

## **Children with Disabilities**

Our Head Start Program covers seven counties in Southwest Tennessee. The counties are as follows: Chester, Decatur, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, and McNairy. The Southwest Head Start Program has an annually updated contract with each Local Education Agency in our service area and we work collaboratively with the LEA throughout the year.

The Head Start Program also works with other outside agencies in each county as deemed necessary. In our service area, there has been an increase by the LEA's in the number of pre-school classrooms. Since the LEA's are now providing pre-school for four year olds, it has proven to have an impact on the number of disability children in Head Start. In comparing the disabilities reports from the LEA's and Head Start from last year, the number of disabled children in the LEA's has decreased by 37 while the number of disabled children in the Head Start Program has decreased by 6. In the past, Head Start identified approximately 80 children with a disability yearly, whereas in the past two (2) years we have identified between 37 and 65 children with disabilities. The following is a report of the number of Pre-School/Kindergarten children identified by the local school systems at the time of this update. Also included is a report of the number of Head Start children identified as having a disability at the time of this update.

**Chester County-** The Chester County School system reports having 35 disabled Pre-School/Kindergarten children. Our Head Start program reports having a total of 4 disabled children (speech) enrolled in the Chester County Head Start centers.

**Decatur County-** The Decatur County School system reports having 70 disabled Pre-School/Kindergarten children. Our Head Start program reports having a total of 11 disabled children (speech) enrolled in the Decatur County Head Start centers.

**Hardeman County-** The Hardeman County School system reports having 105 disabled Pre-School/Kindergarten children. Our Head Start program reports having a total of 15 disabled children (speech) enrolled in the Hardeman County Head Start centers.

**Hardin County-** The Hardin County School system reports having 69 disabled Pre-School/Kindergarten children. Our Head Start program reports having a total of 4 disabled children (speech) enrolled in the Hardin County Head Start centers.

**Haywood County-** The Haywood County School system reports having 83 disabled Pre-School/Kindergarten children. Our Head Start program reports having a total of 10 disabled children (speech) enrolled in the Haywood County Head Start centers.

**Henderson County-** The Henderson County School system reports having 53 disabled Pre-School/Kindergarten children. Our Head Start program reports having a total of 6 disabled children (speech) enrolled in the Henderson County Head Start centers.

**McNairy County-** The McNairy County School system reports having 116 disabled Pre-School/Kindergarten children. Our Head Start program reports having a total of 9 disabled children enrolled in the McNairy County Head Start centers.

## **Services provided by Community Service Agencies serving children with disabilities within the Southwest Head Start seven county areas**

Our ChildFind process begins November of each year. Letters are sent to various agencies seeking referrals on 4 and 3 years old children with disabilities. Family Case Managers do follow-ups by way of office visits, phone contacts and mailing out flyers. Flyers are also given out during door to door recruitment of children. To further secure placement of disability children into the Head Start program written partnerships agreements are kept up to date with the LEA, Tennessee Early Intervention System, Tennessee Infants and Parents Services, Department of Children Services, etc.

The following agencies provided the estimated data to confirm the number of 4, 3 and under the age of 3 years old children with disabilities whom they presently serve. The types of disabilities reflect those of children who are presently being served at the present time. Various agencies have reported that they have had a slight decline in the number of 4 years old and younger children being served. Some reasons being mothers who use more preventive care during prenatal stages to parents having a larger scope of agencies to choose from when searching for an agency to provide services to their child. Each agency's number of children being served and types of disabilities changes from year to year. **\*Note: Counties that are not listed under the various agencies had no children being served at this time. The data listed below may also include children who receive services from two or more of these agencies.**

### **Tn. Early Intervention System:**

Provides educational services for children birth to 3 years old with a developmental delay. Offers developmental screening to all children ages birth to three regardless of income levels. TEIS serves a total of 9 counties taking in the 7 counties served by Head Start. A total of 260 children are being served, with all children having a disability documented as Developmentally Delayed at this time.

**3 Years old County Preschools for children with Developmental Delays:**

Provides intense classroom services for children with special needs. These children must meet the criteria of having a specific learning disability, speech or language impairments, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, other health impairment, multiple impairments, hearing impairments, orthopedic impairment, autism, visual impairments, traumatic brain injury, developmental delay, blindness, or deafness. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides the federal funds for these classes.

COUNTY	No. of classes	No. served	Types of disabilities
CHESTER	1	12	Developmental Delayed(6) Language Impaired(2) Other Impaired (1) Autism(3)
DECATUR	1	10	Developmental Delayed(1) Speech/Language(9)
HARDEMAN	2	18	Developmental Delayed(6) Language Impaired(2) Speech(10)
HARDIN	2	5	Autism(1) Developmental Delayed(1) Language impaired(2) Speech impaired(1)
HAYWOOD	3	17	Developmental Delayed(11) Speech/Language(5) Other(1)
HENDERSON	3	4	Autism(1) Speech Impaired(1) Developmental Delayed(2)
MCNAIRY	2	17	Developmental Delayed(8) Speech(8) Language(1)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>83</b>	
<b>TOTAL SERVED 83</b>			

During the 09-10 program year Head Start served the following number of children with disabilities as of January 2009.

