COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT ANNUAL UPDATE

Community Assessment Annual Update

MID FLORIDA COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC. (MFCS)
HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START
ANNUAL DATA UPDATE TO THE MFCS COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT
REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START

Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. (MFCS) is a private, nonprofit Community Action Agency serving Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Pasco, Polk, Sumter, and Volusia counties in central Florida. The Head Start and Early Head Start program is a central aspect of the agency's services and is provided in three counties within the broader service area (Hernando, Sumter, and Volusia counties). Throughout this report, the term "MFCS' service area" or "service area" will refer only to the Head Start/Early Head Start service area of Hernando, Sumter, and Volusia counties. MFCS is currently funded to serve 1,186 children and families; including 882 Head Start children in a full-day, school year, center-based program option. The agency implements an Early Head Start ("Early Head Start I") program that is funded to serve 112 children in a full-day, full-year, center-based program option. Early Head Start Expansion ("Early Head Start II") funding was awarded to MFCS in 2018 to serve 120 children and pregnant women through full-year, center-based (96 slots) and home-based (24 slots; including 2 pregnant women) program options. Beginning July 17, 2020, additional expansion funding was awarded ("Early Head Start III") to serve 40 children and pregnant women in programming in Volusia County. On September 30, 2021, MFCS was approved for a slot conversion to fund an additional 32 EHS children in center-based programming ("Early Head Start IV").

SERVICE AREA DEMOGRAPHICS

The total population in the MFCS' Head Start/Early Head Start service area is 866,745 and has continued to increase over the past 3 years, while birth rates continue to fluctuate in Hernando County and decline in Volusia and Sumter counties. Median age varies among counties in the service area, with the highest median age in Sumter County. The greatest racial and ethnic diversity within the service area remains in Volusia County.

NEEDS OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND RESOURCES TO MEET THOSE NEEDS

In MFCS' service area, there are a total of 8,009 children (2.9% fewer than December 2021) who are eligible for Head Start or Early Head Start services based on family income at or below the federal poverty level. In Florida, while data regarding the number of children experiencing homelessness has been impacted by varying collection methods during the pandemic, the needs remain substantial. The number of children in foster care has increased dramatically, with an increase of 19.5% from the prior year, mainly due to an increase of infants entering the foster care system.

There are an estimated 1,440 children birth to age 5 who may be eligible for participation in Head Start/Early Head Start based on having a diagnosed disability, representing a 7.1% decrease (110 fewer children) from the year prior. In the 2021-2022 program year, MFCS served 239 children with disabilities (86 EHS, 153 HS), equal to 21.7% of the agency's total Head Start enrollment and 18.7% of the agency's total Early Head Start enrollment.

For all the counties in the service area, the 2021-2022 high school graduation rate was above the statewide rate, for the first time in 5 years. Dropout rates have fluctuated in recent years and vary widely by school district, but tend to trend highest in Hernando School District, where the rate remains at twice the statewide rate.

The drug overdose mortality rate has increased dramatically in the service area and across the state, likely due to the extended impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the continued mixing of fentanyl into other illicit drugs. For other health-related factors, including chronic diseases such as obesity and diabetes, rates are high across the service area. Over time, in the service area, the rate of smoking has decreased or remained the same and the rate of diabetes decreased in all counties.

In the service area, the percent of babies born at a low birth weight is lower than the statewide rate in Hernando and Volusia counties, though disparities remain by race as the highest rates are among Black infants in all counties. Sumter County has rates of low birth weight for all races that are above the statewide rate; infant death rates also reflect great disparity by race, particularly in Sumter County, where rates are much greater for Black infants.

As the extended effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are beginning to be seen in more current data sources, it is clear that there have been multiple impacts on the needs of the eligible children and families in the services area.

AGENCIES SERVING ELIGIBLE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

In MFCS' service area, there are 399 child care and family child care programs available to families, with the capacity to serve 27,356 children, birth to school age. Nearly 49% of providers are participating in the state Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK) and 50% are School Readiness providers (accepting child care subsidies). Just under half (45.9%) of programs are serving infants; there are 24 Gold Seal providers in the service area.

From the start of the pandemic (March 2020) to November 2021, the service area saw a reduction of 32 child care programs, representing a reduction of 2,051 slots (a 7.2% decrease in capacity). As time has passed, some level of recovery has occurred. Between November 2021 and September 2022, the capacity

of the child care system in the service area has increased with the gain of 80 child care programs, representing 1,072 child care slots. Overall, from the start of the pandemic in March 2020 through September 2022, the child care capacity has been reduced in the service area by 3.5% (from 28,335 slots to 27,356 slots). Detailed descriptions of child care capacity by program type and zip code are available in Appendix C.

In MFCS' service area, there are many social services resources available to families, in addition to those offered by the grantee. MFCS continues to connect with resources within the service area and contiguous counties to expand access to comprehensive services for families.

PARENT, STAFF, AND COMMUNITY INSIGHT

Parents and staff were surveyed in 2021 to help guide decisions around program options and service delivery amidst the pandemic. MFCS continues to engage families and staff in partnership through daily informal communication. Improving staff communication was at the forefront of the 2022 intentional reorganization that realigned staffing positions to improve staff supports and collaborative efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MFCS has made significant progress toward the recommendations put forth in the April 2020 Community Assessment, which include:
- review of slot allocations and program types to address enrollment challenges and community-wide trends;
- a continued effort to provide support avenues for families to access extended hours of care so that they may work or attend school;
- implementation of enhanced communication strategies agencywide to ensure clear, consistent, and timely communications;
- exploration of job-specific training that staff feel would be most helpful; ensuring clear processes for staff to order materials and supplies;
- seeking participation opportunities in county or local-level stakeholder groups with Boards or leadership/advisory committees on which MFCS administrators may serve to focus on hard-to-solve issues, such as families' barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment;
- building community partnerships and leveraging agency services to increase access to comprehensive services in MFCS sites; considering providers outside the service area to fill service gaps;
- continued support for families experiencing homelessness and those on the brink of homelessness; and
- regular review of community data to adapt to the impact of COVID-19 on communities.

CONTENTS

LIMITATIONS OF DATA (2020 US CENSUS DATA)

U.S. Census Bureau data in this data update is reported from the American Community Survey (ACS),[i] an annual survey that is provided to help determine how more than $675 billion in federal and state funds are distributed each year. On March 17, 2022, the Census Bureau released the 2016-2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, after multiple delays due to quality and response issues for 2020 data collection.

Analyses of the quality of the 2020 Census counts indicated that certain demographic groups were undercounted.[ii] The Black or African American population, American Indian or Alaska Native population living on a reservation, the Hispanic or Latino population, and people who report being of "some other race" were all undercounted in the 2020 census. Adding to the challenge, many of the groups that were undercounted are the same groups that have been historically undercounted.

Additionally, young children (birth to age 4) have historically been undercounted in the Census. In 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau reported the largest undercount of young children since the 1970 Census.[iii] This is attributable, in part, to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to disrupted living arrangements and the closure of settings (e.g., child care, community organizations) where communications campaigns might reach families.

When examining U.S. Census data tables, the margins of errors for data on communities with small populations may be higher than communities with large populations. Zip code level data provided in the U.S. Census is a representation of the U.S. Postal Service zip code service area as a "Zip Code Tabulation Area."[iv] Zip codes are used by the Postal Service for mail delivery routes, and these boundaries may cross county, school district, or other geographic boundaries. A sum of zip code level data for a county will not necessarily total the county level data.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The 2022 Community Assessment Data Update serves as an update and supplement to the *Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. Community Assessment, April 2020* and the *2021 Annual Update*. The purpose of this report is to update essential data and to provide new and enhanced data to ensure Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. has the most current and comprehensive information for program planning and grant writing.

