



# HEAD START ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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# A NOTE FROM LEADERSHIP

With the support of our Board of Directors, Policy Council, and community partners, the staff at WHCO continues to offer quality early learning and family services to the children and families enrolled in our Head Start program.

While we recognize the ongoing challenges associated with the nationally recognized staffing crisis in early childhood, our educators make meaningful connections and leverages growth opportunities every day.

I hope your family is healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

*Andrea Hayes*

Andrea Hayes  
Executive Director

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## OUR AGENCY

Since 1966, West Harlem Community Organization, Inc. (WHCO), a federally funded, not-for-profit, community-based organization, has provided free, comprehensive, early childhood development services to economically disadvantaged children and their families in Central Harlem and Washington Heights in upper Manhattan. The program is funded to serve 149 children and their families in a full-day, center-based program option. WHCO Head Start focuses on education, health, nutrition, safety, and mental health services. The program operates under the areas of Early Childhood Development and Health Services, Family and Community Partnerships, and Program Design and Management. WHCO's curriculum follows the Head Start Program Performance Standards. The program offers social services to the families of the children it serves and promotes parent involvement.

## Mission

The mission of WHCO, also called West Harlem, is to provide high-quality comprehensive and inclusive child and family services. Parents are empowered to be advocates for themselves and their children, to be positive role models and to become productive members of society. Our philosophy stems from the belief that a child's learning experiences during her/his preschool years form the foundation of her/his life success. WHCO is committed to utilizing all available resources to educate children and to providing a safe, nurturing, literacy-rich learning environment that facilitates children's positive developmental and social growth. We provide every opportunity for families to fully participate in the education and development of their children. Through these efforts, West Harlem hopes to contribute to ending the cycle of poverty that has existed for too long and to restore its communities to health, happiness, and prosperity.



## Vision

To prepare children and their families to achieve their maximum potential to better succeed in life. To achieve this goal, we provide programs focusing on the child and family in the areas of education, health and nutrition, parent involvement, and social services.

## Program Goals

- ❖ West Harlem will foster a workplace culture that promotes relationship building in order to retain an engaged, well-trained team that is responsive to the social-emotional, cultural, and cognitive needs of all children and families.
- ❖ West Harlem will foster a data-informed culture that empowers stakeholders and ensures partnerships and program services are responsive to the needs of children, families, and the community as a whole.
- ❖ West Harlem will empower family engagement by providing goal-setting opportunities, school-to-home connections, and access to resources designed to strengthen families as advocates for their children's learning.
- ❖ West Harlem will employ a fiscal approach designed to support a clear, concise, and uniform practice for meeting compliance with the Head Start Act, Head Start Program Performance Standards, and federal cost principles that bolster the program's sustainability in meeting the needs of children, family, and staff.
- ❖ West Harlem will develop and retain an engaged, well-trained Governing Board that is responsive to the families and communities we serve.

My experience in West Harlem H.S program has been very good, excellent. I super recommend it. All the teachers are very good and professional. Thanks to them my daughter learned a lot and I'm very grateful that other than helping children, they do it with the parent too by providing them the means to get a better job or better education.

Parent from the Rainbow Room

## Program Governance



West Harlem’s Board of Directors has been constituted, trained, and operates in accordance with Head Start Program Performance Standards and the Head Start Act. Pursuant to the Head Start Act, the Board establishes procedures and criteria for recruitment, selection, and enrollment of children; reviews all applications for funding and the amendments; and reviews and approves all major policies, including but not limited to, the annual self-assessment and financial audit, progress in carrying out the programmatic and fiscal provisions in the grant applications, implementation of corrective action plans, and Head Start personnel policies.

The Board meets monthly to receive reports on fiscal and program operations and to make decisions regarding the Head Start program. As a part of the shared governance process, the Board and the Policy Council review the service delivery plans and procedures annually and make and approve necessary changes and/or adjustments. Additionally, the Board and Policy Council meet with staff to review the Community Assessment, the Program Information Report (PIR), and the annual program self-assessment, as well as all recommendations from advisory committees to establish long- and short-range goals and objectives for the program. The Board has established an annual training retreat that includes Policy Council and new Board members. This training provides for an understanding of the roles of both groups in the shared governance process, the philosophy of the Head Start program and the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

## Program Accomplishments and Accreditations

West Harlem is a participant in New York’s Quality Rating and Improvement System, QUALITYstarsNY, which demonstrates our commitment to building and sustaining high-quality early childhood programming in our community. The technical assistance that we receive is focused on a strengths-based approach that requires ongoing quality improvement planning. The focus of quality improvement is within the areas of qualifications and experiences, children’s learning environment, family engagement, and management and leadership through intentional planning within individualized Quality Improvement Plans. We value the positive impacts of high-quality early childhood experiences for young children and are striving for excellence.



