


**HEAD START
ANNUAL REPORT TO PUBLIC
2024-2025**





The purpose of this document is to share data and updates to the program during the program year.
This document is made available to the public via the Agency's website, astorservices.org.
Parents may also request this report at anytime and a copy will be made available to them.



Astor Head Start and Early Head Start

Astor Early Childhood Program provides comprehensive services to pregnant mothers, infants, toddlers and preschool children and their families in Dutchess County, New York. Services were offered from sites in Poughkeepsie, Beacon, Wappingers Falls (Mt. Alvernia), and Wingdale. Both EHS and HS offered home-based and center-based program opportunities. During the fiscal year 2024-2025, Astor offered programming county-wide, serving approximately half of the income eligible children and families in the county. Funding for the program comes from the federal Office of Head Start and the New York State Education Department.

Astor's Federal Report Card/External Audits

Astor began the first year of the grant cycle November 1, 2021. The Office of Head Start has developed a new monitoring system to align with the new Head Start Performance Standards, AMS 2.0. Astor Head Start completed an OHS Focus Area 1 Review in July 2023, no corrective actions were needed. The program was reviewed in the areas of CLASS in March 2025. CLASS scores were consistently above the competitive threshold and two of three areas were above the quality threshold. Focus Area 2 is a comprehensive review of all services to children and families. Astor is scheduled for a Focus Area 2 review the week of May 19, 2025.





Efforts to Prepare Children for Kindergarten

Our Head Start program works in partnership with the public schools, parents and parent/teacher organizations to support the successful transition of children and families into the new educational setting. This partnership strives to maintain open communication, cooperation and coordination of efforts to streamline the process.

To prepare and facilitate the smooth process from Head Start to Kindergarten, we plan the following activities:

- Notification to parents of the dates of their school district's Kindergarten registration to make sure they understand the importance of taking their child to district activities
- Provide Kindergarten transition workshops for parents on what to expect from the public school experience
- Plan special events for Kindergarten teachers to visit the classrooms and begin to prepare for our children
- Offer our facilities to district personnel to provide opportunities for meetings with parents of all our children, including those with special needs
- Tracking of annual review appointments and arranging for special education staff to participate in the development of the child's IEP, when the child is involved with the CPSE
- Kindergarten checklist is completed by the classroom teacher for the parent and the school district
- Letter of agreement is signed annually between Head Start and each school district-(LEA) in our local community to facilitate the process of successful transition

To prepare children for school readiness during the preschool years, our Head Start program utilizes the Creative Curriculum approach to early childhood education. This curriculum is research based and provides outcomes for the same children from birth to age 5.

We support our families with our transition process as our children leave us and venture into public schools. We continue to focus on building a strong relationship with public schools, families and other providers to ensure that children and families are ready for school and that public schools are ready and prepared for our children. We share our school readiness plans and goals with our families and partners throughout our communities.



Astor Takes Pride in Family Engagement

Astor views parents as the primary educators of their children and we welcome and encourage involvement in every aspect of the EHS and HS programs. From volunteering in the classrooms and offices to setting policy, Astor's early childhood programs know that the program is only as effective as the level of family engagement. Astor's parent engagement opportunities also include parenting classes and workshops which are available at every site.

Children are more successful in school and life when parents/families are engaged in their education. Astor Early Childhood Program develops a variety of activities with parents to encourage and support parents to become engaged in their child's education and success.

Opportunities include:

- Policy Council
- Parent Committee Meetings
- Classroom volunteers
- Parent trainings
- Parent curriculum suggestions
- Parent/teacher conferences
- Mother's and Father's Groups
- Home visits
- Take Home activities
- Lending Library
- Education Advisory Committee
- Center Level Committee
- Personnel Committee



Program Highlights

- Based on parent feedback and challenging summer attendance, the program has increased hours for the preschool students by one hour, resulting in a six-hour program day for Head Start. To address the summer attendance difficulties, Astor is no longer offering summer program to all Head Start and UPK students. Rather, families who are interested in attending throughout summer can register to be included in a lottery for slots. The six-week summer program will operate for all Early Head Start and the Special Education rooms.
- The children continue to demonstrate high gains across all developmental areas. This evidences the program's commitment to nurturing school readiness and life-long learners. In order to ensure curriculum fidelity and utilize the most up-to-date, appropriate curriculum all education staff utilize the Creative Curriculum.
- The leadership team spent quality time reviewing the program's self-assessment, community assessment and child outcomes. Staff and families continued to brainstorm and action plan for ongoing work towards Astor's long-term program goals. A review of short-term objectives, baseline data needed and action plans revealed that the program is on track based on the fifth year of the grant cycle.
- The Office of Head Start rolled out the new Program Performance Standards in November 2016. Leadership team reviewed the standards at length and began the implementation process through staff trainings, revision of program policies and procedures as well as planning and preparing for the extension of services delivered to families. The program is actively reviewing the updated Performance Standards that were issued in 2024.
- Successful collaborations continued with the Lion's SEE Program, Dover School District UPK, Wappingers Central School District UPK, Poughkeepsie City Schools UPK, NYS Education Department, Astor Services for Children and Families Hudson Valley Counseling Services as ways to enhance services to our Head Start children and their families.
- Astor Head Start collaborated with Ampact Early Learning Corps to provide an environment for tutors to be apprentices at the Poughkeepsie center. In the program year 2024-2025, tutors have joined the Mount Alvernia center in addition to the Poughkeepsie Center.
- During the 2018-2019 year, the program implemented use of a family outcomes tool, Parent Gauge. Parents reported a better understanding of the emotional and mental well-being of their child, trust the program to help their child grow and learn, understand the importance of attendance and stated that our program's activities have helped them get ready for Head Start and school.



