

# Summit County Early Head Start & Head Start Community Assessment



**2024**

An assessment of current trends and issues impacting early childhood education in Summit County within a local and state context.

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# Summit County Early Head Start and Head Start Community Assessment

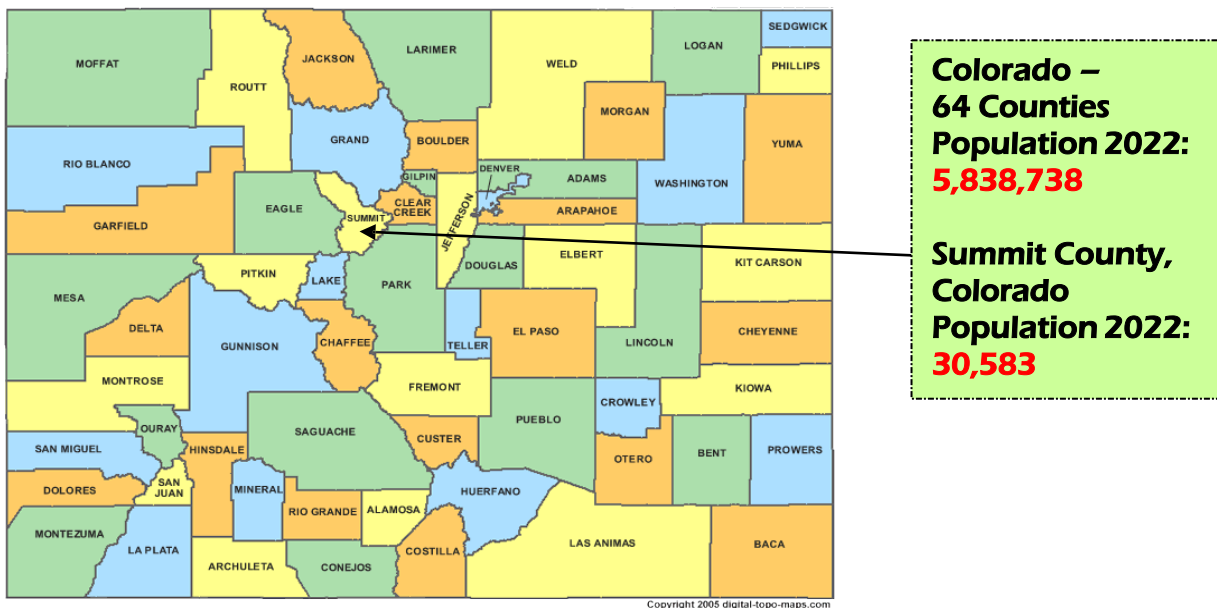
## I. Introduction

### General Area Description

Summit County is nestled in the Colorado Rockies, approximately 70 miles west of Denver. The County is comprised of seven municipalities—Blue River, Breckenridge, Dillon, Frisco, Keystone, Montezuma, and Silverthorne. Breckenridge is the largest town, with a population of 4,930 in 2022, followed by Silverthorne (4,773), Frisco (2,796), and Dillon (1,031). Blue River and Montezuma each had a population of fewer than 1,000 residents in 2022. (Keystone is a newly incorporated municipality and population data for this town is not yet available but is included in the data set for unincorporated Summit County). Overall, these seven municipalities account for 47% of the county's residents. The remaining 53% live in unincorporated areas.

Summit County is a popular tourist destination, with an estimated 2 overnight visitors per resident in busy months (e.g., July). Snow and outdoor recreation became business in Summit County when Arapahoe Basin Ski area opened its slopes in 1946. With the opening of Breckenridge Ski area in 1961, Keystone Resort in 1970, and Copper Mountain in 1972, "The Summit" became one of the greatest destination ski areas in the nation and was coined "Colorado's Playground". Today, the tourism industry is growing and continues to dominate economic activity in the county. Tourism impacts the community in different ways, creating economic stimulation as well as contributing to significant wealth and housing disparities.

**Figure 1: Colorado and Summit County Population**



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## **Program History & Service Delivery Area**

Summit Head Start 0-5 (HS0-5) is federally funded to serve 60 children ages prenatal-5 years from low-income families in Summit County, Colorado. HS0-5 includes three programs: Head Start (HS), Early Head Start (EHS), and the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Program (EHS-CCP).

- 35 HS children are enrolled in 14 classrooms throughout the service delivery area;
- 13 EHS children are enrolled in 13 classrooms throughout the service delivery area;
- 11 EHS-CCP slots are also allocated in EHS classrooms throughout the service delivery area;
- 1 prenatal mother and child are enrolled

Summit County Government (SCG) is the grantee for the Head Start and Early Head Start slots. SCG holds all legal and fiscal responsibility for implementation and operation of the Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The Summit Board of County Commissioner (BOCC) serves as the governing board. The Board of Early Childhood Options (ECO) and Policy Council, made up of HS0-5 parents as well as community members, serves as an advisory committee to the BOCC.

In 2016, HS0-5 began a partnership with Clayton Early Learning, a Denver-based early childhood organization, to serve 11 Early Head Start (EHS) children through an Early Head Start Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) grant. The Clayton Early Learning Board and Policy Council are the governing entities for these 11 slots.

## **Program Structure – The Partnership**

***Summit County Government (SCG)*** - In addition to its role as the grantee and as a program partner for HS and EHS, it is the County's Finance office that compiles the SF-269 and PMS- 272 Reports and reimburses partners for program expenses incurred. The County Attorney's office provides legal guidance and service when needed. Through its Department of Public Health, SCG provides a Public Health Nurse who serves as the HS05 Health Consultant. Public Health also employs a WIC dietician who serves as the program's nutritional consultant.

***Summit School District (SSD)*** delivers the Head Start early education program through 6 classrooms at four separate elementary school sites. The Head Start instructional and special education staff, including teachers, teacher assistants and the district Early Childhood Coordinator, are employees of the School District. The Early Childhood Coordinator also serves as the Head Start Disabilities Coordinator (Part C).

Summit School District also provides facilities, nutrition and transportation services. Support health services are provided through school nurses, counselors, and the School Psychologist. 22 students are currently served through Head Start at Silverthorne Elementary (SVE), Upper Blue Elementary (UBE), Frisco Elementary (FRE), and Dillon Valley Elementary (DVE). Given the mountain topography of Summit County, this delivery mechanism enables the program to be most responsive to the needs and constraints of the families served and raises the quality of care and programming for all kids at these sites.

***Early Childhood Options (ECO)*** – A private non-profit agency, ECO employs the HS0-5 Director and Program Manager, a Family Engagement Specialist, an Eligibility and Enrollment Specialist, an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant, a Health Services Coordinator and a Data Coordinator.

***ECO History*** - In 2000, a diverse group of more than 30 people representing childcare, the school district, local government, the medical community, large and small business, and parents came together to “develop a responsive, efficient system of child care where high-quality supply meets demand over time.” After much discussion and research, the planning group produced a strategic plan which, among other recommendations, urged that a sub-group immediately undertake a needs assessment process for Head Start in anticipation of the opportunity to apply for funding in 2001 or 2002. Additionally, the strategic plan called for the creation of a community-based governing structure to oversee critical early childhood care and education issues in the community. At this point in time, the Summit County Child Care Resource & Referral Agency became known as Early Childhood Options (ECO).

Current ECO Board representation includes a County Commissioner, the School District Superintendent, A County Assistant Manager, a representative from a local Mental Health organization, a Town Manager, and community business leaders.

***Community Based Childcare Centers*** - ECO has been designated by all Head Start partners as the entity to carry out the implementation of the HS0-5 program and is responsible for implementing the community childcare center agreements with four non-profit childcare facilities:

- Lake Dillon Preschool provides full day, full year services for 1 EHS, 3 HS and 7 EHS-CCP children.
- Summit County Preschool provides full day, full year services for 6 EHS, 4 HS and 4 EHS-CCP children.
- Carriage House Early Learning Center provides full day, full year services for 4 EHS, and 4 HS children.
- Wildflower Nature School provides full day, full year services for 2 EHS, and 2 HS

children.

HS0-5 childcare services are further subsidized with Summit County Right Start funds, State funded Preschool (UPK), Summit County First Steps for infants and toddlers, and the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP).

This unique partnership with the SGC, SSD, ECO, and community-based child care programs was designed to utilize existing information, services, expertise, and experience to create a comprehensive family services program for our Early Head Start and Head Start families and children.