## OUR HISTORY

In January 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared a "war on poverty" in his State of the Union address. The government was influenced by new research on the effects of poverty, as well as its impact on education. This research indicated an obligation to help disadvantaged groups, compensating for inequality in social or economic conditions.

Sargent Shriver soon took the lead in assembling a panel of experts to develop a comprehensive child development program that would help communities meet the needs of disadvantaged preschool children. Among these experts were Dr. Robert Cooke, a pediatrician at Johns Hopkins University, and Dr. Edward Zigler, a professor of psychology and director of the Child Study Center at Yale University.

The Head Start program began as an eight-week demonstration project designed to help break the cycle of poverty. It provided preschool children from low-income families with a comprehensive program to meet their emotional, social, health, nutritional, and educational needs. A key tenet of the program established that it be culturally responsive to the communities served, and that the communities have an investment in its success through the contribution of volunteer hours and other donations as non-federal share.

Head Start programs have served more than 36 million children since 1965, growing from an eight-week demonstration project to include full-day/full-year services and many program options. Currently, Head Start grants are administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. Head Start programs serve over 1 million children and their families each year in urban, suburban, and rural areas in all 50



*In the Rose Garden on May 18, 1965, President Johnson announced the eight-week summer project which would become Head Start.*

states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and U.S. territories, including American Indian and Alaska Native and Migrant and Seasonal communities.

## **West Harlem Community Organization, Inc.**

WHCO is a 501(c)(3) community-based organization that provides childcare services to working families and families in need.

For 56 years, WHCO provided Head Start services as an early childhood education services provider while the NYC Administration for Children's Services was the grantee.

In 2019, WHCO was successful in its application to the federal Office for Head Start to become a grantee and serve 149 preschool children and their families.



My wife and me are very happy to choose that school for our daughter. She has improved very well, she became smarter and smarter, and she says she loves the teachers and the school. For us is the same. we love the school. Everybody! The teachers are very nice, the program is great. We hope the school grows with more grades. We are going to miss that school. Thank you so much.

Parent from the Discovery Zone



## FUNDING

The Head Start Act, Section 644 (a)(1)(2) requires grantees to report to the public (A) the total amount of public and private funds received and the amount from each source; and (B) an explanation of budgetary expenditures and proposed budget for the fiscal year.

### Funding by Source

In budget year 2021-2022, WHCO received funding from three sources.

Funding Sources	Amount
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	\$2,411,500
USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program	\$51,071
In-Kind Contributions (Non-Federal Share)	\$567,604
Total	\$3,030,175

### Budget December 2021 – November 2022

WHCO became a grantee in July 2019. The first budget period was July 2019 to November 2019. The third year's budget period was December 2021 to November 2022. This is the last period for which WHCO has audited financial statements (see below) and actuals to compare to budget.

Proposed WHCO Head Start Annual Budget 2022-2023	
Object Class Category	Federal Funding
Personnel	\$1,524,935
Fringe	\$251,155
Supplies	\$42,320
Contractual	\$178,964
Other	\$482,795
T/TA	\$22,946
Total	\$2,503,115

	Budget December 2021 – November 2022	Actuals December 2020 – November 2021
Object Class Category	Federal Funding	Federal Funding
Personnel	\$1,483,656	\$904,257
Fringe	\$244,538	\$132,512
Supplies	\$48,320	\$133,175
Contractual	\$223,652	\$221,181
Other	\$411,334	\$680,013
T/TA	\$22,946	\$22,946
Total	\$2,434,446	\$2,094,084

## REVIEW AND AUDIT

*The Head Start Act, Section 644 (a)(1)(2) requires grantees to report to the public (D) the results of the most recent review by the Secretary and the financial audit.*

### Federal Review

The Administration for Children and Families conducted a Focus Area Two (FA2) monitoring review of West Harlem Community Organization, Inc. from June 5, 2023 to June 9, 2023.

