



HEAD START COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2018

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Introduction

Purpose

As a Community Action Agency and Federal Head Start Grantee, KOOTASCA Community Action is responsible for understanding the changing needs of the communities and peoples it serves. For that purpose, KOOTASCA Community Action undertakes this Head Start Community Needs Assessment and significant additional planning, research, and parent engagement to best meet the needs of our community.

Report Sources

- Parent Survey, (May 2018)
- KOOTASCA Community Action Community Needs Assessment, (January 2017)
- Demographical data from US Census Bureau - American Community Survey 2012-2016 (5 year), (December 2017)
- Other state and local data sources, particularly Minnesota Department of Education and Department of Health

Service Area

KOOTASCA Community Action operates Head Start programming in Itasca and Koochiching counties in Northeastern Minnesota.

During the 2017-2018 school year, the total cumulative enrollment in KOOTASCA Head Start was 217. The total funded enrollment was 200. The greatest number of children attended Head Start programming in the county seats of Itasca and Koochiching counties. Head Start sites are located in Grand Rapids, International Falls, Deer River, Taconite, Marble, Keewatin, and Northome.

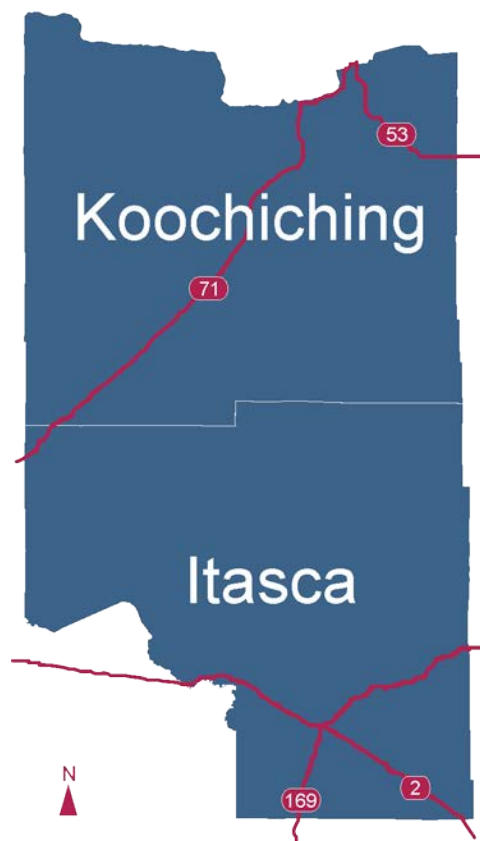
The total size of this service area is 5,771 square miles and is larger than the state of Connecticut or the country of Northern Ireland. From the southern border of Itasca County to the northern border of Koochiching County is 140 miles. Providing Head Start services in an area this large with low population density poses many challenges.

Itasca County is 2,928 square miles in size and is the third-largest county in the state of Minnesota. Itasca County's population of approximately 45,435 is widely scattered among 16 small cities and 42 organized townships. The county seat is Grand Rapids, with a population of 11,097. Located in the south-central portion of the county, Grand Rapids serves as a regional center and draws many workers, shoppers, visitors, and tourists from outlying areas. Nearly two-thirds of the population of Itasca County lives within 10 miles of Grand Rapids.

At 3,154 square miles in size, Koochiching County is the second-largest county in the state. Koochiching County is a sparsely populated county located along Minnesota's border with Canada. The county seat is International Falls; the largest city in the county, it is located on the Canadian border and has a population of 6,171. Other small cities in the county include Littlefork, Big Falls, Northome, and Mizpah. There are no organized townships in Koochiching County. The total county population is 12,841.

Requirements

Head Start Program Performance Standards 45 CFR Chapter XIII, §1302.11 (b): To design a program that meets community needs, and builds on strengths and resources, a program must conduct a community assessment at least once over the five-year grant period.



Demographic make-up of Head Start eligible children and families

According to the 2016 American Community Survey, there are 964 Head Start and Early Head Start eligible children in Itasca and Koochiching Counties- that is, 964 children under 6 years of age living below 125% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Utilizing school enrollment to estimate the number of eligible children, as shown in Table 1, we estimate that there are 390 Head Start eligible children in Itasca County and 100 in Koochiching County. Further, we estimate that there are 585 Early Head Start eligible children in Itasca County and 300 in Koochiching County.