- With the need for more Early Intervention services identified in Dutchess County, the program opened its first Bright Steps room. This integrated class serves 3 Early Intervention students and 4 non-classified students, providing a variety of services including special instruction, speech therapy, counseling and occupational therapy. This classroom is located at the Mount Alvernia site.
- Based on data from the community assessment, there is a need for infant childcare in our community. The program opened two rooms to serve infants at the Poughkeepsie and Wingdale sites.
- Given the increased need in services for preschoolers, the program opened its first 12:1:2 classroom at the Beacon center. This class is a self-contained classroom of 12 students with IEPs. The program opened a third 8:1:2 class in 2024-2025 based on the need for additional preschool special education placements.
- In response to childhood obesity, the program has expanded its pilot of a nutrition and physical activity curriculum. This curriculum is currently implemented at the Beacon and Mount Alvernia centers. I'm Moving, I'm Learning is fun and engaging. The children enjoy the music and movement. The program will review progress and plan the steps to incorporate the curriculum to the other centers.
- With the increase in UPK funding from New York State, local school districts offered collaboration and expansion opportunities to community partners. The program now has 1 UPK classroom for the Wappingers Central School District at the Mt Alvernia center. The Poughkeepsie center now has 1 UPK classroom for the Poughkeepsie City School District.
- The program has seen an increased need for homeless children in our county. The program was able to use funding to collaborate with the 2 largest shelters in the county to transport the children to school each day. Hudson River Housing Lodge and Community Housing Innovations Vanderbilt shelter drop off and pick up the children each day. The children enjoy the consistency that school offers when their housing may be unstable.



- Based on parent input the program is piloting the family engagement software, Learning Genie. This application allows for 2-way communication with parents, the program is able to send interactive activities and program announcements.



Head Start Program
2023-2024 Service Area Statistics

Astor operated Early Head Start and Head Start Programs at the following Dutchess County locations: Beacon, Wappingers Falls (Mt. Alvernia), Poughkeepsie and Wingdale.

	HS	EHS
Total # children served	370	163
Total # families served	352	150
% of children completing medical exams	86.2	52.1
% of children completing dental exams	76	45*
Avg. Monthly Enrollment	305	98
Percent of Capacity	85.1%	50.2%

* Percentage reflects all EHS children, including those under 2 years of age



Astor Early Childhood FY24 Budget vs FY24 Spending							
	BUDGET FY24				ACTUAL @ 6/30/24		
Program Name	% of Rev.	Revenue	Expense	Surplus (Deficit)	Revenue	Expense	Surplus (Deficit)
HEAD START/ EARLY HEAD START	75.14%	8,917,916	9,039,304	(121,388)	9,949,721	9,360,062	589,659
SPECIAL CLASS / INTEGRATED SETTING	8.69%	1,030,834	1,022,214	8,620	886,704	895,632	(8,928)
BEHAVIORAL SPECIAL CLASS	5.95%	706,494	704,956	1,538	1,048,306	1,056,859	(8,553)
POUGHKEEPSIE DT - PRESCHOOL	2.94%	348,479	345,598	2,881	283,670	305,094	(21,424)
UNIVERSAL PRE-K	5.05%	599,838	431,038	168,800	657,448	481,116	176,332
EVALUATIONS - UPSTATE	0.46%	54,000	37,027	16,973	56,761	(3,904)	60,665
EARLY INTERVENTION	0.51%	61,000	51,434	9,566	44,174	(7,521)	51,695
TITLE I - PRESCHOOL	0.93%	110,458	93,626	16,832	21,821	26,514	(4,693)
1:1 AIDE - SPECIAL EDUCATION	0.33%	39,000	273	38,727	28,367	23,115	5,252
TOTAL EARLY CHILDHOOD	100.00%	11,868,019	11,725,470	142,549	12,976,972	12,136,967	840,005



**Year to Date July 2023 to June 2024
Results vs. Budget and Prior Year -**

**Early Childhood Programs - Dutchess
County**



	2024 Actual	2024 Budget	2023 Actual
Revenue	12,976,972	11,868,019	10,896,786
Expense	12,136,967	11,725,470	10,797,816
Surplus/Deficit	840,005	142,549	98,970