### **Key Strategies for the Head Start Partnership**

***A Community Governing Structure*** - Each partner has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SCG. ECO maintains contracts with four community-based childcare centers, including Summit County Preschool, Lake Dillon Preschool, Wildflower Center, and Carriage House Early Learning Center.

***Multiple Classrooms with Organizational-Level Blending*** - Head Start eligible children are enrolled across SSD and community child care preschool classrooms. HS0-5 pays tuition rate to each of the programs. The cost of providing full day, and sometimes full year care, is fully covered by layering funds from HS0-5, UPK, RSP, First Steps and CCCAP.

***Using the Practice of Cost Allocation*** – Cost allocation shows how to systematically share costs among the different funding sources leveraging the funds to a maximum benefit. With multiple funding sources and agencies funding the program operations cost allocation ensures benefits and costs of services are distributed equitably across the sources.

***Understanding and Reconciling the Different Program Standards and Licensure Requirements*** – Understanding and reconciling the different program standards and licensure requirements is one of the key collaborative features of this unique integrated model. Head Start Program Performance Standards act as a benchmark for service and help to reconcile the different requirements and practices of each partnership. Maintaining compliance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards, though more stringent in some areas, has been beneficial in helping to evaluate current practices and has also led to overall improvement. A strong substantive understanding of the program aligned with all the standards and licensure requirements attached to special education, the Colorado's UPK Program, and Head Start funding has allowed for better identification of services that need to be adjusted to maintain compliance with all. This has been a key strategy for success.

## **Overview of the Community Assessment Process**

Once during the five-year grant period, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families (ACF) requires all Head Start programs to conduct a comprehensive community assessment to collect and analyze community information focused on current strengths, conditions and resources of families and children birth to 5 years old. The community assessment must include the following six components:

- (i) The number of eligible infants, toddlers, preschool age children, and expectant mothers, including their geographic location, race, ethnicity, and languages they speak, including children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care and children with disabilities;
- (ii) The education, health, nutrition, and social service needs of eligible children and their families, including prevalent social or economic factors that impact their well-being;
- (iii) Typical work, school, and training schedules of parents with eligible children;
- (iv) Other child development services, child care centers, and family child care programs that serve eligible children, including home visiting, publicly-funded state and local preschools, and the approximate number of eligible children served by other service providers;
- (v) Resources that are available in the community to address the needs of eligible children and their families, as well as gaps in service delivery or lack of accessibility to services; and,
- (vi) Strengths of the community.

Current and reliable sources used for collecting quantitative data include a variety of local reports and assessments, as well as state and national data sources. All sources are cited. Much of the qualitative data presented in this report was collected through surveys, interviews, and the annual program self-assessment process.

Information gathered from diverse stakeholders including families, parents, community members, program staff, teachers, community program administrators and service providers helps to produce a comprehensive picture of the Summit County community. Specific sector representation includes Social Services, Summit School District, Head Start, child care, Part C providers and parents, Public Health, the Summit Combined Housing Authority, and family support providers.

Summit County has long been a community that believes that those residing in the community must be partners in shaping and seeking solutions to community challenges. This 2024 report provides updated data and incorporates critical community feedback to help guide the direction and goals of the Summit County Head Start Program for the next five years.

## II. Community Profile – External Data

### **General Demographics & Population**

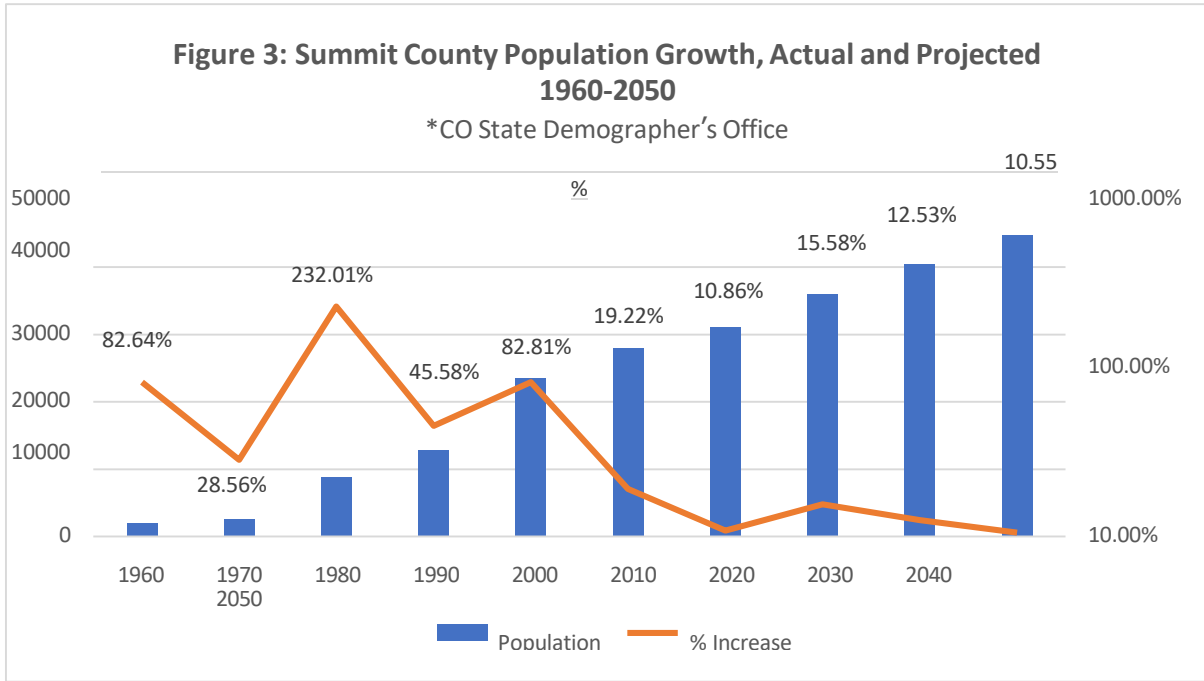
According to the Colorado State Demography Office, in 2022 Summit County had a population of 30,583 residents. The year-to-year population distribution by municipality is indicated in Figure 2, with Silverthorne - located on the north end of the County - being the only town with a net population increase from 2020-2022.

**Figure 2: County Permanent Population Distribution Table**

Source: Summit County Government, Planning Department; CO Department of Local Affairs, State Demography Office

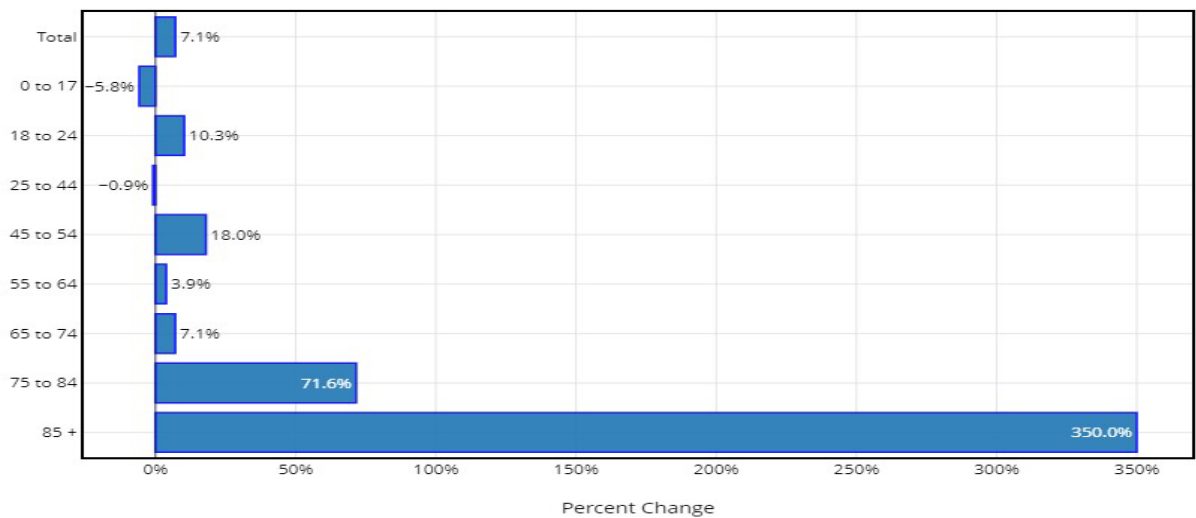
<b>Area</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2022</b>
Breckenridge	548	818	1,285	2,408	4,540	5,078	4,930
Blue River	8	230	440	685	849	877	848
Dillon	182	337	553	802	904	1,064	1,031
Frisco	471	1,221	1,601	2,443	2,683	2,913	2,796
Montezuma	N/A	N/A	60	42	65	74	70
Silverthorne	400	989	1,768	3,196	3,887	4,402	4,773
Unincorporated Summit County	1,056	5,253	7,174	13,972	15,066	16,647	16,135
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>2,665</b>	<b>8,848</b>	<b>12,881</b>	<b>23,548</b>	<b>27,994</b>	<b>31,055</b>	<b>30,583</b>

As shown in Figure 3 below, Summit County experienced rapid population growth in the 1970s and 1990s and has experienced a much lower pace of growth since 2000. From 1970 – 1980, Summit County was the fastest growing county in the country with a 232% increase in permanent population. The following decade, from 1980 – 1990, the population increase was significantly slower at 45.6%. Between 1990 and 2000, the population nearly doubled (from 12,881 to 23,548) with an increase of 82.8%. From 2000 onward, growth has again been much slower and in 2022 Summit County saw a slight decrease in total population when compared to the previous year.