Table 1: Head Start and Early Head Start Estimate of Eligibility

School District	Kindergarten Enrollment	Kindergarten Free Lunch Enrollment	Head Start Eligible Children	Early Head Start Eligible Children
Greenway 316	84	37	74	111
Deer River 317	74	40	80	120
Grand Rapids 318	303	100	200	300
Nashwauk-Keewatin 319	45	18	36	54
Itasca Total	506	195	390	585
International Falls 361	74	31	62	186
Littlefork-Big Falls 362	26	10	20	60
South Koochiching 363	19	9	18	54
Koochiching Total	119	50	100	300
Total	625	245	490	885

Source: Minnesota Department of Education. 2017-2018 Special Population Enrollment

Note: Free lunch enrollment eligibility is based on 130% percent of the Federal Poverty Line (for families who apply). To arrive at the number of children income eligible for Head Start, Kindergarten free-lunch enrollment was multiplied by two (ages 3 and 4). To arrive at number of children income eligible for Early Head Start, the free-lunch enrollment was multiplied by three (ages birth to 1, 1, and 2).

Race/Ethnicity

Table 2: Race and Ethnicity of Residents by Poverty Status

Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin	Itasca County			Koochiching County		
	Total	Below poverty level	Percent below poverty level	Total	Below poverty level	Percent below poverty level
White alone	41,314	5,064	12.3%	11,893	1,772	14.9%
Black or African American alone	154	17	11.0%	90	90	100.0%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	1,453	357	24.6%	451	160	35.5%
Asian alone	188	30	16.0%	49	34	69.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	5	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%
Some other race alone	97	25	25.8%	0	0	0.0%
Two or more races	1,052	393	37.4%	158	83	52.5%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	514	214	41.6%	22	0	0.0%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	41,013	4,958	12.1%	11,878	1,772	14.9%

Source: US Census Bureau. American Community Survey 2012-2016, (December 2017)

Language

Table 3: Language Spoken at Home for the Population 5 Years and Over in Poverty

	Itasca County	Koochiching County	Total
5 to 17 years	1,421	424	1,845
Speak only English	1,374	418	1,792
Speak Spanish	12	0	12
Speak other Indo-European languages	0	6	6
Speak Asian and Pacific Island languages	2	0	2
Speak other languages	33	0	33
18 years and over	4,006	1,594	5,600
Speak only English	3,843	1,495	5,338
Speak Spanish	41	0	41
Speak other Indo-European languages	17	21	38
Speak Asian and Pacific Island languages	14	21	35
Speak other languages	91	57	148

Source: US Census Bureau. American Community Survey 2012-2016, (December 2017)

Children in Foster Care

Table 4: Number of children in out-of-home care by age and agency, 2016

	Birth - 2 years	3 - 5 years	6 - 8 years	9 - 11 years	12 - 14 years	15 - 17 years	18 or older	Total children
Itasca County	46	38	33	34	50	74	11	286
Koochiching County	9	5	2	7	14	20	2	59
Total	55	43	35	41	64	94	13	345

Source: Minnesota Department of Human Services. Minnesota's Out-of-Home Care and Permanency Report, 2016 (Oct. 2017)

Table 5: Number of children in out-of-home care by race, ethnicity, and agency, 2016

	African American / Black	American Indian	Asian or Pacific Islander	Two or more races	Unknown /declined	White	Total children	Hispanic (any race)
Itasca County	*	38	*	30	*	211	286	*
Koochiching County	*	12	*	*	*	43	59	*
Total	*	50	*	30	*	254	345	*

Source: Minnesota Department of Human Services. Minnesota's Out-of-Home Care and Permanency Report, 2016 (Oct. 2017)

*The number of children is less than seven and is omitted to prevent identification of individuals. Totals include the omitted data.

Children with disabilities

During the 2017-2018 school year, a total of 56 Head Start children in Itasca and Koochiching counties had an Individualized Education Program (IEP), indicating that they had been determined eligible to receive special education. The diagnosed disabilities among this group were speech or language impairments, 4; Autism, 1; and non-categorical/developmental delay, 51.

According to the US Census Bureau 2012-2016 5-year estimates, 79 (± 67) children four years old or younger had a disability in Itasca County and 10 (± 28) children four years old or younger in Koochiching County had a disability.

Community agencies providing services for children with disabilities

Services for children with disabilities in Itasca and Koochiching counties include Early Childhood Special Education, KOOTASCA Community Action, Interagency Early Intervention Committees, Northern Lakes Special Education Co-op, and the Forget-Me-Not Foundation.

Other agencies that provide services to children with disabilities include:

The PACER Center – A Minnesota coalition concerned with education of children and youth with physical, mental, emotional and behavioral disabilities.

The University of Minnesota Extension Service – Provides information and resources as requested by professionals and families.