Per Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), Section 1302.11[v], community assessment requirements include:
1) The number of eligible infants, toddlers, preschool age children, and expectant mothers, including their geographic location, race, ethnicity, and languages they speak, including:
    a) Children experiencing homelessness in collaboration with, to the extent possible, McKinney-Vento Local Education Agency Liaisons (42 U.S.C. 11432 (6)(A));
    b) Children in foster care;
    c) Children with disabilities, including types of disabilities and relevant services and resources provided to these children by community agencies;
2) The education, health, nutrition, and social service needs of eligible children and their families, including prevalent social or economic factors that impact their well-being;
3) Typical work, school, and training schedules of parents with eligible children;

4) Other child-development, child-care centers, and family child care programs that serve eligible children, including home visiting, publicly funded state and local preschools, and the approximate number of eligible children served;

5) Resources that are available in the community to address the needs of eligible children and their families; and,

6) Strengths of the community.

Information in this report is organized according to the community assessment requirements noted above.

Throughout the report, COVID-19 related findings and data will appear as boxed text with blue shading.

Throughout the report, notable changes from the *2021 Community Assessment Annual Update* will appear as boxed text with light gray shading.

INTRODUCTION

Head Start and Early Head Start Program Summary

Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. (MFCS) is currently funded to serve children enrolled in both Head Start and Early Start programs in Hernando, Sumter, and Volusia counties.

In its Head Start program, MFCS is funded to serve 882 children through a full-day, school year, center-based program option.

In Early Head Start ("Early Head Start I"), MFCS serves 112 children in a full-day, full-year, center-based program option. Early Head Start Expansion ("Early Head Start II") funding was awarded to MFCS in 2018 to serve 120 children and pregnant women through full-year, center-based (96 slots) and home-based program (24 slots, including 2 pregnant women) options. Early Head Start Expansion ("Early Head Start III") funding was awarded to MFCS (with the program year beginning July 17, 2020) to serve 40 children and pregnant women through 16 full-year, center-based slots and 24 home-based program slots in Volusia County zip code 32114. On September 30, 2021, MFCS was approved for a slot conversion to serve an additional 32 EHS children in center- based programming ("Early Head Start IV").

Transportation is not provided to enrolled children. A summary of MFCS Head Start and Early Head Start funded slots by type and county is presented in Table 1. A detailed list of sites and funded enrollment by county is provided in Appendix A.

Table 1. Head Start and Early Head Start Slots by County and Program Type

County	Number of Funded Slots	County Where Provided
Head Start (center-based)	882	Hernando, Volusia, Sumter
Early Head Start I (center-based)	112	Hernando, Volusia
Early Head Start II (96 center-based and 24 home-based, including two pregnant women)	120	Hernando, Volusia
Early Head Start III (center-based and home-based)	40	Volusia (City of Daytona Beach)
Early Head Start IV (center-based/slot conversion)	32	Hernando, Volusia
Total	1,186	

During the 2021-2022 program year to date, MFCS has served 704 children in Head Start and 460 in Early Head Start (including 7 pregnant women).

As described in Table 2, more than 66% of enrolled children in Head Start and more than 65% in Early Head Start are eligible for participation based on family income. Approximately 47.6% of children enrolled in Head Start at age 3; 42% enrolled at age 4. Few children enrolled at age 2 (73 children; 10.4%). Nearly 35% of all children were enrolled in Head Start for 2 or more years.

In MFCS' Early Head Start program, 15.7% of children were under age 1 at enrollment, 29.6% were age 1, 35.7% were age 2, and 17.6% were age 3. MFCS served seven pregnant women (four in Early Head Start II, and three in the Early Head Start III grant).[vi]

Table 2. Number and Percent of Children Enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start by Primary Eligibility Criteria[vii]

Primary Eligibility Criteria	Number of Children (HS)	Percent of Cumulative Enrolled Children (HS)	Number of Children (EHS I, II, & III, IV)	Percent of Cumulative Enrolled Children (EHS)
Income-eligible	475	66.7%	299	65.0%
Public assistance	113	15.9%	66	14.3%
Status as foster child	19	2.7%	18	3.9%
Status as homeless	56	7.9%	49	10.7%
Based on other type of need, not counted above (e.g., over–income)	41	5.8%	28	6.1%
Exceeding over income	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	704	100.0%	460	100.0%

Compounding the historical pressures on the early childhood sector, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to sudden wage growth for child care workers and centers looking to rebuild lost capacity and retain workers. As of October 2021, average hourly earnings for child care workers had risen to $16.44, up 10.4% from the year prior, on top of already above-average wage growth of 4.3% between September 2019 and September 2020, and much stronger than the 5.8% wage growth for all nonsupervisory employees over the same period.[viii]

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) conducted a brief national check-in survey in January 2022, which found that 66% of respondents reported experiencing a staffing shortage that affected their ability to serve families; 52% of those with staffing shortages were forced to serve fewer children, while 37% had a longer waiting list. Months later, at the 2022 National Head Start Association Annual Conference, NHSA polled attendees on workforce issues in their programs and estimated that an average of 30% of staff positions are currently unfilled. Additional key survey findings include:

- 57% of respondents indicated compensation is the number one reason for staff leaving
- 85% of respondents indicated staff turnover is higher than in a typical year
- 90% of respondents' programs have closed classrooms permanently or temporarily due to lack of staff[ix]

Though MFCS maintains a healthy waitlist and has great interest from families and children, staff recruiting and retention are large challenges resulting in classroom closures due to staff shortages. Since the start of this school year, MFCS has had to shut down three classrooms due to staff shortages, across two counties and all program types. Many enrolled families are back to work, school, and training, and need consistent care for their children. MFCS has used stopgap measures to support families during closures (e.g., gas cards when families are forced to stay home with their children, unable to work and earn money because of classroom closures).

In September 2022, excessive flooding and related sanitation issues caused by Hurricane Ian also exacerbated these conditions as three MFCS programs (representing three Head Start classrooms and two Early Head Start classrooms) in the Daytona Beach area (EVEC, Holly Hill and Port Orange) had to close and most enrolled children were placed in alternative programs. Transportation to the new sites was a barrier for multiple families that could not accept the new placement. Thirteen children remain displaced as of November 2022 and were placed on "drop/wait" status in Child Plus and will be prioritized when spaces become available.

MFCS is consistently evaluating and modifying recruitment efforts and continues to advertise job openings, including extending opportunities to local universities with early childhood programs.

In Spring 2022, MFCS implemented a plan of action called "All Hands On Deck," which included filling classroom vacancies with all appropriate staff, across all service areas (e.g., Behavior Specialists as teachers) in order to support classrooms and avoid closures. MFCS leadership found that this approach began to impact the staff and the level of service that could be provided. For example, as Behavior Specialists stepped into classrooms to fill a support role, their expertise could not be utilized across classrooms to help facilitate comprehensive services and behavioral and social emotional supports, therefore diminishing their program-wide impact. While the approach allowed classrooms to remain open, it inadvertently reduced the level of meaningful quality services and compounded increasing stress levels for many staff members, who were working outside their area of expertise.

In program year 2022-2023, an intentionally modified version of "All Hands On Deck" was put into effect to preserve staff morale and retention and to ensure a high level of quality programming. As teachers or assistants resign, MFCS leadership has decided to close classrooms rather than using support staff as substitutes in order to prioritize the safety and well-being of all individuals in the program and to provide a higher level of quality. MFCS has found that without teacher continuity, there is an elevated level of risk of crisis and incidents in the classroom.

This program year, MFCS leadership has been engaged in multiple efforts to ensure quality programming and to optimally support staff. One priority has been working with the HR Director and HR Manager on a staffing project to realign the structure of the program and staffing positions. The focus of the restructuring was to both build in additional supports for teachers and enrolled children in classrooms, while simultaneously improving the overall monitoring systems across the agency.