Overall, as the additional charts below indicate, projections from the State Demographers Office indicate a slow or flat growth in the population of young children, and a much larger growth in the population of older residents. Growth in the 0-4 age group is expected to grow at a slower rate than the total population, with a rate of less than 4.5% during each five-year period from 2020 through at least 2030.

Projected Population Change by Age Group, 2022 to 2032, Summit County



**Figure 4**  
Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs, State Demography Office

## **Income & Related Factors**

### ***Area Median Income (AMI)***

The Area Median Income (AMI), published annually by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) represents the median family income of an area. Many of the income- and deed-restricted housing units in Summit County use the AMI to qualify households for occupancy and establish affordable prices. In 2024, the Area Median Income for a family of four in Summit County is \$109,700. This number is slightly lower than 2023, but almost 10% higher than 2022.

### ***Employment and Wages***

Summit County typically has a low unemployment rate, primarily due to the large number of service industry jobs in the area. In May of 2024 Summit County's unemployment rate was 3.3%. This rate is up slightly from the previous month at 2.3%. While rates can fluctuate seasonally, Summit County's post-COVID jobless rate has generally been low, while demand for workers is high.

A 2023 Summit County Housing Needs Assessment reports that overall employment in the county increased by 33% between 2010 and 2022. 50% of this increase was driven by the county's largest economic sectors, including accommodation and food services as well as the arts, entertainment, and recreation industries. These two sectors, while adding the most employment, are also among the industries with the lowest full-time wages, typically below \$50,000, or less than 50% of Area Median Income (AMI).

According to the Summit County Housing Survey (SCHS), Spanish speaking households have a higher concentration of workers in the accommodation and food services (40%) and construction (53%) industries. On the other hand, English speaking households have a greater representation in government (28%), accommodation and food services (22%), outdoor recreation/outfitter (21%), and real estate/property management (18%) industries. Households with workers in construction (16%), accommodation and food services (19%), and retail (11%) industries are more likely to have a household income of \$35,000 or less (approximately 40% AMI and less). Hispanic households have a median income that is approximately 40% lower than for non-Hispanic White households, and median income growth has been slower among Hispanic households, widening the income gap between Hispanic and non-Hispanic White households.

### ***Housing***

The high cost of housing is a concern that is consistently identified in community needs assessments and in key informant interviews. As early as the 2006 Community Health Assessment, the expense of living in Summit County was identified as a concern, with 52% of respondents claiming "cost of living" as their primary economic concern. A

2022 Community Health Assessment reported similar findings, specifically calling out the high cost of housing and childcare as significant barriers to affordability in Summit County. This is a concern, as we know that community affordability is a social determinant of health outcomes for individuals and families. Housing options are limited and the cost of renting and/or owning continues to rise. The 2023 Housing Needs Assessment found the following trends that impact the Head Start eligible population in the area:

- Between 2019 and 2022, Summit County saw a slight decrease in permanent residents (1%). According to the assessment study, this decrease is “likely due workers leaving the county for more affordable housing elsewhere, owners selling their homes, and conversion of long-term rentals into short term rentals and second home use.”
- In 2021, the average income of households moving into the county was \$44,000 higher than those moving out of the county.
- Hispanic households have a median income that is 40% lower than non-Hispanic White households.
- Since 2010, local job growth has outpaced workforce growth, exacerbating the demand for housing.

In addition to the trends identified above, renters and owners surveyed identified concerns about housing security, overcrowding, and housing conditions. Among those who responded to the 2023 housing survey:

- 17% reported living with someone sleeping on a couch or floor. This rate was highest for Spanish speakers (47%), single parents (43%), residents under age 25 (33%).
- 18% rate their homes or apartments in fair or poor condition.
- 37% of Spanish speaking respondents worry about rent increases or eviction if they request repairs to rental units.
- 25% of renters have asked for repairs and been refused.
- 58% of renters reported being cost-burdened and 29% reported being severely cost burdened.
- 26% of renters have been displaced in the past 5 years. This rate is higher for Spanish speakers (49%) and renters without a lease (52%).

Figure 5: Median Housing Prices

	<b>Median Rent</b>	<b>Median List Price</b>	<b>Median Sold Price</b>	<b>Median List Price / Square Foot</b>
<b>Summit County</b>	\$2,800	\$652,500	\$615,900	\$509
<b>Colorado</b>	\$1,995	\$429,800	\$367,000	\$260

Source: Summit County Combined Housing Authority

Cost of Housing – Throughout Colorado, the cost of housing is difficult for low-

income families. In Summit County, this scenario is made more difficult given the unique conditions of the resort economy. Rental costs in Summit County have continued to shift upward, with sharp increases between 2019 and 2021.

- 2021, 38% of rental units rented for \$2,000/month or more (v. 22% in 2019).
- In Spring 2023, 15% of renters in the county could afford the cost of units listed for rent.
- The median rent per bedroom was \$1,667 in Spring 2023, requiring an annual income of \$67,000 per year or an equivalent full time hourly wage of \$32/hour.
- The median deed-restricted rental is \$1,200 per bedroom, potentially saving a renter \$450 per month or \$5,500 in rental costs annually.
- A median-valued single family detached home requires an income of \$456,183, making home ownership out-of-reach for the vast majority of renters for all product types. (2023 Summit Combined Housing Report)

There are multiple ripple effects when housing is unaffordable. Businesses have difficulty recruiting and retaining employees, families are burdened with extra costs, long commutes from outside the county create extra cost burden and decreased satisfaction for employees, and community character is impacted by increased transience.

### ***Homelessness***

Homelessness looks different in Summit County than in many other parts of the country. While people without a home may camp during the summer, during the long, cold winter it is unusual to see a person living on the streets. Instead, persons without a home or shelter often “couch surf” or rely on friends for temporary housing. Additionally, multiple families will live in a single dwelling to save costs. Compared to poor, housed children, homeless children have worse physical and mental health, more developmental delays, more behavioral issues, poorer school attendance and performance, and other negative conditions (National Alliance to End Homelessness). Even housing instability (not necessarily homelessness) negatively impacts children. Moving three or more times per year is associated with increased behavioral, emotional, and school-related problems. Summit County does not have a homeless shelter.

The McKinney-Vento definition is defined as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence” and includes a variety of living situations including shared housing, living in hotels or motels, and living in cars or substandard housing, among other situations. During the 2021-22 school year, the Summit School District reported 20 children meeting the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness (Kids Count). It is notable that this figure decreased from 41 reported children in the 2018-

19 school year, 16 in the 2019-20 school year and only 12 in the 2020-21 school year. These variable reports are challenging to explain, given the urgent need for affordable housing identified in other reports. The pattern could be the result of under reporting during the COVID pandemic, or a discrepancy in how the homeless data is collected.

The Summit County Head Start program continues to see a rise in the number of families qualifying as homeless. Anecdotally, Head Start staff hear regularly from families that rent has increased and parents are stressed about how to find adequate housing. In the 2022-23 school year, 14% of the total Head Start and Early Head Start enrollment in Summit County met the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness. That number increased to 17% during the 2023-24 school year.