Table 6: Data regarding the education, health, nutrition, and social service needs of Head Start children and their families

Head Start	2015-2016 School Year	2017-2018 School Year
Number of children with household income below 100 percent of federal poverty line.	131	101
Number of children with health insurance.	216	215
Number enrolled in Medicaid and/or CHIP.	201	186
Number of children with chronic condition.	56	24
Number of children overweight.	55	36
Number of children obese.	47	50
Number of children for whom a mental health professional provided three or more consultations with program staff.	66	61
Number of children for whom a mental health professional facilitated a referral for mental health services.	42	6
Number of children who had an Individualized Education Program or Individualized Family Service Plan.	59	56
Number of families who received emergency/crisis intervention.	138	102
Number of families who received housing assistance.	132	81
Number of families that experienced homelessness.	7	16
Number of single-parent families in which the parent/guardian was working.	60	72
Number of single-parent families in which the parent/guardian was not working.	45	39
Number of two-parent families in which one or both parents/guardians were working.	82	81
Number of two-parent families in which both parents/guardians were not working.	19	12
Highest level of education obtained by the child's parent(s)/guardian(s)		
An advanced degree or baccalaureate degree	19	10
An associate degree, vocational school, or some college	102	118
High school graduate or GED	74	70
Less than high school graduate	11	6

Source: 2017-2018 KOOTASCA Community Action Head Start PIR

Children and Youth Issues	
Percent who said it is a serious or somewhat a serious problem	Head Start Parents (n=53)
Money to pay for after-school opportunities	34%
Money to pay for child care	26%
Recreational opportunities during the school year at a low cost	26%
Finding child care for a sick child	23%
Child care that is reliable	21%
Finding evening/night or weekend child care	21%
Care for your children so you can get a break (respite)	21%
Non-athletic after-school opportunities	19%
Transportation for a child to after-school opportunities	17%
Child care in a convenient place	15%
Summer child care	15%
Helping teens stay out of trouble	15%
Child care that is safe	13%
Safe and secure community spaces for youth	13%
Finding child care for a child with special needs (disabilities)	9%
After-School care for children	9%
Help with school work (tutoring)	8%
Jobs for teens	8%
Assistance with parenting concerns	8%
Driver's education for teens	8%
Finding infant care	4%
Helping teens understand the consequences of alcohol and drug use	4%

Employment Issues	
Percent who said it is a serious or somewhat a serious problem	Head Start Parents (n=53)
Finding a job that pays enough to meet your needs	45%
Finding a job that provides health insurance	42%
Finding a job	28%
Work hours make it difficult to find child care	28%
Dissatisfied with employment	28%
Experienced difficulty in finding a job (2yrs)	28%
Clothes to wear for interviewing or on-the-job	23%
Necessary skills and/or training to get a job or for advancement	15%
Help with resume writing and interviewing skills	11%
Transportation to get to work	9%
Loan to start your own business	8%
Information about starting your own business	6%

Health Issues	
Percent who said it is a serious or somewhat a serious problem	Head Start Parents (n=53)
Dealing with other emotional or mental health problems	36%
Dealing with a physical health problem	30%
Having trouble doing things that you normally enjoy or feeling sad, empty, and blue	28%
Enough money to pay for eye care or repair of glasses	17%
Help filling out insurance forms for billing and payments	11%
Health insurance coverage	8%
Dental insurance coverage	8%
Enough money to pay for prescription drugs	8%
Getting information on how to stay healthy	6%
Help paying for mental health services	6%
A doctor you can go to	4%
Assistance taking care of an elderly or disabled person	4%
A dentist you can go to	2%

Source: KOOTASCA Community Action Needs Assessment, Survey of Head Start Parents

Transportation Issues	
Percent who said it is a serious or somewhat a serious problem	Head Start Parents (n=53)
Money to buy a car	43%
Money to buy gas	42%
Assistance in maintaining a vehicle and car repairs	34%
Money to pay for car insurance	30%
Reliability of your vehicle	26%
Money to pay for license tabs	25%
Learning how to maintain a car	19%
Reliable transportation to meet household needs	17%
Knowing how to drive or getting a driver's license	9%
Legal issues that prevent you from driving	8%

Education Issues	
Percent who said it is a serious or somewhat a serious problem	Head Start Parents (n=53)
Having enough money to attend training or college?	42%
Having appropriate childcare in order to attend training or college?	36%
Money to purchase needed school supplies?	36%
Help with past college debt which prohibits future attendance in new training programs?	23%
Access to a computer to perform school work?	19%
Help applying for financial aid or assistance to attend training or college?	19%
Academic advising to know what field of study to choose to meet personal goals?	17%
Having appropriate transportation to attend training or college?	17%
Accessing the Internet to search for work or education opportunities?	15%
Help applying to college or other training?	15%
Information on how to go to school?	8%