The multi-pronged reorganization included an intentional restructuring of the Education branch to reduce staff turnover and to optimize supports and services for staff and children, as a marked increase of challenging behaviors in the classroom has been observed after the start of the pandemic. The creation of a Learning and Development role, under the Education branch of the agency, allows for the growth of the home based program and to provide additional supports to teachers serving enrolled children that are most at-risk. Inclusion of the School Readiness and CLASS Coaches in this area also allows for greater synergy and collaboration.

Additionally, the merger of the Inclusion Specialist and Behavior Specialist roles, under the Health branch, allows for advancements in mental health supports to staff to support enrolled children and families.

Lastly, the transition of a second Deputy Director position into a Senior Program Manager position served to support greater compliance for data and monitoring systems across the program and increases the ability to target training and professional development more strategically.

Looking forward, MFCS is planning to engage in a Wage and Benefits Comparability Study and continues an examination of the agency budget to ensure that compensation aligns with each staff position. MFCS also plans to utilize remaining American Rescue Plan (ARP)/Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) funds to support staff bonuses in a manner that does not create additional administrative burden to manage.

SERVICE AREA DEMOGRAPHICS

State and Local Government

As noted in the 2020 Community Assessment Report, the MFCS service area continues to include 18 federally designated Opportunity Zones (designed to increase economic development by providing investors with tax benefits) (Table 3).[x] The number and location of opportunity zones has not changed. Detailed maps of opportunity zones are available in Appendix B.

Table 3. Opportunity Zone Census Tracts by County[xi]

Hernando County (5)	Sumter County (1)	Volusia County (12)
12053040400 (Brooksville) 12053040502 (Brooksville) 12053041104 (Spring Hill) 12053041204 (Spring Hill) 12053041302 (Spring Hill)	12119910602 (western part of county)	East of I-95: 12127081000 (Holly Hill) 12127081700 (Daytona Beach) 12127081800 (Daytona Beach)* 12127082000 (Daytona Beach)* 12127082100 (Daytona Beach)** 12127082301 (Daytona Beach)** 12127082401 (South Daytona) 12127082415 (South Daytona) 12127082511 (South Daytona) 12127083008 (Edgewater) West of I-95: 12127090500 (Deland) 12127090600 (Deland)

*Included entirely in zip code 32114.
**Included partially in zip code 32114.

Service Area Demographics

The total population in MFCS' service area is 866,745, representing a 2.2% increase from 2019. Over the past 3 years, the population in Florida and in MFCS' service area has continued to increase (Table 4). Birth rates continue to fluctuate in Hernando County, while declining in Volusia and Sumter counties (Table 5).

Table 4. Population by Geographic Area and Year[xii]

Geographic Area	2018	2019	2020	Three-Year Trend
Hernando County	182,696	186,313	190,700	Increasing
Sumter County	120,999	125,044	129,938	Increasing
Volusia County	527,634	536,487	546,107	Increasing
Florida	20,598,139	20,901,636	21,216,924	Increasing

Table 5. Number of Births and Birth Rate (per 1,000 resident population) by Geographic Area (2020) [xiii]

Geographic Area	Number of Births (2000)[xiv]	Birth Rate[xv]	Three-Year Trend for Birth Rate
Hernando County	1,589	8.3	Fluctuating
Sumter County	456	3.4	Declining
Volusia County	4,726	8.6	Declining
Florida	209,645	9.7	Declining

In the service area, the median age trends higher than the statewide rate, and significant portions of the population in the service area are over age 65 (Table 6). This continues to be particularly true in Sumter County, where the destination retirement community, The Villages, is located.

Across the service area, the median age and distribution of age in the population did not change significantly; the percentage of the population under age 5 remains lower than the statewide rate across the service area, and Sumter County continues to have the smallest percentage of the population that is under age 5 (Table 6).

Table 6. Median Age and Distribution of the Population by Geographic Area (2020)[xvi]

Geographic Area	Median Age[1]	Percent of Population Under Age 5	Percent of Population Over Age 65[2]
Hernando County	48.8	4.5%	27.5%
Sumter County	68	1.9%	57.8%
Volusia County	46.5	4.7%	24.5%
Florida	42.2	5.3%	20.5%

Tables 7 and 8 describe the race and ethnicity of the service area population by county. The race and ethnicity of individuals in the service area did not change significantly from the year prior. Counties within the service area remain less diverse than Florida, as a whole. The greatest racial and ethnic diversity within the service area remains in Volusia County.

Table 7. Population (and Percentage of Population) by Race and Geographic Area (2020)[xvii]

County	White	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaskan Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	Some other race	Two or more races
Hernando County	165,207 (86.6%)	9,964 (5.2%)	547 (0.3%)	2,291 (1.2%)	111 (0.1%)	4,136 (2.2%)	8,444 (4.4%)
Sumter County	115,275 (88.7%)	9,253 (7.1%)	348 (0.3%)	1,244 (1.0%)	80 (0.1%)	1,344 (1.0%)	2,394 (1.8%)
Volusia County	433,267 (79.3%)	59,583 (10.9%)	1,794 (0.3%)	9,916 (1.8%)	73 (0.0%)	23,725 (4.3%)	17,749 (3.3%)
Florida	15,199,588 (71.6%)	3,381,061 (15.9%)	55,655 (0.3%)	590,668 (2.8%)	13,339 (0.1%)	699,596 (3.3%)	1,277,017 (6.0%)

Table 8. Ethnicity as a Percentage of the Population by Geographic Area (2020)[xviii]

Geographic Area	Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	Predominant Hispanic or Latino origin
Hernando County	14.1%	Puerto Rican (7.76%)
Sumter County	5.8%	Mexican (2.3%) and Puerto Rican (1.7%)
Volusia County	14.5%	Puerto Rican (6.9%)
Florida	25.8%	Other Hispanic/Latino origin (9.8%), Cuban (7.2%), Puerto Rican (5.4%), Mexican (3.3%)

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[1] Values greater than the statewide value are highlighted.
[2] Rates greater than the statewide rate are highlighted.

Poverty

The poverty rate of counties in the service area as compared to the state of Florida is provided in Table 9. While poverty has been fluctuating and declining across the service area in recent years, the poverty rate remains high in Hernando and Volusia counties.

Table 9. Poverty Rate by Geographic Area and Year (2018-2020)[xix,3]

Geographic Area	2018	2019	2020	Three-Year Trend
Hernando County	14.3%	14.1%	14.4%	Fluctuating
Sumter County	8.8%	8.2%	8.8%	Fluctuating
Volusia County	15.2%	14.3%	13.2%	Declining
Florida	14.8%	14.0%	13.3%	Declining

Across the service area, there continues to be disparity with regard to poverty rates by race (Table 10). Poverty rates are substantially higher among Black or African American individuals and those identifying as "some other race" as compared to other races.

Overall, the poverty rate by race remained fairly steady from the year prior; the greatest fluctuations were reflected in the population identifying as "some other race," which increased by 11.2% in Hernando County and by 26.2% (up from 0% in 2019) in Sumter County. Sumter County also reflected a 12.7% increase in the percentage of individuals below the poverty rate that identify as "Black or African American" (Table 10).

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[3] Rates greater than the statewide rate are highlighted.

Table 10. Number (and Percent) of Individuals Below Poverty Level by Race and Geographic Area (2020)[xx,4]

County	White	Black or African American	American Indian & Alaskan Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Some other race	Two or more races
Hernando County	22,250 (13.6%)	2,024 (20.8%)	157 (30.3%)	185 (8.1%)	0 (0.0%)	1,143 (28.4%)	1,259 (15.2%)
Sumter County	8,328 (7.5%)	1,905 (37.0%)	18 (8.1%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (10.0%)	219 (26.2%)	60 (3.0%)
Volusia County	49,827 (11.7%)	12,465 (22.4%)	66 (3.7%)	1,778 (18.0%)	8 (15.1%)	4,032 (17.3%)	2,589 (15.0%)
Florida	1,715,595 (11.5%)	673,421 (20.7%)	8,705 (16.2%)	69,508 (11.9%)	2,094 (16.1%)	128,890 (18.7%)	174,726 (13.9%)

Similarly, across the service area, the poverty rate among individuals of Hispanic or Latino origin is higher than that of individuals who are White alone. In the service area, the poverty rate is 3.1% to 8% greater for Hispanic or individuals of Latino origin) compared to Non-Hispanic or Latino Origin, White Alone (Table11).