### *Poverty*

Poverty is related to child outcomes in many ways. Compared to more affluent children, children who live in poverty are more likely to have physical health problems and to score lower on tests of cognitive ability, such as verbal ability, reading readiness; and problem solving. Poverty in young children under five is particularly detrimental to children and is associated with fewer total years of school and drop-outs. Poverty levels are determined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The National Center for Children in Poverty reports that research suggests families need an income at least equal to about two times the federal poverty level to meet their most basic needs. These families are referred to as low income (below 200% of the FPL).

In 2022, 11.8% of Colorado children lived in poverty, and 7.4% of Summit County children lived in poverty. This Summit County rate is slightly higher than the 2020 poverty rate (6.4%). While poverty rates are lower in Summit County than in the State as a whole, this is not necessarily a positive economic indicator. The current Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for a family of four is \$31,200, however the 2022 Self-Sufficiency Standard indicates that an annual income of \$126,839 is needed in Summit County (or 3.7 times the FPL) for that same family to make ends meet.

The Family & Intercultural Resource Center (FIRC) is a local organization that provides families and individuals with access to food banks, rental assistance, health insurance navigation and other critical supports. In 2021, FIRC reported that among all the clients served through their assistance programs, the average income was \$31,382 - close to the Federal Poverty Level and significantly below the Self-Sufficiency Standard.

In the fall of 2023, 41.2% of Summit County students qualified for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) services. This includes 29.3% who qualify for free lunch and 12% who qualify for reduced lunch (Colorado Department of Education). In 2018, 34.5% of students qualified for Free or Reduced Lunch, indicating a 19.4% increase in eligibility based on household income in the past five years.

**Figure 6: The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Summit County, Colorado 2022**

	Adult, Preschooler	Adult, Infant, Preschooler	2 Adults, Infant, Preschooler
<b>Monthly Costs</b>			
Housing	\$1,797	\$1,797	\$1,797
Child Care	\$1,654	\$3,332	\$3,332
Food	\$683	\$886	\$1,229
Transportation	\$314	\$314	\$605
Health Care	\$633	\$654	\$735
Miscellaneous	\$620	\$811	\$926
Internet & Cell Phone	\$112	\$112	\$156
Other Necessities	\$508	\$698	\$770
Taxes	\$1,523	\$2,544	\$2,379
Earned Income Tax Credit (-)	\$0	\$0	\$0
Child Care Tax Credit (-)	(\$50)	(\$100)	(\$100)
Child Tax Credit (-)	(\$167)	(\$333)	(\$333)
<b>Self-Sufficiency Wage</b>			
Hourly (per adult)	\$39.82	\$56.28	\$30.03
Monthly	\$7,007	\$9,905	\$10,570
Annual	\$84,089	\$118,864	\$126,839
Emergency Savings Fund	\$344	\$651	\$160

Source: Colorado Center on Law and Policy

### *Diversity*

In addition to an increasing aging population, data from the State Demographer’s Office indicates an increase in ethnic diversity throughout Summit County. Based on the 2020 US Census, 2022 data estimates the total non-white population in Summit County to be 20.33%, with 15.69% reported as Hispanic/Latino origin. Among children ages 0-4 years, the population of children reported as Hispanic/Latino origin is 35.29%. Over time, ethnic diversification of the permanent resident population is expected to continue, which will influence the demographic make-up of the County (Summit County Government, 2014). For the 2023-24 school year, Summit School District Re-1, which serves all of Summit County, reported a non-white enrollment of 45.43%, including 40.4% Hispanic/Latino enrollment. During the 2023-24 program year, 93% of HS0-5 families were of Hispanic and Latino origin and 92% primarily spoke Spanish at home.

### **Education and Social Environment**

#### *Education*

There is one school district within Summit County with six elementary schools, one middle school, one alternative school and one high school. The entire district is International Baccalaureate (IB) authorized. The current demographics of the district are highlighted below.

**Figure 7: Summit School District Data**

**Summit School District PreK-12 Data**

<b>Program Year</b>	<b>Total School Population (PreK-12)</b>	<b>Hispanic or other minority</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Other Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>ELL</b>	<b>FRL</b>	<b>Special Needs</b>	<b>Gifted (K-5)</b>
2013-14	3,287	33%	63%	4%	22%	37%	11%	7%
2018-19	3,577	40%	60%	5%	25%	35%	10%	9%
2023-24	3,572	40.4%	54.6%	5%	24.6%	41.2%	12.2%	8.3%

Source: Colorado Department of Education

Twenty-five percent of the Summit School District population is English Language Learners (ELLs). Although there are English Language Learners (ELL) in all schools throughout the district, some schools have larger populations than others. Silverthorne Elementary and Dillon Valley Elementary are both classified as Title One schools and serve many ELLs.

In 2006 Summit School District decided unanimously to pilot a dual-language program at Dillon Valley Elementary School. Today this program is fully implemented. Students of the first dual language cohort graduated in spring 2018. In 2021, Silverthorne Elementary School also piloted a dual-language school. Students in a bilingual immersion (also called Dual Language) program are instructed in both English and Spanish. Open enrollment allows families from across the County to enroll their child at Dillon Valley Elementary, Silverthorne Elementary, or another school of choice.

Summit County’s high school graduation rate was 89% compared to the state average of 82% in 2022. Fourth graders meeting or exceeding expectations in English Language Arts was 38.4% compared to the state’s 44.1%. As seen below, math and language arts proficiency are trending downward in Summit compared to the State.

**Figure 8: Students Scoring Proficient or Above (Kids Count, 2018 & 2023)**

<b>Content Area on CMAS</b>	<b>Summit</b>	<b>Colorado</b>
<b>Math, 2016-17</b>	35%	33%
<b>Math, 2022-23</b>	28%	32%
<b>English Language Arts, 2016-17</b>	48%	42%
<b>English Language Arts, 2022-23</b>	41%	43%

During the 2023-24 school year, Colorado rolled out a new Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program (UPK) for all four-year olds, and for three-year olds who qualify due to certain risk factors. UPK provides either full-day or partial-day school programming. Summit is one of few counties in Colorado that has free full day Kindergarten for all children. Full day Kindergarten is funded by a local tax levy. In addition, Summit has a local Pre-K Program (SPK), providing full-day or partial-day funding, full year or school year, for

qualifying three- and four-year-old students.

### ***Children with Disabilities***

Children with special needs are identified through a community screening and Child Find process or referred by community partners for evaluation. Children between 0-3 years are served through Part C of the Individuals of Disabilities Act (IDEA) by Summit County Early Intervention with funding through the Colorado Department of Human Services. Children ages 3-21 are served through Part B of IDEA by services through the Summit School District. Services for children age 3-5 years with special needs are provided in the local school district preschool classrooms. HS0-5 enrolls children with special needs in these classrooms.

HS0-5 participates in the Child Find process and the development of an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) for Early Head Start or Head Start children. During the 2023-24 program year, 25% of EHS children (6 children) were on an IFSP and 11% (4 children) were on an IEP. Screenings and referrals are conducted in partnership with Summit School District, Head Start and our Regional Partner, the Developmental Disabilities Resource Center. For the 2024-25 program year, 3 Head Start eligible families declined IEP services due to the limitations of the school schedule. Currently, Summit School District only offers a school-year, school-day schedule, with multiple breaks throughout the school year. This creates a childcare challenge for many working families in Summit County.

### ***Child Care***

Availability and affordability of quality early care and education is a major social issue in Summit County. A 2022 Child Care Assessment found that 73% of children in Summit County have all parents in the workforce, and close to 600 children are on a waitlist for childcare (Root Policy Research). Without additional subsidies the cost to deliver quality care is beyond the reach of most families. In response to this critical issue, County and Town leaders have consistently prioritized access to affordable, quality care in their planning and funding priorities.

**Figure 9: Summit County Cost of Child Care**

#### **2018 Summit County Cost of Care**

<b>Type of Provider</b>	<b>Infants</b>	<b>Toddlers</b>	<b>Preschool</b>
Family Child Care	\$43	\$41	\$38
Center Child Care	\$62	\$62	\$55
School District	n/a	n/a	\$43

#### **2024 Summit County Cost of Care**

<b>Type of Provider</b>	<b>Infants</b>	<b>Toddlers</b>	<b>Preschool</b>
Family Child Care	\$67	\$67	\$71
Center Child Care	\$94	\$94	\$88
School District	n/a	n/a	\$50

Source: Early Childhood Options

Summit County Department of Social Services offers assistance with childcare through the federally subsidized Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP). During the 2023 program year 14 HS0-5 families received support from CCCAP. For the current 2024-25 program year, that number is 10.