#### *Program Management and Quality Improvement*

The reviewers found that WHCO's qualified and supported staff provided services to enrolled participants. The leadership team all held master's degrees in their respective fields and used their expertise to oversee operations, make program decisions, and support staff. All staff members had professional development plans to encourage growth and continued learning, and those furthering their education received salary increases upon attainment of a degree or credential. Additionally, the program developed a Class Partner Internship Program to recruit teaching staff. This intense 16-week early childhood training program was available to parents interested in exploring teaching as a career. Participants worked as classroom interns, received support from mentor teachers, and participated in weekly focus groups with administrators. Upon completion, participants were encouraged to pursue advanced credentials or degrees in early childhood education and, if eligible, apply for employment. These efforts helped the program build staff capacity and growth.

#### *Education Services*

The review report noted that WHCO developed strategies to promote learning at home. Each year, the program held a curriculum fair to inform families about the program's school readiness goals and the classroom activities that could be used at home. During this event, teachers set up display tables showcasing early education components such as lesson planning, assessment tools, school readiness goals, and early learning standards. They also demonstrated classroom activities and materials, and provided information on books, resources, and activities that families could use at home. The 2022-2023 fair also centered around topics such as healthy eating, transportation, and the five senses. Families were encouraged to attend the fair to further understand the school readiness goals that the Head Start program adopted. These efforts supplied families with tools to support their children's learning.

### *Health Services*

Health Services includes child health status and care, mental health, oral health and nutrition, safety practices, and services to expectant families. A review of the criminal record check (CRC) tracking form showed that WHCO. did not obtain CRC prior to hire for five staff members hired in the last 12 months. This resulted in an area of noncompliance with 120 days for correction.

### *Family and Community Engagement Services*

WHCO connected families with resources to strengthen their knowledge. The program surveyed families to learn about their interests and needs. A review of data indicated parenting education was the most identified area of interest. In response, the program utilized its parenting curriculum to offer home activity suggestions and training on safe environments and child development during monthly parent meetings. To provide additional parent engagement opportunities, the program partnered with *New York Cool Culture*, a citywide arts and culture program providing families free access to cultural institutions for a year. The program also offered a family event at the *Museum of Natural History*. These efforts helped increase family engagement and build parental confidence.

### *Fiscal Infrastructure*

WHCO's fiscal staff, executive director, Governing Board, and Policy Council collaborated to ensure fiscal resources supported program goals. After the annual budget was developed, the governing bodies oversaw expenditures and program goals progress by reviewing regular fiscal and program outcomes reports. Additionally, the program's accounting and internal control systems ensured Head Start funds were only used for allowable and authorized purchases. This approach supported the oversight and efficient use of Federal funds.

The school is a perfect spot for my child.

Parent from the Discovery Zone

*ERSEA*

WHCO adopted new recruitment strategies to increase the enrollment of eligible children and families. After reviewing its recruitment plan, the program identified a need to increase the community's awareness of Head Start services. This prompted the program to create a recruitment team that conducted weekly visits to social service agencies and local businesses. Furthermore, the program asked parents to play an active role in recruitment by sharing information within their community. These combined efforts supported the recruitment and enrollment of eligible children.

**Financial Audit**

On March 31, 2023, WHCO's Auditor, Olugbenga Olabintan, CPA, issued the financial audit with an unmodified opinion. There were no audit findings on internal controls nor compliance with major programs.

I have a good experience meeting other parents, sharing love, care, and support. Even though we are facing a challenge, they always keep us updated and posted. I have a good experience and communication with [my son's] teachers.

Parent from the Early Dawn Room

## OUR PROGRAM

*The Head Start Act, Section 644 (a)(1)(2) requires grantees to report to the public (C) the total number of children and families served, the average monthly enrollment (as a percentage of funded enrollment), and the percentage of eligible children served.*



### *Enrollment and Attendance*

In Program Year (PY) 2022-2023, WHCO was funded to serve 149 children. WHCO achieved enrollment of 52 by July 2023, with an overall average daily attendance of 79.05%.

WHCO's program year is December to November. Some of the 2022-2023 data, below, is from the prior program year.