Table 11. Number (and Percent) of Individuals Below Poverty Level by Ethnicity and Geographic Area (2020)[xxi,5]

Geographic Area	Hispanic or Latino Origin	Non-Hispanic or Latino Origin, White Alone
Hernando County	5,480 (20.6%)	18,174 (12.6%)
Sumter County	544 (10.5%)	7,982 (7.4%)
Volusia County	13,279 (17.1%)	41,845 (11.0%)
Florida	887,135 (16.4%)	1,083,283 (9.7%)

There continues to be disparities in the poverty rate with regard to family composition (e.g., one-parent and two-parent families). In families with a "female head of household (no husband present)," the poverty rate is substantially higher than "married-couple families" (Table 12).[xxii]

Overall, in 2020, the number of "female head of household (no husband present)" decreased in Florida by 2.6%, while also decreasing in Hernando (-2%) and Volusia counties (-5.9%), but slightly increasing in Sumter County (+1.8%).

Table 12. Poverty Rate by Family Status and Geographic Area (2020)[xxiii,6]

County	All Families with Related Children Under Age 5	Married-couple Families with Related Children Under Age 5	Families with Female Householder, No Spouse Present, with Related Children Under Age 5
Hernando County	13.6%	4.1%	26.5% (-2%)
Sumter County	25.0%	22.6%	35.3% (+1.8%)
Volusia County	13.9%	2.1%	36.6% (-5.9%)
Florida	13.8%	5.7%	34.2%

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[4] Rates greater than the statewide rate are highlighted.
[5] Rates greater than the statewide rate are highlighted.
[6] Rates greater than the statewide rate are highlighted.

Household Composition and Family Characteristics

There are many one-parent households served by MFCS' Head Start and Early Head Start programs, with the rate of one-parent families nearly double the countywide rates (Table 13). The rate of children in one-parent families in the service area fluctuated slightly by county in 2020 (Table 13).

Table 13. Children in One-Parent Families by Geographic Area[7]

Geographic Area	2019[xxiv]	2020[xxv]	Head Start (2021-2022)[xxvi]	Early Head Start (2021-2022)[xxvii]
Hernando County	23.5%	21.5%		
Sumter County	27.1%	29.9%	57.4%	58.3%
Volusia County	29.5%	28.9%		
Florida	29%	28.4%		

In Florida and in the United States as a whole, 4% of all children (birth-18) at all family income levels are in the care of grandparents.[xxviii] While not a one-to-one comparison, during the 2021-2022 program year, the rates of children in the care of grandparents in the Head Start and Early Head Start programs were 2% (14 out of 704 Head Start families) and 1.1% (5 out of 460 Early Head Start families) respectively. Eight children were in the care of other relatives (7 children in Head Start, 1 child in Early Head Start).[xxix]

ELIGIBLE CHILDREN AND PREGNANT WOMEN

Table 14 provides estimated numbers of eligible children in the service area compared to the current number of children served by MFCS' Head Start and Early Head Start programs (listed by primary eligibility type). Primary eligibility captures only one factor by which a child is eligible for services; many children have needs that fall into multiple categories.

Table 14. Estimated Number of Children in Service Area Eligible for Head Start or Early Head Start Services Compared to the Number of Head Start/Early Head Start Children Currently Served by MFCS (based on primary eligibility)[8]

Eligibility Criteria	Total Number of Eligible Children Birth-5 (% Change from 12/2021 Annual Update)	Number of Eligible Children (Birth-5) Currently Served by MFCS Head Start/Early Head Start[xxx]
Income-eligible children	8,009 (-2.9%)	774 (299 EHS, 475 HS)
Income-eligible pregnant women	1,520 (-5.2%)	7
Children experiencing homelessness	>84 (N/A)	105 (49 EHS, 56 HS)
Children in foster care	510 (+19.5%)	49 (22 EHS, 27 HS)
Children receiving public assistance	11,113 children (-14.5%)	179 (66 EHS, 113 HS)
Over income/Exceeding over income	26,760[9] (-0.8%)	69 (28 EHS, 41 HS)
Children with disabilities (may be eligible)	1,440 (-7.1%)	239 (86 EHS, 153 HS)

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[7] Rates greater than the statewide rate are highlighted.
[8] The source for each of the data points in this table will be described throughout the report.
[9] Number of children birth to age 5 less the number of children birth to age 5 living in poverty.

Poverty and Geographic Location

In order to reflect on the zip code level fluctuations in the service area, from 2020 as compared to 2019, Table 15a shows the poverty rate for children <5 years old and the number of children <5 years old living in each zip code for both years side-by-side.

Table 15a. Children Under Age 5, Child Poverty and Trends by Geographic Area (2019- 2020)[xxxi,10]

Geographic Area	Poverty Rate for Children <5 Years Old[11]		Number of Children <5 Years Old	
	2019	2020	2019	2020
34601 (Brooksville)	14.1%	14.5%	1,102	873
34602 (Brooksville)	19.6%	37.0%	46	27
34604 (Brooksville)	11.8%	14.2%	880	744
34606 (Spring Hill)	37.8%	37.8%	1,313	1,310
34607 (Spring Hill)	32.5%	39.2%	206	176
34608 (Spring Hill)	29.0%	25.6%	1,620	1,891
34609 (Spring Hill)	18.1%	18.6%	2,288	2,328
34613 (Brooksville)	15.9%	30.5%	497	675
34614 (Brooksville)	15.5%	10.5%	233	344
Hernando County	22.0%	23.1%	8,357	8,515
32162 (The Villages)	0.0%	0.0%	87	87
33513 (Bushnell)	19.8%	20.6%	647	582
33514 (Center Hill)	5.2%	1.7%	115	115
33521 (Coleman)	0.0%	0.0%	60	42
33538 (Lake Panasoffkee)	58.6%	46.2%	203	145
33585 (Sumterville)	0.0%	0.0%	95	69
33579 (Webster)	5.0%	3.4%	2,740	2,352
34484 (Oxford)	11.9%	0.0%	118	70
34785 (Wildwood)	23.1%	63.0%	585	826
Sumter County	25.5%	36.3%	2,229	2,318
32114 (Daytona Beach)	63.3%	54.2%	2,074	1,839
32117 (Daytona Beach)	48.7%	52.4%	1,157	1,184
32118 (Daytona Beach)	37.7%	34.1%	610	621
32119 (Daytona Beach)	22.0%	22.4%	987	839
32124 (Daytona Beach)	6.0%	6.9%	217	189
32127 (Port Orange)	26.9%	24.7%	1,399	1,152
32128 (Port Orange)	21.1%	15.6%	900	623
32129 (Port Orange)	12.7%	4.8%	770	1,015
32130 (De Leon Springs)	35.1%	27.0%	319	326
32132 (Edgewater)	21.5%	19.9%	302	301
32141 (Edgewater)	22.3%	19.0%	1,083	952
32168 (New Smyrna Beach)	14.6%	13.2%	999	1,012
32169 (New Smyrna Beach)	9.1%	15.1%	242	152
32174 (Ormond Beach)	15.6%	23.2%	2,225	2,504
32176 (Ormond Beach)	16.5%	29.6%	255	294
32180 (Pierson)	49.5%	59.8%	186	199
32190 (Seville)	100.0%	n/a	28	0
32713 (Debary)	10.2%	11.4%	888	878
32720 (Deland)	12.7%	6.5%	1,263	1,365
32724 (Deland)	23.0%	17.4%	1,597	2,155
32725 (Deland)	9.5%	6.8%	2,780	2,494
32738 (Deltona)	24.6%	16.0%	2,813	3,180
32744 (Lake Helen)	17.7%	14.0%	175	164
32759 (Oak Hill)	23.7%	42.3%	97	142

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[10] The margin of error on the numbers of children living in poverty in specific zip codes are high given small populations. Zip code level data should be interpreted with caution and understanding that there may be more or fewer children living in poverty than indicated.
[11] Rates above the statewide rate are highlighted.