In 2018, Summit County voters approved a property tax ballot initiative that, in part, provides funding for three- and four-year-olds to participate in full-time preschool. The Summit PreK Program (SPK) provides financial assistance to families based on a sliding income scale. In 2023, 167 children participated in SPK, including 16 Head Start enrolled children. SPK also offers teacher training, salary support and other resources to participating in child care and education programs.

In 2022, five municipalities and the Summit County Government entered into a cooperative agreement to fund childcare tuition assistance for infants and toddlers, now called the First Step Program. Again, funding is available to families based on a sliding income scale. In 2023, 314 families with infants and/or toddlers participated in the local First Steps Program, including 13 Early Head Start enrolled children.

In addition to the affordability challenges, availability of childcare can be limited – particularly for infants and toddlers. According to Early Childhood Options, county-wide childcare waitlists have well over 500 unduplicated names, and most of the children on the waitlist are under the age of three. Two new childcare centers opened their doors in 2023, providing some relief to the availability challenges. In addition, Summit School District plans to open one new PreK classroom in the fall of 2024.

### ***Quality of Care***

Early Childhood Options and HS 0-5, along with several community partners, invest time, expertise and funding into supporting the quality of care at the local childcare and preschool sites. 85-90% of all licensed care facilities participate in the state quality rating and improvement system, Colorado Shines. The majority of rated programs in the county have earned a high-quality rating of three stars or above. In addition to Colorado Shines, programs have opportunities to receive coaching and consultation, as well as teacher training and other resources, through Early Childhood Options.

CLASS Tool observations are conducted annually to assess the quality of teacher-child interactions. In addition, mock Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scales (ITERS) & Early Childhood Rating Scales (ECERS) are offered to all sites.

Early Childhood Options offers training to the entire child care community through an annual “Menu of Quality Services”. Training topics include, among others, Expanding Quality in Infant and Toddler Caregiving; Pyramid Training; and Ages and Stages Developmental Screenings. A total of 114 teachers participated in the Menu of Quality

Services options in the 2023-24 program year. Coaching is also offered to all sites, providing a minimum of eight hours per classroom per program year. Additional support is available for sites upon request.

Despite the availability of professional development opportunities and stipends, keeping qualified staff is a challenge due to the high cost of living and the seasonal nature of the community. Community child care programs have a more difficult time retaining staff than does the Summit School District, although both are challenging. The SPK program helps partially offset increased wages in the childcare sector. Since the inception of SPK, childcare wages have increased by approximately 33% (Source: Early Childhood Options).

## **Comprehensive Health & Well-Being**

### ***General Information***

Summit County's health care and social service infrastructure has expanded its capacity over the past two decades. St. Anthony Summit Medical Center (SASMC) opened in December 2005 near the Summit County Government offices in Frisco. A 41,000-square-foot Medical Office Building is located next to the hospital. Taken together, the hospital and the medical offices have centralized most of the health care in Summit County. Summit Community Care Clinic (SCCC) is located there; it is a Federally Qualified Health Center. As the only safety net provider in Summit County, its primary care, oral health and behavioral health services are available for individuals and families with private, public insurance as well as those without insurance via a sliding fee scale. SCCC serves many of Summit County's transient workers as well as the mainstay working families who lack insurance or are otherwise slipping through the cracks of the current health care system. While most families do not have to travel to Vail or Denver for regular or routine medical care, families in need of more specialized services often do travel outside of the county.

Colorado has made progress in several areas of child health, most notably by increasing the number of children with health insurance coverage. Summit County continues to exceed the state rate of uninsured children, however. In 2023, 7.9% of Summit County children were uninsured compared to 4.7% in Colorado. However, 6.7% of children in Summit County are enrolled in CHP+, compared to the state average of 3.8% (KidsCount, 2022).

In 2023 Summit County's teen birth rate was 16.4 per 1,000 teens, compared to the state rate of 11 per 1,000 teens (Kids Count, 2023). Summit County's rate of low-birth-weight babies (13.3%) is high compared to the state average (9,5%). This is a consistent concern and is likely attributable to altitude.

### ***Oral Health & Nutrition***

The 2023 Colorado Health Access Survey noted that 28.8% of individuals in Summit

County and the surrounding mountain region did not get dental care because of the costs associated with such care. 65% of regional respondents reported having no dental insurance, and almost 20% of regional respondents indicated that they have fair or poor dental care. Despite meeting dental screening requirements and oral health education outreach, HS0-5 children are consistently needing dental health follow up and treatments.

Both oral health and obesity concerns are tied directly to nutrition. WIC (Women Infant Child) serves low-income mothers and children 0-5 with nutrition education and access to food. In 2023, 58% of Summit County children enrolled in Medicaid are also enrolled in WIC. In past reports, Summit County WIC noted that 40% of WIC children over 1 year old are low in iron, 14.5% of WIC children improperly use a bottle/cup/pacifier, and 18% routinely consume sugar-containing beverages (SCG-PH). In key informant interviews, several community partners identified the need for increased education about the important role consistent dental care plays in overall healthy growth and development.

In the mountain region of Colorado, 9.1% of survey respondents reported eating less than they thought they should because there wasn't enough money for food (SCHAS, 2023). Like many rural, resort communities in Colorado, many families in Summit report relying on low-cost food. The Summit Rotary and Elks Clubs provide a free community dinner every Tuesday. In addition, several churches offer free dinners and food bank services. FIRC also houses a food bank accessible to the community.

### ***Mental Health***

Summit County's 2018-2022 Community Health Improvement Plan identified mental health (with a focus on families) as one of three priorities for action, and the revised Plan (2023-2027) identified a similar priority. Additionally, based on the 2023 Colorado Health Access Survey (CHAS) results, the Colorado Health Institute recently concluded that "mental health challenges did not abate as the pandemic eased" (May, 2024). The analysis went on to state the "Coloradans are struggling with their mental health. More than one in four people reported poor mental health in 2023. That's the highest number the CHAS has ever measured, but statistically unchanged from 2021." Although the Colorado Health Survey included children and adults over age five years, the mental health challenges faced by parents can have a significant impact on the development of their young children.

Similarly, the 2022 Summit County Community Health Assessment found that 28% of survey respondents indicated they or a loved one needed mental health care in the past 12 months but did not get it. Additionally, 23% of Hispanic/Latinx respondents reported the same. Some of the identified barriers to access included:

- Trouble getting appointments
- Cost too much
- No doctor/counselor

## ➤ Stigma

Of all the mental health providers in Summit County, 90% are white and 1% are Hispanic; 15% provide services in languages other than English; 35% accept Medicaid. 84% of survey respondents indicated that it is somewhat important or very important to focus on more affordable or free mental healthcare in the next three years; 92% indicated that it was important to focus on more mental health providers; and 88% responded that it is important to focus on a more diverse mental health workforce.

In addition to the Summit County Public Health Department, there are several organizations actively engaged in supporting the mental health needs in the community. SCCC provides behavioral health services in all of Summit County's schools via the School Based Health Center (SBHC) system. In 2018, SCCC opened a Comprehensive Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) program at Summit High School to meet the need for increasingly high acuity behavioral health concerns.

The Building Hope initiative, a stand-alone nonprofit organization, has worked in the community in recent years to create awareness of mental health needs, to reduce stigma, and to increase access to services. In 2018, a local tax initiative resulted in dedicated funding to support mental health needs via Building Hope; these funds are being used in part to increase access to behavioral health services.

The Family & Intercultural Resource Center provides health and behavioral health navigation, as well as a limited amount of mental health care scholarships.

Summit HS0-5 employs one Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant (ECMHC), who is monolingual English speaking. The ECMHC uses the ASQ-SE2 scores and observational recommendations from all children enrolled at Summit County partner sites to identify any developmental delays in social-emotional skills. In the 2022-2023 program year, 15 EHS or HS children at partner program sites were referred for social-emotional support services (22%).

### ***Family Well Being & Parent Support***

Home Visitation- Summit County has a long history of home visitation programming. Currently, both FIRC and the Summit County Department of Youth and Family Services offer home visits to vulnerable populations.

