Head Start provided services to 421 children from 408 families in the communities of Ashland, Framingham, Marlborough, Medway, Milford, Natick and Northbridge during the 2019-2020 schoolyear. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the program needed to end classes early on March 13th and services were provided remotely to children and families for the remainder of the school year. Full enrollment was maintained throughout the year and 78% of enrolled children were from families who were at or below the federal poverty guidelines. The program continued to serve a high percentage (56.6%) of children from families with a primary language of non-English and 14.4% of children had Individualized Education Plans for Special Education services through the public schools.

The provision and tracking of health services for children remained a primary focus of the program though the pandemic disrupted many of the services. By the end of the school year: 91.5% of the children had health insurance; 91.2% had a continuous and accessible source of health care; 93.1% had a continuous and accessible source of dental care; 92.4% were up to date on their health exams; 70.7% has a dental exam within the past year; and 87.5% were up to date with their immunizations.

Parent involvement remained a strength of the program. Parents served on our Parent’s Policy Council, Health and Education Advisory Committees, participated in Parent Center meetings, and volunteered in our classrooms. Efforts on improving ‘school readiness’ of the children increased during the year as well. In addition to our continuing to utilize a nationally recognized curriculum and child assessment tool, we increased our efforts on partnering with our local school departments and School Readiness Goals were developed for the year (see School Readiness Goals).

Funding Received for FY’ 2020

Federal (Health and Human Services) - $3,250,811
State (Department of Early Education and Care) - $400,715 (grant and subsidies)
Local (Town of Natick) - $20,329
Parent Fees (for state subsidies) - $22,660
Department of Education (USDA funds for nutrition services) - $185,500