Geographic Area	Poverty Rate for Children <5 Years Old[11]		Number of Children <5 Years Old	
32763 (Orange City)	14.1%	11.5%	1,199	1,292
32764 (Osteen)	0.0%	0.0%	83	36
Volusia County	23.7%	20.9%	24,630	24,936
Service Area Total[12]			35,216	34,769
Florida	22.4%	20.2%	1,109,315	1,112,667

Table 15b provides an estimate of the number of children under age 5 living in poverty, by zip code. This figure is calculated by taking the number of children under age 5 in each of the service area zip codes and applying the rate of children under age 5 living in poverty. In MFCS' service area, there are a total of 8,009 children who are eligible for Head Start or Early Head Start based on family income at or below the federal poverty level, representing 238 fewer children and a decrease of 2.9% from 2019.

In Florida, the poverty rate for children under 5 is 20.2% and is slightly higher in the overall service area; 23.1% in Hernando County, 20.9% in Volusia County, and 36.3% in Sumter County.

The poverty rate for children under age 5 in Florida decreased slightly (2.2%) in 2020, from the year prior, and followed a similar trend in Volusia County, with a 2.8% decrease. Hernando County reflected a slight increase of 1.1%, while Sumter County had the most significant increase in the service area, with an increase of 10.8% from 2019. Of note – the largest factor in the increase in Sumter County in 2020 was due to zip code 34785 (Wildwood), where the number of children under age 5 living in poverty increased 74% from 2019. MFCS staff corroborate this data and have noted a significant increase in applications to the Bushnell Center, which is the closest program to Wildwood, though due to the almost twenty mile commute, most applicants do not follow through with placement. Additionally, staff note the increasing waiting list in the Brooksville area in Hernando County.

Additionally, a selection of zip codes in the service area saw a significant uptick in the number of children living in poverty, including in 34613 (Brooksville, Hernando County), 34785 (Wildwood, Sumter County) and 32174 (Ormond Beach, Volusia County). Specifically, as can be seen in Table 15a., this is due to an increase in both the poverty rate and the number of children living in these zip codes:

34613 (Brooksville): +14.6% poverty rate for children under 5, +26.4% number of children under 5;

34785 (Wildwood): +40% poverty rate for children under 5, +29% number of children under 5;

32174 (Ormond Beach): +7.6% poverty rate for children under 5, +11.1% number of children under 5.

Table 15b. Children Under Age 5, Child Poverty and Trends by Geographic Area (2020)[xxxii,13]

Geographic Area	Child Poverty Rate (0-18)	Poverty Rate for Children <5 Years Old	Number of Children <5 Years Old	Number of Children <5 in Living in Poverty	Three-Year Trend for Number of Children <5 in Poverty[14]
34601 (Brooksville)	19.4%	14.5%	873	127	Decreasing
34602 (Brooksville)	29.9%	37.0%	27	10	**Increasing**
34604 (Brooksville)	19.0%	14.2%	744	106	Fluctuating

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[12] Service area total reflects the sum of county-level data.
[13] Rates greater than the statewide rate are highlighted. The margins of error on the numbers of children living in poverty in specific zip codes are high given small populations. Zip code level data should be interpreted with caution and understanding that there may be more or fewer children living in poverty than indicated.
[14] Increasing trends are in bolded text.

Geographic Area	Child Poverty Rate (0-18)	Poverty Rate for Children <5 Years Old	Number of Children <5 Years Old	Number of Children <5 in Living in Poverty	Three-Year Trend for Number of Children <5 in Poverty[14]
34606 (Spring Hill)	34.3%	37.8%	1,310	495	Steady
34607 (Spring Hill)	56.1%	39.2%	176	69	Fluctuating
34608 (Spring Hill)	18.5%	25.6%	1,891	484	**Increasing**
34609 (Spring Hill)	12.4%	18.6%	2,328	434	**Increasing**
34613 (Brooksville)	20.6%	30.5%	675	206	**Sharply Increasing**
34614 (Brooksville)	5.3%	10.5%	344	36	Steady
Hernando County	20.0%	23.1%	8,515	1,967	**Increasing**
32162 (The Villages)	0.0%	0.0%	87	0	Steady
33513 (Bushnell)	23.0%	20.6%	582	120	Decreasing
33514 (Center Hill)	6.7%	1.7%	115	2	Steady
33521 (Coleman)	4.0%	0.0%	42	0	Steady
33538 (Lake Panasoffkee)	41.4%	46.2%	145	67	Decreasing
33585 (Sumterville)	1.1%	0.0%	69	0	Steady
33597 (Webster)	4.6%	3.4%	2,352	80	Decreasing
34484 (Oxford)	3.2%	0.0%	70	0	Decreasing
34785 (Wildwood)	50.5%	63.0%	826	520	**Sharply Increasing**
Sumter County	25.9%	36.3%	2,318	842	Fluctuating
32114 (Daytona Beach)	44.5%	54.2%	1,839	996	Decreasing
32117 (Daytona Beach)	33.3%	52.4%	1,184	620	**Increasing**
32118 (Daytona Beach)	22.3%	34.1%	621	212	Decreasing
32119 (Daytona Beach)	22.8%	22.4%	839	188	Fluctuating
32124 (Daytona Beach)	20.5%	6.9%	189	13	Steady
32127 (Port Orange)	20.3%	24.7%	1,152	285	Decreasing
32128 (Port Orange)	7.7%	15.6%	623	97	Decreasing
32129 (Port Orange)	16.7%	4.8%	1,015	49	Decreasing
32130 (De Leon Springs)	27.2%	27.0%	326	88	Decreasing
32132 (Edgewater)	14.5%	19.9%	301	60	Fluctuating
32141 (Edgewater)	13.2%	19.0%	952	181	Fluctuating
32168 (New Smyrna Beach)	18.2%	13.2%	1,012	134	Fluctuating
32169 (New Smyrna Beach)	9.0%	15.1%	152	23	**Increasing**
32174 (Ormond Beach)	16.4%	23.2%	2,504	581	**Sharply Increasing**
32176 (Ormond Beach)	19.1%	29.6%	294	87	**Increasing**
32180 (Pierson)	26.8%	59.8%	199	119	Fluctuating
32190 (Seville)	12.6%	n/a	0	0	Steady
32713 (Debary)	9.4%	11.4%	878	100	Fluctuating
32720 (Deland)	12.0%	6.5%	1,365	89	Decreasing
32724 (Deland)	19.8%	17.4%	2,155	375	Fluctuating
32725 (Deland)	8.1%	6.8%	2,494	169	Decreasing
32738 (Deltona)	18.9%	16.0%	3,180	510	Decreasing
32744 (Lake Helen)	7.7%	14.0%	164	23	Decreasing
32759 (Oak Hill)	41.9%	42.3%	142	60	Fluctuating
32763 (Orange City)	10.4%	11.5%	1,292	149	Decreasing
32764 (Osteen)	6.2%	0.0%	36	0	Steady
Volusia County	18.2%	20.9%	24,936	5,200	Decreasing
Service Area Total[15]			34,769	8,009	Decreasing
Florida	18.7%	20.2%	1,112,667	224,436	Decreasing

A majority of income-eligible children in the service area reside in Volusia County (5,200 children). While income-eligible children reside throughout the county, 31% live in zip codes 32114 and 32117 in Daytona Beach, where the poverty rate among children under age 5 is over 50%.