*Average enrollment and attendance, by month, in PY 2022-2023*

	9/22	10/22	11/22	12/22	1/23	2/23	3/23	4/23	5/23	6/23	7/23	8/23
% of enrolled children/ funded enrollment	15.44%	24.83%	29.53%	28.86%	28.86%	30.20%	29.53%	30.20%	32.89%	34.90%	34.90%	*
Number of enrolled children	23	37	44	43	43	45	44	45	49	52	52	*
Program attendance	92.16%	86.16%	78.89%	72.52%	77.34%	79.25%	75.35%	80.07%	82.08%	74.58%	71.13%	*

\*Data not available at time of report

### *Eligible Children Served*

WHCO's Head Start service area includes ten ZIP codes in Manhattan: 10023 (Upper West Side), 10024 (Upper West Side), 10025 (Upper West Side), 10026 (Central Harlem), 10027 (Morningside Heights), 10029 (East Harlem), 10030 (Central Harlem), 10035 (East Harlem), 10037 (Central Harlem), and 10039 (Washington Heights).

Children must meet an age requirement to participate in Early Head Start or Head Start. The age requirement is birth to two years old (up to age 3) for Early Head Start and three to five years old for Head Start. Children are eligible to receive services if they meet one or more of the Head Start/Early Head Start eligibility requirements: their family has an income at or below the federal poverty level, the family is eligible for public assistance (e.g., TANF, SSI), the child is homeless, or the child is in foster care. Further, Head Start Program Performance Standards require that at least 10% of program enrollment be children eligible for services under IDEA (i.e., early intervention and preschool special education).

On April 21, 2022, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families issued Information Memorandum ACF-IM-HS-22-03. This communication added SNAP to the category of public assistance, noted above. This means that children in families that receive SNAP benefits are categorically eligible for Head Start Services.

The following table from the WHCO 2023 Comprehensive Community Assessment (CCA) provides estimated numbers of eligible children in the current service area.

**CCA Table 64. Estimated Number of Children in WHCO Service Area Eligible for Head Start/Early Head Start (August 2023)<sup>1</sup>**

Eligibility Criteria	Estimated Number of Eligible Children in Service Area		
	Age Birth -3 (EHS)	Age 3-5 (HS)	Total Age Birth to 5
Income-eligible children	4,116	2,746	6,862
Income-eligible pregnant women	1,156	n/a	1,156
Children experiencing homelessness	n/a	>2	>2
Children in foster care	113	87	200
Children with disabilities	785	1,293	2,078
Children receiving public assistance	4,858	3,238	8,096

<sup>1</sup> The source for each of the data points in this table is described in the CCA document.

## HEALTH, DENTAL, MENTAL HEALTH, AND NUTRITION

*The Head Start Act, Section 644 (a)(1)(2) requires grantees to report to the public (E) the percentage of enrolled children that received medical and dental exams.*

### *Immunization Status*

Per the 2022 Program Information Report (PIR), at the end of enrollment, 40 children were determined by a health care professional to be up-to-date on all immunizations appropriate for their age; and 3 children were determined to have received all immunizations possible at the time but had not received all immunizations appropriate for their age.

We've observed some improvements regarding his capacity to remove his clothes and his shoes. He has also made progress his pronouncing new words.

Parent from the Rainbow Room

### *45-Day Screening and Follow Up*

Per the 2022 PIR, 36 newly enrolled children had received a 45-Day Screening; 12 required follow-up.

### *Health Services Advisory Committee*

WHCO's Health Services Advisory Committee supports children's health and mental health. It provides guidance to staff and families that contributes to the delivery of high-quality health and mental health services.

### *Dental Health*

Per the 2022 PIR, 37 children had a source of continuous dental care at the end of enrollment. During the school year and at the end of enrollment, three children had dental needs identified during a routine dental exam and one had received the indicated dental services. WHCO partners with *Healthy Smiles Mobile Dental* for biannual exams and fluoride treatments.

### *Mental Health*

WHCO uses the Early Screening Inventory Revised – Preschool (ESI-R) and Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) as social-emotional screening tools.

### *Nutrition Services*

Per the 2022 PIR, 21 enrolled children were at a healthy weight, 14 were obese, four were underweight, and four were overweight.

## PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

*The Head Start Act, Section 644 (a)(1)(2) requires grantees to report to the public (F) information about parent involvement activities.*

Positive & Goal-Oriented Relationships			
Equity, Inclusiveness, Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness			
PROGRAM FOUNDATIONS	PROGRAM IMPACT AREAS	FAMILY OUTCOMES	CHILD OUTCOMES
Program Leadership	Program Environment	Family Well-being	Children are:
Professional Development	Family Partnerships	Positive Parent-Child Relationships	Safe
Continuous Learning and Quality Improvement	Teaching and Learning	Families as Lifelong Educators	Healthy and well
	Community Partnerships	Families as Learners	Learning and developing
	Access and Continuity	Family Engagement in Transitions	Engaged in positive relationships with family members, caregivers, and other children
		Family Connections to Peers and Community	Ready for school
		Families as Advocates and Leaders	Successful in school and life

### Family Services

WHCO Head Start offers comprehensive family services by Family Advocates who work with each family to serve as a link between home and available services in the program and throughout the community. The Family Advocates support families in setting goals and measuring growth.

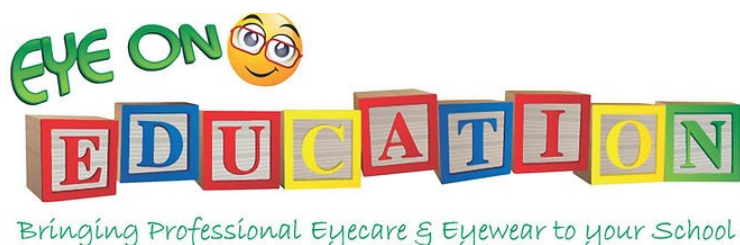
Per the 2022 PIR, one family received mental health services, two received English as a Second Language (ESL) training, ten received assistance in enrolling into an education or job training program, 33 engaged in a research-based parenting curriculum, 39 were involved in discussing their child's screening and assessment results and their child's progress, 14 were supported in transitions between programs, and 39 received education about preventative medical/oral health and nutrition.



### *Community Involvement*

WHCO has strong partnerships with community organizations to support children and families.

WHCO partners with *Eye on Education*, which offers vision screenings, and *Workforce 1*, which offers employment opportunities and job training.



WHCO participates in the *Union Settlement Asthma Initiative*, which enables the program to identify children who have or may develop asthma during the intake process.



If indicated, families receive an Asthma Action Plan and receive documented follow-up support. Through this

initiative, staff and parents receive training on asthma and how to control it. Family support staff participate in webinars and quarterly meetings on available resources and strategies to maintain a healthy environment. Parents are also invited to join these webinars and meetings.

I have been part of West Harlem since 2018, and they have been great! From the teachers to staff, my daughter has learn so much. Always looking forward to coming to class.

Parent from the Discovery Zone

## SCHOOL READINESS

*The Head Start Act, Section 644 (a)(1)(2) requires grantees to report to the public (G) the agency's efforts to prepare children for kindergarten; and any other information required by the Secretary.*

### School Readiness Goals

WHCO's school readiness goals are aligned with the Office of Head Start's Early Learning Framework and the New York Early Learning Guidelines.

### Child Outcomes

WHCO uses *Teaching Strategies GOLD®* (TSG) to measure each child's growth and development three times per year.

The reporting tool measures children's abilities against widely held expectations.

The follow three charts show the percentage of children (three-year-olds, transitioning, and all children) whose performance was on-target per developmental domain at each checkpoint or season.



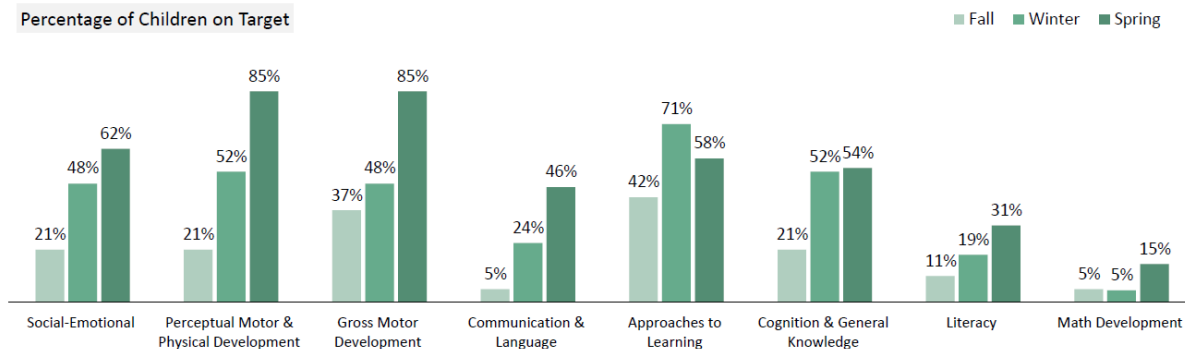
### Three-Year-Old Children

2022-2023 Program Year | Spring

#### Child Outcomes for Program Year:

The percentage of children who scored on-target (meeting expectations) for every objective within a domain based on TSG expectations.