COUNTY	4 yrs.	3 yrs.	Types of disabilities
CHESTER	4	0	4 Speech/Language
DECATUR	4	7	11 Speech/Language
HARDEMAN	9	5	14 Speech/Language
HARDIN	2	2	4 Speech/Language
HAYWOOD	3	7	10 Speech/Language
HENDERSON	3	5	8 Speech/Language.
MCNAIRY	3	6	9 Speech/Language 1 Development
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>32</b>	
<b>TOTAL SERVED 60</b>			

**Pathways:**

Provides mental health and substance abuse treatment services for Haywood and Henderson Counties.

	<u>4 yrs. old</u>	<u>3 yrs. old</u>	<u>under 3</u>	<u>Types of disabilities</u>
No. of children served	23	3	0	Attention Deficit Disorder, Adjustment Disorder, Disruptive Behavior Disorder
<b>TOTAL SERVED</b>	<b>26</b>			

**McNairy Co. Counseling Center:**

Provides mental health outpatient counseling for adults and children, case management services, & medical clinic services for ages 6 and older.

	<u>4 yrs. old</u>	<u>3 yrs. old</u>	<u>under 3</u>	<u>Types of disabilities</u>
No. of children served	4	0	0	Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, Adjustment Disorder
<b>TOTAL SERVED</b>	<b>4</b>			

**West Tn. School for the Deaf:**

Provides a total communication environment for students with emphasis on the use of signed English, finger spelling, speech, gestures and pantomime. Services also include impedance testing, hearing aid/auditory trainer analysis and ear mold impressions. The service area include all 7 counties served by the Southwest Head Start program.

	<u>4 yrs. old</u>	<u>3 yrs. old</u>	<u>under 3</u>	<u>Types of disabilities</u>
No. of children served	2	9	0	Deaf
<b>TOTAL SERVED</b>	<b>11</b>			

**Star Center:**

A resource and training center dedicated to ensuring that all individuals with disabilities or other special needs reach their potentials. Evaluation and training provided in the areas of vision, mobility, augmentative communication, art and music therapy. The service area include all 7 counties served by the Southwest Head Start program.

	<u>4 yrs. old</u>	<u>3 yrs. old</u>	<u>under 3</u>
No. of children served	11	6	21
Types of disabilities:	Autism(1) Prematurity(1) Glaucoma(1) Brain(1) Cerebral Palsy(2) Seizure Disorder(1)	Speech(3) Dev. Delay(3) Down Syndrome(1) Hydrocephalus(2) Down Syndrome(1) Unknown(1)	Visual(16) Occular Albinism(1) Cataracts(2) Prematurity(4) Schizencephaly(1)
<b>TOTAL SERVED</b>	<b>38</b>		

### LEA PreK:

The state PreK Program provides early childhood education services to four-year-old "at-risk" children. At-risk children include children with disabilities, students in state custody, children who qualify for the Free or Reduced Price Lunch Program and those children who are considered the underserved population. The funding sources are provided by The Tennessee Office of Early Learning and the Tennessee Lottery revenues.

Based on the data collected children who are age eligible for Head Start and have a disability are being served many times by agencies that can provide services specific to the child's special needs and in many cases giving the child more one on one educational hours. Over the past two years the seven counties that we serve has opened 48 PreK classrooms, in addition to the twelve three years old preschool classes for children with special needs. The increase of preK and special needs preschool classes has caused the number of disability children served by our Head Start program to decline by as much as one third of the diagnosed children we have served in the past.

The increase of PreK classrooms across our seven county Head Start programs not only affected the number of disability children our program serve but it has had a great impact on the number of 4 yrs. old children being served in our program. In the past years Head Start's enrollment was comprised of at least 85% or more 4 yrs. old children. Since the opening of PreK classes, Head Start percentages of 4 yrs. old children has been steadily dropping. 55% of our children enrolled are 4 years old at the present time. In order to reach the Federal Mandate of full enrollment we are now serving more 3 yrs. old children. The percentage of 3 yrs. old children served by our Head Start program has risen from 25% to a present 45%. Many families have chosen PreK over Head Start due to the conveniences of sending their Head Start age child to the same school system as other siblings in the household, being provided longer hours and more days of service in the school system and in some cases receiving transportation. Our recourse is to provide services that or equal to PreK services. This could include extending Head Start service hours from 1:30 in the afternoons to 2:30 or longer, and in some areas collaborating with PreK classes that would offer parents the opportunity to receive services for their child from both programs in a classroom setting. Presently we have one PreK partnership in our Chester county center. The coming program year we will need to incorporate some of these options.