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[15] Service area totals reflect the sum of county-level data.

In Hernando County, where there are 1,967 income-eligible children, a majority (75.3%) of those children reside in the four Spring Hill zip codes: 34606, 34607, 34608, and 34609.

MFCS Administrators report that one large struggle is not having sites available in the areas where the greatest needs exist. MFCS does have one program in Spring Hill (34609); the impacts and damage caused by Hurricane Ian have exacerbated this challenge.

There are far fewer income-eligible children in Sumter County (842), though, as noted above in 2020 the number of children under age 5 living in poverty in Wildwood increased 74% from 2019 (from 135 children to 520 children). Wildwood is now where the majority of income-eligible children in the County reside, followed by the towns of Webster, Lake Panasoffkee, and Bushnell.

As described in Table 16, the birth rate remains highest in Volusia County. Across the service area, as seen in the 2 years prior, 2020 birth rates remained lower than the state rate across race/ethnicities categories and remain the highest among Black and Hispanic individuals.

Table 16. Number of Live Births and Birth Rate by Geographic Area and Race/Ethnicity (2020) [xxxiii]

Geographic Area	Count	Rate per 1,000			
		All Race/Ethnicity	Black	White	Hispanic
Hernando County	1,589	8.3	8.8	8.0	11.3
Sumter County	456	3.4	6.3	3.0	8.9
Volusia County	4,726	8.6	12.2	7.9	10.9
Florida	209,645	9.7	12.2	8.8	12.1

The number of income-eligible pregnant women in the service area can be estimated based on data for live births and the poverty rate for young children.

For 2020, it is estimated that there are 1,520 income-eligible pregnant women in the service area (a 5.2% reduction from the prior year), a majority of whom reside in Volusia County (Table 17). This reduction is mainly a function of the fewer (78) live births in 2020, and a higher rate of poverty for young children, in Hernando County and particularly in Sumter County.

Table 17. Income-Eligible Pregnant Women by County (2020)

Geographic Area	Poverty Rate for Children <5 Years Old[xxxiv]	Number of Live Births per Year[xxxv]	Estimated Number of Income-Eligible Pregnant Women[16]
Hernando County	23.1%	1,589	367
Sumter County	36.3%	456	165
Volusia County	20.9%	4,726	988
Service Area Total		6,771	1,520

Race and Ethnicity of Eligible Children in Poverty

MFCS serves a diverse population of children. The race of enrolled children is predominately White (56.1% in Head Start and 42.2% in Early Head Start) or Black or African American (34.4% in Head Start and 44.6% in Early Head Start). Approximately 9.4% of children in Head Start and 12.6% in Early Head Start identify as biracial/multi-racial or other races. In the Head Start program, 41.8% of enrolled children's ethnicity is

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[16] Calculated by applying the poverty rate for children under age 5 in each of the counties in the service area to the number of live births per year (2020).

Hispanic or Latino, while the rate is 29.3% in Early Head Start. Children and families served by MFCS' Head Start and Early Head Start programs are more diverse than the general population.[xxxvi]

Language of Eligible Children

The primary language of individuals in MFCS' service area is English. Table 18 describes the percent of people over the age of 5 in the service area, by language spoken at home and county. There was no significant change in the languages spoken at home from the year prior.

Table 18. Language Spoken at Home (5 Years and Over) by Geographic Area and Percentage of Population (2020)[xxxvii,17]

Geographic Area	English	Spanish	Other Indo-European	Asian and Pacific Island	Other
Hernando County	88.6%	8.3%	2.3%	0.6%	0.2%
Sumter County	93.1%	4.4%	1.5%	0.8%	0.1%
Volusia County	85.7%	10.2%	2.4%	1.1%	0.6%
Florida	70.6%	21.8%	5.3%	1.6%	0.7%

During the 2021-2022 program year, a majority of families of children enrolled in the MFCS Head Start and Early Head Start programs spoke English as their primary language at home, at rates of 74.1% and 80.2%, respectively. Spanish was the next most common language spoken at home by enrolled families, spoken at rates of 24.9% (Head Start) and 18.3% (Early Head Start).[xxxviii]

Cultural Trends

A culturally diverse population exists within the entire state of Florida, and that diversity extends to the service area. The percent of the population that is foreign-born continues to be less than the statewide rate (Table 19). There have not been significant changes in the foreign-born population.

Table 19. Foreign-Born Population by Geographic Area (2020) [xxxix]

Geographic Area	Percent Foreign-Born	Percent of Foreign-Born Population that is non-US Citizen	Predominant Region of Birthplace for Foreign-Born Population
Hernando County	7.3%	29.0%	Latin America (49.0%) Europe (27.6%)
Sumter County	5.7%	37.6%	Latin America (42.8%) Europe (24.9%) Northern America (17.7%)
Volusia County	7.8%	35.3%	Latin America (46.5%) Europe (22.3%) Asia (17.7%)
Florida	20.8%	42.8%	Latin America (75.3%) Asia (10.7%) Europe (9.4%)

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[17] Rates greater than the statewide rate are highlighted.

Children Experiencing Homelessness

Over the past 5 years, Florida experienced a 16.8% reduction in the rate of Floridians experiencing "literal homelessness," which includes individuals with a primary evening residence that is not meant for human habitation, and since 2010, the rate has decreased by 55%. However, for the first time in more than 10 years, in 2022, the number of Florida resident experiencing "literal homelessness" reflected an increase.[xl]

To better identify and serve homeless families, key MFCS staff attended a 3-day intensive session regarding Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance (ERSEA), which clarified the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness for intake staff. MFCS leadership also note that their partnership and provision of Early Head Start and Head Start programming at the HOPE Place, which provides emergency housing for families, remains a priority as they continue to maintain the site and ensure the grounds are safe for children (e.g., additional fencing and landscaping). MFCS has begun tracking families' reasons for leaving the Head Start and Early Head Start programs to be able to understand the extent to which the lack of affordable housing in the service area plays a role.

Table 20 reflects the total number of homeless persons in families with children identified by Continuum of Care over the past 5 years. Due to modified "Point in Time" data in both 2020 and 2021 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the data for those years are not directly comparable to prior years' counts. The 2022 count reflects a larger number of total homeless persons in families with children than in the past 5 years.

Table 20. Total Homeless Persons in Families with Children by Continuum of Care (2018-2022) [xli]

Continuum of Care (CoC)	2018	2019	2020*	2021*	2022
Flagler, Volusia Counties CoC	199	301	300	178	322
Mid FL Homeless Coalition CoC (Citrus, Hernando, Lake and Sumter Counties)	285	178	180	128	182

* The 2020 and 2021 data are not comparable to the previous or current years' counts, as many CoCs did not conduct a count of unsheltered households due to COVID-19 related safety concerns.

Homelessness can be a significant stressor on families (e.g., food insecurity, poor overall health, reduced educational attainment) and has a significant impact on children including higher levels of behavioral problems, health problems, and academic performance. [xlii]

Over 25% of the homeless population in the state of Florida includes households with children. The 2022 point in time data reported that 6,360 families were homeless, as compared to 5,322 in 2021 and 9,163 in 2020 (data does not include families that are doubled up). [xliii]

The shortage of affordable rental housing remains a significant factor in families experiencing homelessness. As rental costs increase, families must pay a larger portion of their income toward housing costs. [xliv]

The number of homeless students in the service area remained fairly steady from past years (115 fewer than 2019-2020); Table 21 further describes the living situation of homeless students by school district in MFCS' service area.