Parent Training and Education - Parents who have some knowledge of basic child development are likely to have more realistic expectations of their children. With this knowledge, parents are better able to provide the right amount of nurturing, supervision, and guidance. When parents understand their roles in their children's lives and learn about specific parenting techniques and strategies, they can form positive relationships with their children and have options for appropriate responses to typical

child behaviors. Resilient parents are stronger parents. In times of stress or crisis, their children are less likely to be abused or neglected. When parents are depressed, or too consumed by their own problems, they often have difficulty providing for their children's needs. Resilient parents, however, have more patience with their children, especially in times of stress. Parent training and education is provided at local childcare centers, HS0-5, FIRC, and the Summit School District multiple times throughout the year. Most of these opportunities are provided free of cost.

Colorado Mountain College (CMC) provides college courses at extremely reasonable rates (around \$200 a credit hour) and provides scholarships for low-income students. CMC provides credited course work in addition to ESL and GED classes. Many local agencies provide parent training. Building Hope offers monthly events such as Yoga, community cooking classes, and community awareness educational events focused on suicide prevention, addiction and mental health support. HS0-5 also offers multiple engagement opportunities for participants and families.

### ***Child Abuse & Neglect***

In 2023, the child abuse and neglect rate in Colorado was 8.6 for every 1,000 children. A comparable county specific rate is difficult to find due to the low numbers and small population size. In 2023 the number of out-of-home placements in Summit County was 1.4 for every 1,000 children.

### **III. Summit County Head Start 0-5 (HS0-5) – Internal Data**

#### **Children & Families**

Summit County Early Head Start & Head Start has made a tremendous impact in our community. Its integrated model reflects the Summit County culture — we are all in this together. By utilizing expertise from various program partners, HS0-5 can operate a small but creative and innovative program.

HS0-5 is authorized to serve 60 children—35 Head Start and 25 Early Head Start children. During the 2022-23 program year, HS0-5 served a total of 60 families. Most enrolled children (91%) are from homes that speak a language other than English, mostly Spanish. 59% of participants are single parent families. HS0-5 families are employed in a variety of professions, mostly related to the service industry such as food/beverage, housekeeping, maintenance and construction (HS0-5). In the 2022-23 program year, 100% of HS0-5 families participated in a Family Partnership Agreement assessment and goal setting process focusing on both the child and family.

In 2022 Summit HS0-5 had a successful federal review. CLASS (Classroom Assessment and Scoring System) scores were collected during the review. The CLASS is an assessment that rates the quality of teacher-student interactions. In addition, the SSD preschool and community childcare sites serving Head Start programs all have a level 4 rating from Colorado SHINES.

*Waitlists & Demand* - Waitlist numbers for Head Start and Early Head Start child care/preschool were both very high. In 2023, there were 93 children on the HS0-5 waitlist. In 2024, there are 59 children on the waitlist, including 38 infants and toddlers and 21 preschool age children.

#### **Program Information**

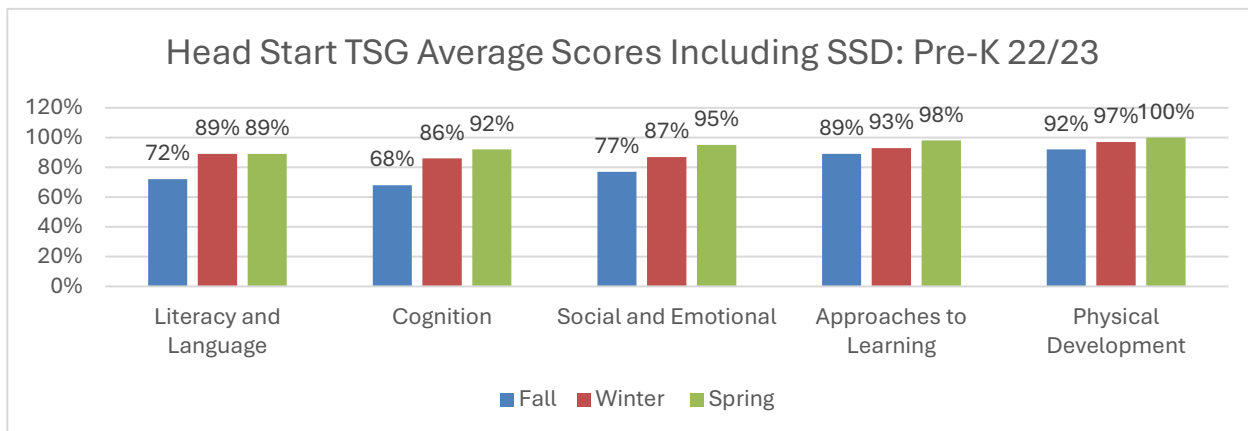
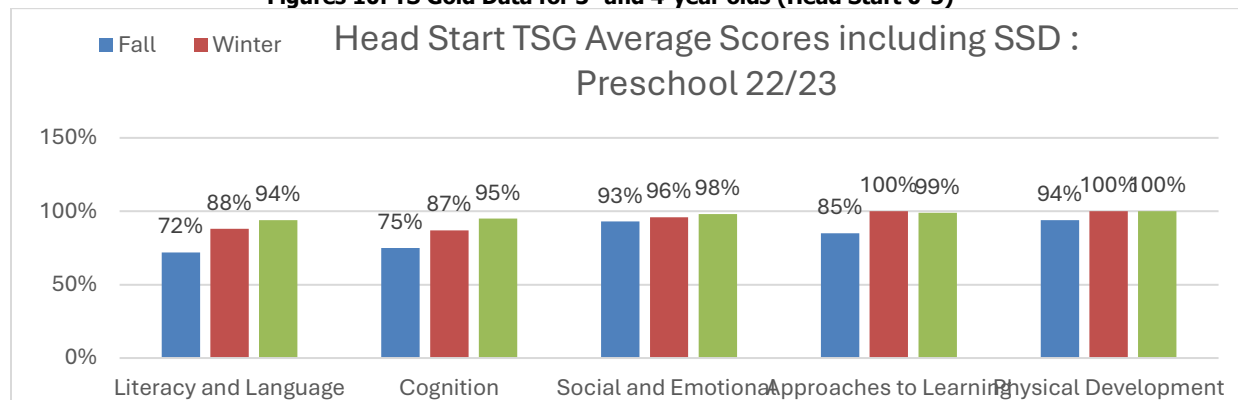
##### ***Staff Qualifications***

HS0-5 has been fortunate to have highly trained staff in the SSD. Almost all of the SSD preschool teachers have a master's degree in early childhood special education or Bachelor's in Education/Early Childhood Education or are enrolled in classes to work towards the degree. The SSD requires that all paraprofessionals /preschool teacher assistants have an equivalent of an Associate's Degree and some early childhood course work. The community childcare programs have had more difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified staff. An additional challenge for all programs is to find staff with early childhood credentials in addition to speaking both English and Spanish. Given the challenges of finding bilingual teaching staff, family engagement specialists and support staff are bilingual. Interpretation is provided to families when needed. Staff have access to many high caliber trainings offered at the local, state and national level.

### School Readiness

HS0-5 center-based programs are using the online TS GOLD assessment with 3 data checkpoints per year. School Readiness Goals were created locally by a School Readiness Committee. Head Start requires that goals are created for each of the following domains: literacy & language, cognitive & knowledge, social & emotional, approaches to learning, and physical health & development. Both center and home-based data points to the need for more focus on instruction related to language and literacy.

**Figures 10: TS Gold Data for 3- and 4-year olds (Head Start 0-5)**



## ***Parent and Family Engagement***

HS0-5 offered multiple engagement opportunities for HS0-5 participants and families. There were 3 big events in the 22-23 program year. The events included a screening event (Back to School), Cultural Night, Head Start Graduation 22-23. The events were well attended and fostered community, whether they were in-person events among which parents participated such as the EHS-HS 2023 transitions, Circle of Security classes, ESL Class Registration, ALMA Group (Mental Health Support Program) and including community events offered by Building Hope, FIRC, Public Health, SSD and Summit Library. In addition to the events, we offer a monthly parent Policy Council Committee meeting, open to the whole program, but attended by our parent and community members to review program goals, objectives, outcomes and management as well as providing financial oversight.

