



Community Link

First Step

Early Head Start

Clinton & Washington counties, IL

Annual Report

Fiscal Year ended April 30, 2009

First Step Early Head Start—An Overview






First Step Early Head Start (EHS) is a program of Community Link, a 37-year-old, not-for-profit agency based in Clinton County, IL. The mission of Community Link is to increase opportunities for program participants to enjoy meaningful, independent lives and to become full members of their communities.

Since 1999, First Step EHS has provided early, continuous, intensive and comprehensive child development and family support services on a year-round basis to low-income families in Clinton and Washington counties of southwestern Illinois.

First Step Early Head Start program is designed to enhance children's physical, social, emotional and intellectual development; to support parents' efforts to fulfill their parental roles; and to help parents move toward self-sufficiency.

Program hours and home visits are scheduled to accommodate family needs. Four full-time home visitors provide weekly visits that are at least 60 minutes for pregnant women and 90 minutes for children birth to 3 years of age, plus semi-monthly group socializations and quarterly community-wide family outings.

Fast Facts About First Step EHS

-  Provides EHS services to pregnant women, children and families in their homes and local communities throughout a 1066-square-mile service area.
-  Employs eight staff—a director, two coordinators, four home visitors, and a secretary.
-  Offers enhanced services through the director, who holds a master's degree in special education, and a coordinator who is licensed clinical professional counselor specializing in child-and-family mental health.
-  Consults with a registered dietitian to support nutritional counseling and education.
-  Is part of an agency that has pioneered home-based Early Intervention in southern Illinois and offers a wide variety of disability services for children.

Funding Sources

Community Link's First Step Early Head Start program is a stand-alone EHS program that received funding from the following sources from May 1, 2008 through April 30, 2009.

Funding Source	2008-09	Notes
Early Head Start, OHS, ACF, DHHS	333,218	
First Step Non-Federal Share	83,305	Representing parental volunteer hours
Total Funding	416,523	

Budget and Expenditures

Budget Category	2008-09 Actual	2008-09 Budgeted	Notes
Personnel	210,503	216,143	Under-budget due to open positions, particularly Director
Fringe Benefits	56,547	60,440	Under-budget due to open positions, particularly Director
Travel > 200 miles/trip	-	-	
Equipment	-	-	
Supplies	14,848	4,780	Variance due to purchase of laptops, monitors, computer bags and accessories, as well as conference room table and chairs, and file cabinets, etc.
Contractual	4,777	0	Variance due to use of consultants during vacancy in the Director position.
Facilities/Construction	-	-	
Other	46,543	51,855	Variances in the line items for staff mileage reimbursement and vehicle-maintenance expenses.
Other: Volunteer Wages	83,305	83,305	
Direct Costs	416,523	416,523	
Indirect Costs	0	0	
Total	416,523	416,523	

Eligibility & Enrollment

Eligibility / Enrollment Statistic	2008-09
Funded EHS Enrollment for Any Point-in-Time	54
Average Monthly EHS Enrollment	54
Monthly EHS Enrollment as a Percentage of Funded Enrollment	100%
Total Non-Duplicated Enrolled EHS Families During the Year	70
Total Enrolled Pregnant Women, Infants & Toddlers—Annual (Enrolled prenatal mom + baby born into the program = 1 enrollment.)	92
Total Enrolled Pregnant Women, Infants & Toddlers Deemed Income-Eligible	91
Percentage of Persons Served Who Were Income Eligible	98.9%
Number of Non-Duplicated Pregnant Women and Children on Waiting List	111

Federal Review and Agency Financial Audits

Office of Head Start (OHS) Triennial Federal Review: The OHS Triennial Federal Review in August 2007 found four points of non-compliance. First Step took corrective action, a follow-up Federal Review in February 2008 found **First Step EHS in full compliance with all applicable Head Start Program Performance Standards, laws, regulations and policy requirements.**




Community Link Financial Audits: Glass and Shuffett, Ltd., CPAs, Centralia, IL, has conducted financial audits of Community Link, Inc., most recently for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2008, and the auditor **had no findings.**

Children's Medical & Dental Exams

Medical / Dental Exam Benchmark	2008-09
% of Enrolled Children Up-to-Date on Required Immunizations	100%
% of Enrolled Children Up-to-Date on EPSDT Well-Child Exams	76%
% of Enrolled Children Offered a Free Professional Dental Exam (not an EHS requirement, but a First Step proactive health initiative)	100%
% of Enrolled Children Receiving A Professional Dental Exam (not an EHS requirement, but a First Step proactive health initiative)	19%
# of Children (EHS-enrolled & community-wide) Attending the First Step Dental Clinic	79

EHS Parents Creating a Brighter Future

Parents with enrolled children volunteered more than 6,116 hours in 2008-09 with the First Step Early Head Start program. They also planned parent involvement activities. In the past fiscal year:

-  The First Step EHS Policy Council—consisting of six Parent Representatives and five Community Representatives—participated in budget monitoring, the Community Assessment review, program restructuring and planning, the hiring of successor EHS Directors, and the development and approval of grant applications.
-  Parents participated in 35 socializations—held in five bi-county locations—including such special events as the annual Father’s Day weekend Fishing Derby and the annual Free Fall Family Carnival that alternates between counties.
-  During monthly Parent Committee Meetings—which rotated among Breese, Centralia, Damiansville, Nashville and New Baden—parents discussed topics including pedestrian safety, reading to children, handling temper tantrums, administering discipline rather than punishment, dealing with stress during the holidays, poison control, choosing Policy Council Representatives, egg storage and dyeing, and transition to pre-school.

Transition

EHS staff members assist parents with transitioning their children to preschool (connecting with teachers in the receiving programs, to discuss children’s needs and progress and any concerns, etc.). First Step strives to ensure continued services for 3-year-olds, pending their enrollment in a Head Start, Pre-K, or Early Childhood Special Education program.

In-Kind Support

First Step EHS is grateful for community in-kind support received in the past year:

- City of Breese; Janice Hemann of The Dutchmen’s, and Clinton County colleagues; Home Nursery and Apartments, Damiansville; K & J Chevrolet, Carlyle; Kohl’s, Edwardsville; Motomart Convenience Stores, Breese; Siblings & Company; Super Valu, Breese.
- Boy Scout Troop 127, Nashville; Faith United Methodist Church, Centralia; Grace United Methodist Church, Nashville; Lighthouse Community Church, Nashville; Pathways Within, Roads to Reading; St. Ann Church, Nashville; St. Paul United Church of Christ, Nashville; Trinity – St. John Lutheran Church and School, Nashville; Zion United Church of Christ, New Baden.
- Amanda Chwascinski; Jerry & Phyllis Dintelman; Rick Gruenenfelder.

First Step Early Head Start

955 N. Plum Street
P.O. Box 157
Breese, IL 62230
Phone: (618) 526-8830
FAX: (618) 526-8831
E-mail: tke@commlink.org

A program of
Community Link, Inc.
1655 N. Fourth St.
P.O. Box 157
Breese, IL 62230
Phone: (618) 526-8800
Fax: (618) 526-2021
E-mail: info@commlink.org

This report complies with Public Law 110-134, "Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007," Administrative Requirements and Standards Section 644 [42 U.S.C. 9839].