Percentage of Children on Target



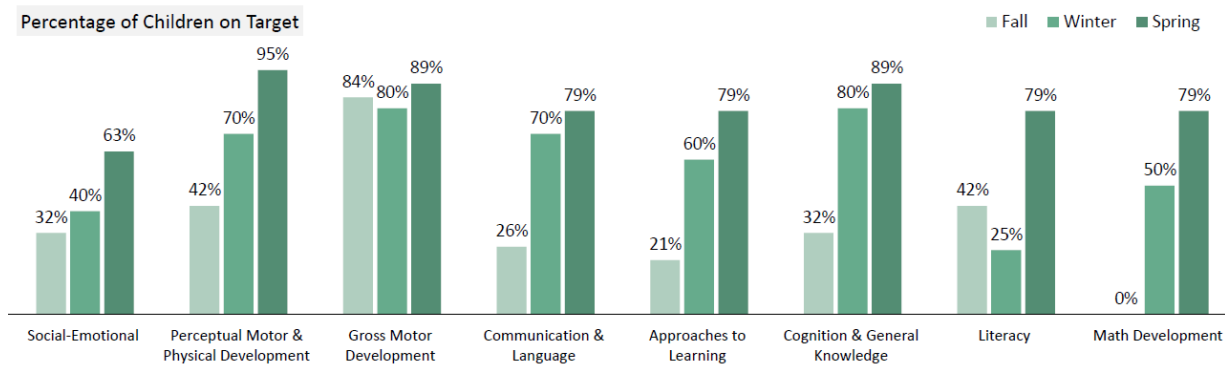
## Transitioning Children

2022-2023 Program Year | Spring

### Child Outcomes for Program Year:

The percentage of children who scored on-target (meeting expectations) for every objective within a domain based on TSG expectations.

Percentage of Children on Target



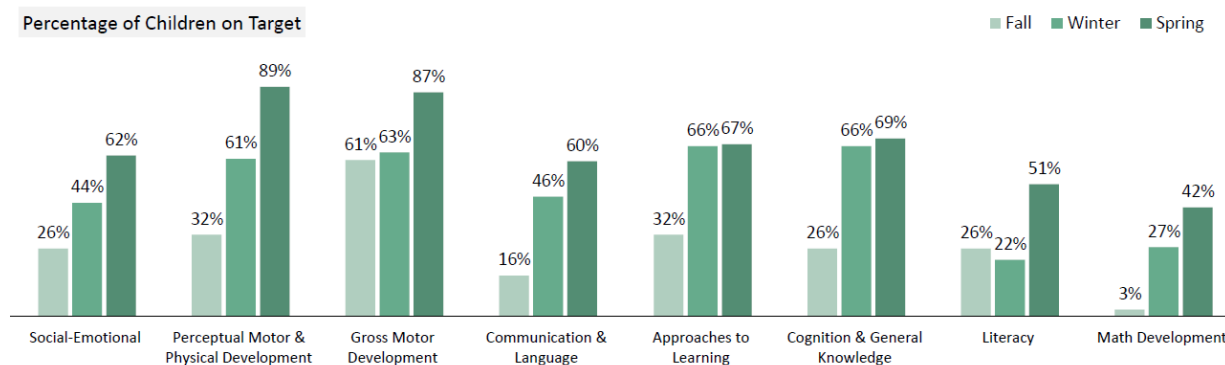
## All HS Children

2022-2023 Program Year | Spring

### Child Outcomes for Program Year:

The percentage of children who scored on-target (meeting expectations) for every objective within a domain based on TSG expectations.

Percentage of Children on Target



[My daughter] has learned so much in the short time she has been going to West Harlem. She enjoys the students as well as the teachers. The staff are extremely helpful and caring. Thank You, West Harlem.

Parent at West Harlem Community Organization Head Start