/Exceeded Expectations
Social-Emotional	Manage emotions with the support of familiar adults	Winter 75% Spring 86%	Winter 67% Spring 77%
Physical	Begin to learn and practice healthy and safe habits	Winter 85% Spring 86%	Winter 67% Spring 87%
Language & Communication	Use increasingly complex and varied language for conversations and communication	Winter 76% Spring 85%	Winter 67% Spring 78%
Approaches to Learning	Develop strategies to make discoveries and solve problems using creativity, persistence, and imagination	Winter 77% Spring 86%	Winter 67% Spring 77%
Cognition	Develop emerging mathematical skills and knowledge	Winter 76% Spring 79%	Winter 67% Spring 77%

REHS — MASSAIMH Endorsement

MASSAIMH

REHS continues to work collaboratively with the Massachusetts Association for Infant Mental Health (MassAIMH) to support staff in obtaining their Infant Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Endorsement Credentials based on their experience working with children and families. MassAIMH is a non-profit interdisciplinary, professional statewide organization established to promote and support the optimal development of infants, young children, and families through relationship-focused workforce development and advocacy efforts. “MassAIMH Endorsement is an international credential that provides recognition of specialized knowledge and expertise for professionals working with or on behalf of families with infants and young children (birth-6).” As of January 2026, all REHS employees have received their Infant Family Associate (IFA) endorsement certificate. MASSAIMH continues to work with the management team through the reflective part of the endorsement process.

We recognize the vital importance of the foundational early development years and that families need and deserve the support necessary to nurture their children. Like you, we are providers and professionals serving young children and families and are dedicated to promoting healthy social and emotional development in the earliest stages and relationships of life.

MASSAIMH Mission Statement

- To promote family and infant and early childhood social and emotional well-being as foundational to development.
- Enhance and link specialized training, research, policy, advocacy, and preventive and therapeutic intervention through collaboration across systems, disciplines, and providers.

Brazelton Touchpoints Center

Brazelton is a non-profit organization based in Boston, MA, originally founded by pediatrician T. Berry Brazelton, MD. They are part of the Developmental Medicine division at Boston Children’s Hospital, a Harvard Medical Teaching School. The center focuses on early childhood development and family support. They offer workshops, courses of coaching for professionals who work with families and young children — including educators, health providers, social workers, and community leaders. Members of our management team and Home Visitors attended several workshops that helped to expand understanding of child and family development, improve how we engage with families, and promote practices and policies that strengthen families and child developmental systems.

Brazelton Touchpoints Center Mission Statement

To partner with family-facing providers, researchers, advocates, policymakers, and their institutions to listen to and amplify the unheard voices of babies, children, and families, and to co-create with them practical, incremental solutions to the challenges they express.

Throughout the year, REHS collaborates with Brazelton touchpoints to offer appropriate training to our staff that align with early childhood development and reflective practices.

Annual Report: Head Start 2007 Act

Head Start 2007 Act Compliance Statement

This annual report has been prepared in compliance with the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007. The Act Section 644 (2) states that: “Each Head Start agency shall make available to the public a report published at least once in each fiscal year that discloses the following information from the recently concluded fiscal year, except that reporting such information shall not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual child or parent:

- A. The total amount of public and private funds received and the amount from each source.
- B. An explanation of budgetary expenditures and proposed budget for the fiscal year.
- C. The total number of children and families served, the average monthly enrollment (as a percentage of funded enrollment), and the percentage of eligible children served.
- D. The results of the most recent review by the Secretary and the financial audit.
- E. The percentage of enrolled children who received medical and dental exams.
- F. Information about parent involvement activities.
- G. The agency’s efforts to prepare children for kindergarten.
- H. Any other information required by the Secretary.