## **Feedback from parents, teachers and community partners**

To gain additional feedback and insights, the Head Start staff distributed a survey to parents, teachers, and community partners in the spring of 2024. Overall, all groups reported a high rate of satisfaction with all aspects of the HS0-5 programs. A few key findings and anecdotes are found below:

### **Parents**

- 25 HS0-5 families responded (42%).
- Between 94 and 100% of respondents felt satisfied with classroom staff, administration, family service providers and health coordination staff.
- 96% of respondents reported feeling confident reading telling stories to their children in the parents' native language.
- Between 87 and 100% of respondents reported that their children were learning basic concepts, becoming more independent and learning to share and cooperate. 78% reported that their children were learning basic concepts in math.
- 87% reported that the support of the family services coordinator helps prepare their children for school.
- A large majority of respondents reported that they were knowledgeable about resources available to them through Summit County HS0-5.
- The biggest stressors for respondents are:
  - Housing/financial – 19%
  - Medical/Dental – 11%
  - Employment – 6%
  - Immigration or Judicial Process – 11%

### **Teachers**

- 13 teachers responded, representing both community childcare sites and school district preschool sites

- Majority of teachers identified the additional supports and services provided by Head Start as being important for the teachers and children
- 92% of respondents felt confident using TS Gold and the Creative Curriculum, although anecdotally several teachers reported not having enough time for TS Gold training or overall planning
- The majority of respondents reported having a good understanding to the HS program, although a few teachers (17%) reported not feeling adequately supported by the HS team, or not knowledgeable about what the HS team can provide.
- 100% of teachers reported that they know where and how to find resources in the community to help them in their job.
- Anecdotally, teachers mentioned needing more comprehensive mental health services for teachers, children and parents.

### **Community Partners**

- Five representatives from four partner organizations participated: Building Hope, Summit County Department of Youth and Family Services; Summit County Public Health Department; Summit County Community Care Clinic.
- Anecdotal comments regarding community/agency strengths include:
  - Providing referral to outside agencies/resources is easy because we all work closely;
  - Some programs are delivered in English and Spanish, and some use evidence-based curriculum;
  - We customize services to fit clients' needs.
- Anecdotal comments regarding community/agency obstacles include:
  - "Social determinants of health: Families are going through a lot of stress due to lack of housing, employment, medical bills, access to healthy options, language/literacy, safety (drugs in school)";
  - Constant struggle to secure enough funding to fully support families;
  - Not enough bilingual professionals or support staff;
  - Medicaid reimbursements are too low.
- Anecdotal comments regarding areas for improvement include:
  - Not enough for children during school breaks;
  - Not enough accessible, affordable childcare;
  - Overall cost of living too high;
  - Demand for services are increasing.
  - Other – 35%

## IV. Key Community Strengths

Summit County continues to address the challenges and hard work of improving the quality of comprehensive services provided for young children. Professionals in the field of education and human services work diligently together to educate the public and policy makers on the issues affecting the health and well-being of young people in Summit County.

Summit County is fortunate and unique to have two local property taxes dedicated to early care and education, the Right Start Project (RSP) and Summit Pre-K (SPK). The Right Start Project's main goal areas are the following: Recruiting and retaining qualified staff; tuition assistance; increasing the quality of programs; parent education; capacity building; and evaluation. The tax was reauthorized by voters in 2013. Several committees are currently meeting to make recommendations that will impact the RSP model. Committees include a finance task force and a data and evaluation committee. Since the start of RSP in 2005, RSP has provided significant support to the HS0-5 program. SPK was authorized in 2018 and will go back to the voters for renewal in 2028. SPK increases access to preschool for three and four year olds and provides important resources and benefits for childcare and preschool programs. A third locally funded initiative is mostly funded through tobacco and nicotine taxes. The First Steps program helps make quality infant and toddler care affordable for families. Coordinating these local initiatives with the Summit County Head Start Program (federal) and Colorado's Universal PreK Program (State), requires diligence and great teamwork across sectors. Fortunately, this is one of Summit County's most impactful strengths.

Results-based accountability is important for Summit County's continued investment for young children. This type of community commitment serves as a springboard for discussion and further planning to meet the needs of all children and to build a community system to serve children and their families. Collaborative partnerships work to gather reliable data that can reflect the well-being of local children and can be tracked over time to measure the progress of prevention and intervention efforts in the community. The 2014 & 2020 Summit Early Childhood Community Assessment provided valuable information about the early childhood landscape and recommendations for continual improvement. An updated assessment is anticipated in 2025.

Some strengths that will help HS0-5 and community partners work collaboratively to address community needs are:

- It is expected that Summit County will continue to be a destination for immigrants. Many community organizations have committed to exploring ways to promote effective immigrant integration and to meet their needs.
- The demand for mental health services that are affordable, culturally relevant and accessible continues to increase. Many community organizations are

working to address this critical need as well.

- The need to promote oral healthcare continues to be identified as a need in Summit County. Closely related to this is ensuring access to health care in general, and mitigating the effects of food insecurity. Organizations such as the FIRC and Departments of Health and Human Services are critical partners in this area.
- As demonstrated in multiple reports and assessments, affordability in Summit County is significantly impacted by the high cost of housing and childcare. Further, these high costs impact low-income and non-English speaking households at a significantly higher rate than higher income and English-speaking households. Community partners, including policy makers, have been coming together for years to address these issues at both the program and the policy level.
- Quality care and education is a high priority in Summit County. The majority of Summit County early childhood programs maintain high quality ratings and participate in professional development. With significant community support, teachers have realized measurable improvements in wages and benefits. Early Childhood Options, childcare and preschool providers, as well as the School District and Colorado's Department of Early Childhood, have a long-standing commitment to supporting all the adults that work with young children and families every day – including, parents, teachers and program operators.
- HS0-5 has a history of strong leadership at both the program management levels and the governance levels. This requires maintaining well-qualified leaders in key positions, as well as excellent coordination with parent policy council members and other program partners.

Summit County has a strong commitment to working collaboratively at the local level as well as at a state level to build quality systems that support families and children. HS0-5's integrated delivery model is a testament to the community's commitment to collaboration. In fact, community partnerships are the foundation that will ensure that children and families achieve healthy outcomes.

## **V. Resources to Enhance Program Operations**

Summit County residents enjoy a variety of available resources. All resources are available to every resident with the exception of some income-qualifying services. The traveling distance between towns can limit accessibility. Availability is limited in the capacity of the organizations to provide services to a rapidly increasing population.

***Building Hope*** – Dedicated to building community, support and access to care in the areas of mental health. Services include mental health support groups; free community events; scholarships for mental health services; outreach and education to Latinx community.

***Developmental Disabilities Resource Center(DDRC)/Early Intervention*** – Provides support, information and services for families with children 0-3 years with developmental needs.

- Part C Service and resource coordination
- Connection to funding sources to help defray costs of services
- Information and Referral for families with children ages 0-3 with special needs
- Information about child's development
- Information about parents' and child's rights
- Database of community resources and services
- Referrals for preschool

***Family and Intercultural Resource Center*** – A community-based organization that has the unique role of educating and managing family directed services, directly providing timely emergency assistance including food, clothing, and temporary financial support to residents and families in need.

- Information and referral services
- Warm Welcome home visitation to new babies and their families
- Parent education and parenting classes for English & Spanish speaking families
- Food Bank
- Translation and Interpretation Services
- Housing Works Initiative
- Immigration Information- DACA support
- Health Navigators- health insurance support and enrollment
- Mamacitas & Padres parenting groups
- ALMA- mental health support for Latina women in Summit County
- Promoting Health- personalized health action plans and support
- Mental Health Navigation support

***Summit County Public Health Nursing/Family Planning*** – provides and assists in access to comprehensive health and human service with a focus on education and prevention that maintain the dignity of the individual and family. Provides health services that include assessment, assurance, and policy development.

- Colorado Child's Health Plan Plus
- Colorado Prenatal Care program
- Baby Care (Medicaid for pregnant women)

Nurse-Family Partnership  
Immunizations  
Early Periodic Screening and Diagnostic Treatment  
Family Planning  
Aids/HIV Screening  
WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)- Nutrition Education and supplement foods for pregnant women, breast feeding infants up to one year, and for children 1-5 years of age.  
Information and referral for prenatal care  
Well Child Care

***Summit Community Care Clinic*** – A Federally Qualified Health Center that provides primary care, behavioral health and oral health services for all, regardless of ability to pay. Provides a sliding fee scale for uninsured patients. Operates School Based Health Centers in Summit County schools.