Housing Issues	
Percent who said it is a serious or somewhat a serious problem	Head Start Parents (n=53)
Moved in past 2 years	43%
Enough room in your home for the people who live there	34%
Making your heating, electricity, or utility payments	32%
Dissatisfied with current housing	30%
Help making your home more energy efficient	26%
Finding affordable and decent housing	23%
Help with inside or outside household chores	19%
Help with minor home repairs	17%
Housing that is safe in which to live	15%
Homeless in past 2 years	11%
Making changes to better meet the needs of household members	9%

Quality of Life Issues	
Percent who said it is a serious or somewhat a serious problem	Head Start Parents (n=53)
Enough money each month to pay your bills	57%
Ability to pay your debt or take care of bad debt	55%
Affordable recreation	55%
Ability to start a savings plan	53%
Ability to get credit	47%
Enough money to buy clothing	43%
Enough money to buy food	36%
No one to talk to when things go wrong	28%
Access to legal help	25%
Having community members treat you poorly or disrespectfully because of who you are	25%
Establishing or receiving child support	13%
Understanding and filling out tax forms	13%
Understanding disability benefits and how to apply	11%
Dealing with alcohol or drug problems	6%
Support in raising grandchildren or another relative's child	4%

Source: KOOTASCA Community Action Needs Assessment, Survey of Head Start Parents

Typical work, school, and training schedules of parents with eligible children

Table 7: Head Start Parent Survey - Parent Responses

	9 months	12 months
How many months per year would you prefer?	89	52
	4 days	5 days
Which of the following options would best fit your needs?	41	105
	6 hours	8 hours
How many classroom hours per day would you prefer?	70	60
	Yes	No
Do you need childcare before 8:30am or after 2:30pm?	73	62

What would be the ideal drop-off time?	Number of Respondents	What would be the ideal pick-up time?	Number of Respondents	If you work or attend school, what are your typical hours?	Number of Respondents
6:15 AM	2	2:00 PM	4	6:30 am to 4-5:00pm	2
6:30 AM	6	2:30 PM	10	7:00 am to 3:30 pm	1
7:00 AM	18	3:00 PM	19	7:00 am to 4:00 pm	1
7:30 AM	15	3:30 PM	17	7:00 am to 7:00 pm	1
8:00 AM	18	4:00 PM	8	8:00 am to 3:00 pm	6
8:15 AM	1	4:30 PM	3	8:00 am to 4:00 pm	1
8:30 AM	21	5:00 PM	13	8:00 am to 5:00 pm	1
Total	81	5:30 PM	12	8:30 am to 5:30 pm	1
		6:00 PM	6	9:00 am to 2:00 pm	2
		Total	82	9:00 am to 5:30 pm	2
				9:00am to 3-3:30pm	4
				12:00 am to 8:00 am	1
				1:45 pm to 10:15 pm	1
				3:00 pm to 10:00 pm	1
				10:00 pm to 6:00 am	1
				School Day	2
				Varies Regularly / No set schedule	12
				Total	40

Source: Head Start Parent Survey (May 2018)

Other child development and childcare programs that are serving Head Start eligible children

School Readiness and Early Childhood Family Education

The school districts in both Itasca and Koochiching counties provide School Readiness and Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) programming. School Readiness is specifically designed for high-risk children ages 3-5 and consequently serves many Head Start eligible children. ECFE is provided to all children ages 0-5, however, it also serves a high percentage of Head Start eligible children.

In Itasca County during the 2017-2018 school year, 405 children received some form of school readiness services during- 253 qualified free or reduced price lunch. 319 of these children participated in School Readiness classes or services integrated with center-based Head Start, 59 children participated in summer Kindergarten preparation, and 47 children participated in integrated classes with Early Childhood Special Education. During the same period, 432 Itasca County children ages 0-5 participated in Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) classes.

In Koochiching County during the 2017-2018 school year, 133 children received some form of school readiness services during- 52 qualified free or reduced price lunch. 93 of these children participated in full-day early childhood programming, 38 participated half-day early childhood programming, and 2 children participated in integrated classes with Early Childhood Special Education. During the same period, 142 Koochiching County children ages 0-5 participated in Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE).