Table 21. Homeless Students in Public Schools by School District (2020) [xlv]

School District	Sheltered	Shared Housing	Unsheltered	Motels	Total Homeless
Hernando School District	33	547	33	62	686
Sumter District Schools	11	54	11	16	92
Volusia County Schools	193	1,890	97	389	2,569
Service Area	237 (7.1%)	2,491 (74.4%)	141 (4.2%)	467 (13.9%)	3,347 (100%)
Florida	4,871 (7.6%)	46,897 (73.5%)	3,530 (5.5%)	8,548 (13.4%)	63,846 (100%)

Table 22 describes the percent of students in each school district in the service area who experienced homelessness in the 2018-19 school year as compared to the 2021-22 school year, reflecting a slight decrease in the percentage of students in 2021-2022. Volusia County Schools has an exceptionally high and steady rate of students who are homeless at 4.1%.

Table 22. Percent of Total Students Who Are Homeless (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 School Year) [xlvi,18]

School District	Total Homeless (Total Enrollment)		% Of Total Students Who Are Homeless	
	2018-2019	2021-2022	2018-2019	2021-2022
Hernando School District	696 (22,621)	686 (23,415)	3.1%	2.9%
Sumter District Schools	99 (8,675)	92 (8,912)	1.1%	1%
Volusia County Schools	2,667 (61,088)	2,569 (62,666)	4.4%	4.1%
Florida	79,949 (2,791,687)	63,846 (2,833,179)	2.9%	2.3%

During the 2021-2022 program year in MFCS' Head Start and Early Head Start programs, 84 children were experiencing homelessness, representing 6.4% of children in the Head Start (45 children) and 8.5% of children enrolled in Early Head Start (39 children). Among the 80 families experiencing homelessness, 31 acquired housing during the enrollment year (Table 23). [xlvii] Based on the number of children experiencing homelessness served by the Head Start and Early Head Start programs during the 2021-2022 program year, it is estimated that there are more than 84 homeless children eligible for Head Start/Early Head Start services.

Table 23. MFCS Head Start/Early Head Start Homelessness Services (2021-2022)[xlviii]

	Early Head Start	Head Start	Total
Total number of families experiencing homelessness that were served during the enrollment year	37	43	80
Total number of children experiencing homelessness that were served during the enrollment year	39	45	84
Total number of families experiencing homelessness that acquired housing during the enrollment year	14	17	31

Children in Foster Care

MFCS served 49 children who were in foster care at any point during the 2021-2022 program year (27 in Head Start and 22 in Early Head Start). This represents 3.8% of the total Head Start enrollment and 4.8% of Early Head Start enrollment. Of the Early Head Start children in foster care, 2.4% were referred to the program by a child welfare agency, while the rate was about 1.3% for Head Start children.[xlix]

In Hernando and Volusia counties, there are high rates of young children in foster care, particularly infants, well above the statewide rate (Tables 24 and 25). There are 510, birth to age 5, in foster care in MFCS' service area (155 infants and 355 children ages 1 to 4) who are categorically eligible for Head Start/Early Head Start services.

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[18] Rates higher than the statewide rate are highlighted.

In 2020, as compared to the year prior, the number of children in foster care increased in Florida by 19.5% (an additional 2,003 children). The service area saw similar trends with an increase in the number of infants in foster care, which increased over 70%, while the number of children ages 1 to 4 decreased slightly (-8.5%).

In a 10-year look back, the state trend also aligns, as the rate of infants in foster care in Florida in 2020 was the highest it had been since 2011 (4,822 infants); the lowest in 10 years was in 2018 (945 infants). [l]

Table 24. Number of Infants in Foster Care, Rate per 100,000, by Geographic Area (2019-2020)[li,19]

Geographic Area	Count		Rate per 100,000	
	2019	2020	2019	2020
Hernando County	13	44	841.4	2,799.0
Sumter County	1	3	223.7	680.3
Volusia County	31	108	651.4	2,308.7
Service Area	45	155		
Florida	1,044	3,149	482	1,535

Table 25. Number of Children Ages 1 to 4 in Foster Care, Rate per 100,000, by Geographic Area (2019-2020)[lii,20]

Geographic Area	Count		Rate per 100,000	
	2019	2020	2019	2020
Hernando County	105	76	391.2	279.1
Sumter County	17	17	232.1	228.5
Volusia County	266	262	359.1	351.2
Service Area	388	355		
Florida	7,244	7,142	220.4	214.1

There are also concerning rates of child abuse and neglect in the service area.

As described in Table 26, rates of children experiencing child abuse decreased in 2020 from the year prior, across all counties in the service area. Though, it is possible that this fluctuation in data has been impacted by the known underreporting of child abuse and neglect during the COVID-19 pandemic, and should be interpreted with a note of caution.

The highest rates of child abuse continue to be reflected in Volusia County, where the rate of children experiencing child abuse is over 30% higher than the statewide rate.

Table 26. Children Experiencing Child Abuse, Ages 5 to 11, Rate per 100,000, by Geographic Area (2019-2020)[liii,21]

Geographic Area	Count		Rate per 100,000		Rate Change (per 100,000) from 2019 to 2020
	2019	2020	2019	2020	
Hernando County	83	39	614.3	282.7	- 331.6
Sumter County	25	14	692.4	377.3	- 315.1
Volusia County	363	313	979.9	838.2	- 141.7
Florida	10,856	9,705	662.7	583.9	- 78.8

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[19] Rates higher than the statewide rate are highlighted.
[20] Rates higher than the statewide rate are highlighted.
[21] Rates higher than the statewide rate are highlighted.

Children with Disabilities

During the 2021-2022 program year, 153 children in the MFCS Head Start program, 21.7% of the total enrollment, had an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The most commonly diagnosed disability continued to be "non-categorical/developmental delay," followed by "speech or language impairments."

In the Early Head Start program in 2021-2022, 86 children or 18.7% of total enrollment, had an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), all due to "non-categorical/developmental delay." All of the 86 children with an IFSP received early intervention services.

As shown in Table 27, the percentage of students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade with a diagnosed disability continues to be higher than the statewide rate in all three counties. There have not been significant changes in the percent of students with a disability in the service area since the prior school year.

Table 27. Percent of Students with a Disability by School District (2021-2022)[22,liv]

School District	% Students with Diagnosed Disability (Pre-k though 12th grade)
Hernando School District	15.5%
Sumter District Schools	15.5%
Volusia County Schools	18.7%
Florida	14.7%

Early Steps

While the percent of Early Steps referrals served in Hernando is higher than the statewide rate, the rates in Volusia and Sumter counties are below the state rate, as only 33.3% of referrals are served in Sumter County and 39.7% in Volusia County.

The percent of referrals that were served in Early Steps in Hernando and Sumter counties dipped during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, but began to recover on an upward trend in 2021, while Volusia County is still reflecting a decreasing rate of children served.

MFCS Administrators report that in Hernando County, providers only offer one day a month where they will accept or review MFCS referrals, which can significantly impact the timeliness of evaluations. MFCS does not currently offer EHS services in Sumter County. MFCS maintains a stronger referral partnership with Part C providers, such as the Children's Home Society in Volusia County, but regulatory requirements (DCF requires MFCS to conduct its own fingerprinting of Early Intervention (EI) service providers or a staff must supervise the EI provider) impacts the consistency of the evaluation process. This will likely change in January 2023 when a new centralized database becomes available to share all fingerprinting results.

MFCS serves children with disabilities in the Head Start and Early Head Start programs well above the 10% requirement.

In the service area, there are an estimated 1,440 children birth to age 5 with a diagnosed disability who may be eligible for Head Start/Early Head Start based on the required 10% enrollment of children with disabilities (Tables 28 and 29). This number represents a 7.1% decrease (110 fewer children) from the year prior.

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[22] Rates higher than the statewide rate are highlighted.