***Summit County Department of Social Services*** – Provides a variety of programs for people of all ages from prenatal to senior citizens. Social Services focus principally on vulnerable and at-risk clients such as low-income families, children in need of protection, the aged, and disabled people. The mission is to assist eligible client groups on achieving core needs such as shelter, food, and health care, while working with clients to reach the goals of self-sufficiency and independence.

Child Support Enforcement Child  
Care Assistance payments Colorado  
Child Health Plan Plus  
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Baby  
Care/Kids Care Medicaid  
Food Bank  
Foster care for abused for abandoned children Family  
Child Care Licensing  
Special Circumstance Childcare – for children with safety needs  
Limited Emergency Assistance for medical/dental/optical/temporary housing  
Baby Care/Kid Care (Medicaid)  
Individual/Family therapy  
Sexual abuse treatment Child  
Protection Services  
SNAP

***Summit County Combined Housing Authority*** – Ensures the continuing availability of appropriate housing for permanent and seasonal residents of Summit County who are not otherwise adequately served by the market; Housing information and referral Section 8 Housing Assistance Home Buyer Class.

***CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate)*** – Advocate for children in court cases. Children helped by CASA volunteers include those for whom placement is being determined. Most of the children are victims of abuse and neglect. Trained volunteer appointed by judge to represent the best interests of the child Children helped will include those for which home placement is being determined Advocacy and trust for children

during complex legal proceedings. Work closely with Guardian and other parties including parents

***Summit County Early Childhood Council*** – Advocacy/informational group for all early childhood care and educational programs throughout Summit County. Information sharing between the early childhood community; Advisory group to the Board of Early Childhood Options.

***Early Childhood Options*** – Assists families in obtaining quality, licensed childcare, and related family services.

- Child care referrals to licensed childcare homes and center providers
- Child Care Quality Improvement Initiatives
- Parent/provider trainings
- Professional Development support and scholarships
- Head Start 0-5 Program
- Summit Pre-K Tuition Credit Program
- First Steps

***Summit County School District RE-1*** – Summit County's public school system.

- Child Find
- Pre-K (ages 3&4)
- Full-day Kindergarten
- Individual play therapy
- Child psychiatry for assessment and medication

***Summit County Youth and Family Services*** – Dedicated to serving the unique needs of families in Summit County. Our staff and volunteers provide health-oriented programs to individuals, children, and parents who face the challenges of maintaining a positive lifestyle. The department works hand in hand with the Department of Social Services, Public Health Nursing, and numerous local, not-for-profit agencies to provide a continuum of service from early prevention through treatment and aftercare.

- Family Support/Enhancement Program  
(Strengthening Families)
- New parents support groups
- Mountain Mentor Program
- Communities that CARE

***Bristlecone Health Service, Inc.*** – Provides a continuum of support services to promote health, dignity, and independence. Bristlecone strives to provide the best quality care of our clients, families, and community, maximizing each individual's potential through the utilization of staff and volunteers.

- Education and information regarding in-home health care services, disability options, bereavement, and hospice care
- Home Care
- Skilled Nursing Home
- Health Aids
- Personal Care and Homemaker
- Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy
- Coordination of Oxygen

Pain Management  
Hospice Care

***Silverthorne & Breckenridge Recreation Centers*** - Provide year-round athletic and recreational services for the community with economic, recreational, and social opportunities for all citizens to have a mountain quality of life.

Health/Wellness

Aquatics

Gymnastics/Tumbling

Special events

Breckenridge Rec Center-licensed school age child care

***Summit Stage*** – Provides free public bus transport throughout the county, seven days per week.

## VI. Trends and Observations

Based on the 2023 Community Assessment, several significant trends emerged that may have long term impact on the community and how HS0-5 delivers its programs in the future. Summarized below is a list of the major trends identified from this report.

- Population Changes – Changes in the population of Summit County may have an impact on the demand for Head Start and other early care and education services. Population growth is expected be flat in the next five years.
- Cost of Housing – The lack of affordable housing in Summit County is consistently identified as a challenge for Head Start families. Families report spending between 40% and 60% of their income on housing. Parents, teachers and Head Start leadership all reported that housing was a major issue for low-income families. Parents also reported that it was a challenge to raise their young children in substandard housing situations.
- Cost of Living and Poverty – Families in Summit County are greatly impacted by the cost of living. The cost of living is estimated to be over three times current Federal Poverty Level (FPL) guidelines. The FPL for a family of four is \$31,200. According to the Colorado Self-Sufficiency Standard, it costs a family of four in Summit County over \$126,000 just to make ends meet. Cost of living continues to challenge Head Start families at every level.
- Changing Demographics – Ninety percent of children enrolled in HS0-5 speak a language other than English. It is anticipated that the demand for Head Start services for Spanish speaking families will continue to grow in the future.
- Demand for Mental Health Services - While social emotional growth over the years has been strong, the number of mental health referrals continues to increase. Over 21% of residents reported struggling with depression. Lack of mental health resources for Spanish speaking residents continues to be a major gap in the community. The lack of resources significantly impacts Head Start families who need additional social and emotional support services.
- Oral Health Needs- Community-wide promotion of oral healthcare continues to be identified as a need in Summit County. HS0-5 made oral health care a priority in 2023, resulting in good screening rates for enrolled children.
- Community Mobility – Due to the challenges related to the cost of living in Summit County, the community tends to see a high rate of mobility both by families and Head Start staff. Management should continue to implement strategies to ensure effective communication and smooth transitions during staff onboarding.
- Administrative & Management Complexity – As new funding streams are identified (eg-First Steps and UPK), the cost allocation model that is central to Summit’s delivery model will become more complex. This will likely require careful planning to ensure the best and most efficient use of available resources.

## **VII. Strategic Implications for Head Start**

By examining the data and trends, HS0-5 can make strategic decisions and engage in purposeful planning. The following are recommendations for the HS0-5 program to meet the needs of low-income families and young children in Summit County.

### **1) Quality Teaching and Learning**

- Continue to work on retaining qualified staff: provide scholarships for Early Childhood educational coursework, individualized coaching and mental health consultation support for staff and teachers.
- Community Professional Development committee meeting quarterly to plan training opportunities for staff and teachers; Work with partners to develop strategies to ensure adequate time for teacher planning, team meetings and professional development opportunities.
- Utilize assessment and program data to improve outcomes for children.
- Focus on staff health and wellness.

### **2) Cultural & Linguistic Responsiveness**

- Identify strategies to recruit and retain bilingual staff representative of the Annual staff training on Planned Language Approach for shared understanding of classroom language models.
- Utilize cultural and linguistic needs and trends. Current needs: Spanish speaking staff, staff with diversity training, materials in multiple languages, materials available in reader friendly language.

### **3) Parent, Family & Community Engagement**

- Work with community agencies that serve parents to increase access to resources related to housing, job training, food assistance and other self-sufficiency efforts.
- Work with program partners to coordinate and promote parent and training opportunities.
- Give families access to resources to help with high costs of housing.

### **4) Health**

- Coordinate with community agencies that provide health and mental health services for low-income families.
- Advocate for children with special needs.
- Continue to work with and connect families to disability services and therapies in community childcare centers and decrease lapse in disability services between programs.

- Develop strategies to increase access to affordable, culturally appropriate mental health services for teachers, support staff, children, and families. Several program participants identified the need for additional Mental Health Consultation, provided by a bilingual (Spanish/English) provider.
- Continue to focus on oral health as an integral part of comprehensive health care. Identify resources to help families with the costs of dental care.

## **5) Program Management & Fiscal**

- Encourage EHS/HS staff to attend and participate in community meetings and groups for input and collaboration.
- Ensure fiscal stability by streamlining coordinated fiscal systems and budget review.
- New hire orientation and HR shared services.
- Set up coordinated systems for smooth transitions and staffing changes.
- Provide leadership training for staff and center directors.
- Continue to leverage other funding opportunities and resources to help offset high costs of full day/full year care for eligible children, as well access to other needed services.

## **6) Community Awareness**

- Support a coordinated community partner referral system.
- Promote HS0-5 program and services in the community.
- Utilize community, state, and national data to monitor needs and trends. Current needs: CCCAP/HS/UPK alignment, monitor state and national legislation impacting Head Start and early childhood.
- Ensure required reporting (Self-Assessment, Community Assessment, Annual Report) is shared with key stakeholders.
- Coordinate with other community partners to ensure a continuum of care and resources for families of children ages birth-5 years old.

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