Invest Early

Another significant program that provides child development programming in Itasca County is Invest Early. Invest Early is a collaboration between the four Itasca County school districts, KOOTASCA Community Action, Itasca County Health and Human Services, Itasca Community College, Bemidji State University, and the Blandin Foundation.

The Invest Early partnership together provided nearly 500 early childhood slots for children six weeks old to kindergarten. The participating early childhood programs require a common application, and a team works to rank applications based on income and additional risk factors. Once applications are ranked, children are prioritized into the funding stream that best meets their needs. All Head Start income-eligible slots are filled first, then slots funded by the Blandin foundation, and finally School Readiness slots are filled. If a family drops from Head Start during the year, any income eligible child served through one of the other funded streams or on the Head Start Waiting list is placed into the Head Start slot.

More than 50 Invest Early slots have been dedicated to infants and toddlers because little programming has traditionally been available to them. At any one time, approximately 98% of the infants and toddlers served by Invest Early are Head Start eligible.

Child Care Centers

Table 8: Licensed Childcare Center Capacity in Itasca and Koochiching Counties

Child Care Centers*	City	County	Capacity	Ages Served
Our Redeemers Little Lambs Preschool	Cohasset	Itasca	54	Preschool
St Joseph's Preschool	Grand Rapids	Itasca	20	Preschool
St. Andrew's Preschool	Grand Rapids	Itasca	16	Preschool
Stepping Stones Preschool	Grand Rapids	Itasca	20	Preschool
Rockin Round The Clock II	Grand Rapids	Itasca	52	Infants; Toddlers; Preschool; School age
YMCA/Wee Folksgarten	Grand Rapids	Itasca	70	Infants; Toddlers; Preschool; School age

Source: Minnesota Department of Human Services Licensing Lookup (Sept. 2018)

*Excludes KOOTASCA Head Start and Invest Early Child Care Centers.

Family Child Care

Table 9: Licensed Family Childcare Capacity

City	Type of License				Total Licensed Capacity	Total Family Childcare Providers
	Church-based Care	Commercial Space	Employer-based Care	Residential dwelling		
Bigfork		14	12		26	2
Bovey				41	41	4
Cohasset				10	10	1
Coleraine				24	24	2
Deer River				22	22	2
Grand Rapids	14	24		477	515	44
Hill City				12	12	1*
Marble				14	14	1
Marcell		12			12	1
Nashwauk				36	36	3
Swan River				10	10	1
Taconite				12	12	1
Itasca Total	14	50	12	658	734	63
International Falls				186	186	15
Littlefork				14	14	1
Northome				10	10	1
Koochiching Total	0	0	0	210	210	17
Grand Total	14	50	12	868	944	80

Source: Minnesota Department of Human Services Licensing Lookup (Sept. 2018)

*Provider is located in Itasca County.

Community Resources that could be used to address the needs of Head Start eligible children and families:

KOOTASCA Community Action

Itasca County Health and Human Services

Koochiching County Community Services

University of Minnesota Extension

Second Harvest Northcentral Food Bank

Early Childhood Family Education

Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency

Advocates for Family Peace

North Homes Children and Family Services

Itasca County Family YMCA

Invest Early

Planned Parenthood

Salvation Army

Northland Counseling

Legal Aid

Minnesota Chippewa Tribe

Ross Resources

Falls Hunger Coalition

Area medical clinics

New Beginnings

Boys & Girls Club

Grace House

Servants of Shelter

Baby Steps Boutique

Bigfork Food Shelf

First Call for Help 211

Project READ

Project Care

Support Within Reach

These resources are generally widely available and affordable; however, a lack of transportation or awareness can create accessibility challenges for some. In addition, a lack of insurance or medical assistance can make it difficult to obtain medical treatment.



Additional Tables

Table 10: Head Start Trend Table

	PIR 2007-2008		PIR 2017-2018	
	Total	Percent Change	Total	Percent Change
Total actual enrollment	235	N/A	217	-8%
Total families served	272	N/A	204	-25%
Number of single parent families	143	N/A	111	-22%
Family receives TANF benefits	66	N/A	27	-59%
Families participating in the WIC program	235	N/A	121	-49%
Two-parent families w/ both employed	55	N/A	39	-29%
One-parent families w/ parent employed	89	N/A	72	-19%
Education less than high school	35	N/A	6	-83%
Education high school graduate or GED	140	N/A	70	-50%
Some college, vocational or AA degree	70	N/A	118	69%
Bachelor or advanced degree	29	N/A	10	-66%
Total number of children determined to have disabilities	53	N/A	51	-4%
Native American Children served	8	N/A	13	63%

Source: 2017-2018 KOOTASCA Community Action Head Start PIR