Table 28. Infants and Toddlers (Age 0-2 Years) Served by Early Steps by Geographic Area (2019-2021)[lv,23]

County	Number Served			Number Referred			Percent of Referrals Served		
	2019 Pre-Pandemic	2020	2021	2019 Pre-Pandemic	2020	2021	2019 Pre-Pandemic	2020	2021
Hernando County	174	152	182	339	348	341	51.3%	43.7%	53.4%
Sumter County	24	25	34	73	81	102	32.9%	30.9%	33.3%
Volusia County	516	455	455	1,100	1,002	1,147	46.9%	45.4%	39.7%
Total Service Area	714	632	671	1,512	1,431	1,590			
Florida	18,610	16,170	16,384	36,199	32,949	35,356	51.4%	49.1%	46.3%

The rates of preschool-age children with a diagnosed disability are well above the statewide rate in Hernando County (Table 29). It is of note that due to staffing shortages, the public schools in Sumter County are contracting out for therapy services this program year and as a result children enrolled at the Bushnell Program, who receive services, will receive those virtually.

Table 29. Children Ages 3-5 with Disabilities Receiving Pre-K Services by Geographic Area (2020-2021)[lvi,24]

County	Number of Children		Rate per 1,000 Children	
	2020	2021	2020	2021
Hernando County	332	286	783.0	740.9
Sumter County	56	54	197.2	263.4
Volusia County	530	429	488.0	487.5
Total Service Area	918	769		
Florida	25,704	20,864	392	413.9

Children Receiving Public Assistance

In MFCS' Head Start and Early Head Start programs, a majority of families receive state benefits. Receipt of other types of public assistance varies, as described in Table 30. As of April 2022, households with children accessing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits became categorically eligible for Head Start/Early Head Start services, which allows for a larger pool of eligible families.

Additionally, according to the Florida Department of Children and Families, beginning in late October 2022, Volusia County residents impacted by Hurricane Ian, are eligible for benefits approved through Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP), which will provide food assistance to those who are not already receiving food assistance benefits through SNAP.[lvii]

Table 30. Number and Percent of MFCS Head Start and Early Head Start Families That Received Federal or Other Assistance (At Enrollment, (2021-2022)[lviii]

Program	TANF	SSI	WIC	SNAP
Early Head Start	7 (1.5%)	50 (10.9%)	219 (47.6%)	272 (59.1%)
Head Start	9 (1.3%)	90 (12.8%)	28.3 (44.9%)	381 (54.1%)

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[23] Rates below the statewide rate are highlighted.
[24] Rates higher than the statewide rate are highlighted.

Table 31 describes the percent of individuals eligible for Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) served by year and county in the service area. Access rates are higher than the statewide rate in Sumter County. However, in Volusia County, only 44.1% of individuals eligible for WIC are receiving the benefit, even fewer than in 2020.

Table 31. WIC Access: Percent (and Number) of WIC-Eligible Individuals Served by Year and Geographic Area (2017-2021)[lix]

Geographic Area	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Hernando County	73.5%	71.0%	66.6%	64.6% (3,258 individuals)	59.9% (2,833 individuals)
Sumter County	70.0%	74.5%	69.2%	67.9% (942 individuals)	69% (913 individuals)
Volusia County	67.8%	63.1%	58.7%	55.6% (8,599 individuals)	44.1% (6,674 individuals)
Florida	69.3%	.8%	64.3%	64.8% (420,640 individuals)	63% (400,966 individuals)

Table 32. Children Living in Households that Received Public Assistance in the Past 12 Months (2020)

County	Percent of Children (0-18) Living in Households that Receive Public Assistance [lx,25]	Number of Children Under Age 5	Number of Children Under Age 5 Living in Households that Receive Public Assistance[26]	
			2019	2020
Hernando County	34.8%	8,515	2,891	2,963
Sumter County	37.5%	2,318	2,229	869
Volusia County	29.2%	24,936	7,868	7,281
Service Area Total		35,769	12,998	11,113

There are an estimated 11,113 children eligible for Head Start/Early Head Start in the service area based on receipt of public assistance (Table 32), a 14.5% decrease (1,885 fewer children) from the prior year. This is estimated based on the percent of children (0-18) living in households that receive public assistance and the number of children under age 5 in each county.

NEEDS OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The needs of children and families in MFCS' Head Start/Early Head Start service area are multi-faceted and interconnected. In an area where there is great diversity of need, families experience many of the factors that contribute to the cycle of poverty within their communities. Together with other agencies, MFCS strives to meet the needs as a community partner, serving the area's neediest families.

Education

For all the counties in the service area, the 2020-2021 high school graduation rate was above the statewide rate for the first time in 5 years, as illustrated in Table 33.

In Florida, disparity by race and ethnicity among high school students not graduating on time remains.[27] During the 2020-2021 school year, while 8.2% of non-Hispanic White students in the state did not graduate

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[25] Public assistance includes Supplemental Security Income (SSI), cash public assistance, or food stamps/SNAP.
[26] Calculated based on the number of children under age 5 and the percent of children (0-18) living in households that receive public assistance.
[27] Defined as percentage of freshman class students that did not graduate in 4 years.

on time, rates were higher for Black or African American students (12.9%) and Hispanic or Latino students (10.6%).[lxi]

Table 33. Graduation Rates by School District, 2016-2017 through 2020-2021[lxii,28]

District	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Hernando School District	75.0%	70.7%	88.4%	91.7%	91%
Sumter District Schools	85.3%	87.8%	87.2%	88%	91%
Volusia County Schools	76.6%	78.7%	84.5%	87.7%	91.9%
Florida	82.3%	86.1%	86.9%	90%	90.1%

Dropout rates vary widely by school district. In MFCS' service area rates trend highest in Hernando School District, where the rate remains at twice the statewide rate (Table 34).

Florida's dropout rates vary by race/ethnicity. The subgroup with the largest decrease since 2016-2017 was American Indian or Alaska Native (-2.5%). The same subgroup had the largest one-year decrease at -4.5%. [lxiii]

Table 34. Dropout Rates by School District and School Year (2017-2018 to 2020-2021)[lxiv,29]

District	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Hernando School District	7.9%	5.5%	6.1%	6.4%
Sumter District Schools	5.5%	4.1%	5.4%	3.7%
Volusia County Schools	2.8%	2.5%	1.6%	1.4%
Florida	3.5%	3.4%	3.1%	3.2%

The educational attainment of the adult population varies by county (Table 35). Sumter County remains the only county with significantly rates of individuals with a Bachelor's degree and graduate/professional degrees in the service area. There were no significant changes regarding educational attainment from the year prior.

Table 35. Education Attainment (Ages 25 and over) by Geographic Area (2020)[lxv,30]

Geographic Area	Hernando County	Sumter County	Volusia County	Florida
Less Than 9th Grade[31]	3.4%	2.0%	2.8%	4.6%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma[32]	8.2%	5.8%	6.4%	6.9%
High school graduate	33.8%	30.5%	31.5%	28.2%
Some college, no degree	25.1%	20.5%	22.9%	19.8%
Associate's degree	10.4%	9.2%	11.9%	10.0%
Bachelor's degree	12.6%	18.1%	16.1%	19.3%
Advanced degree	6.5%	14.0%	8.3%	11.3%

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[28] Rates lower than the statewide rate are highlighted.
[29] Rates higher than the statewide rate are highlighted.
[30] Rates higher than the statewide rate are highlighted.
[31] Rates higher than the statewide rate are highlighted.
[32] Rates higher than the statewide rate are highlighted.

The educational attainment among families served by MFCS' Head Start and Early Head Start programs continues to trend most toward "high school graduate or GED" (Table 36).

Table 36. Educational Attainment of Families Served by MFCS Head Start/Early Head Start Program (highest level of education obtained by parent(s)/guardian(s))[lxvi]

	HS: Number of Families	HS: Percent of Families	EHS: Number of Families	EHS: Percent of Families
Less than a high school degree	171	27.4%	100	25.6%
High school graduate or GED	342	54.7%	241	61.6%
Associates degree, vocational school or some college	71	11.4%	32	8.2%
Bachelor's or advanced degree	41	6.6%	18	4.6%
Total	625	100%	391	100%

Table 37 describes the overall performance grade for each school district in the service area. Schools are awarded points on up to 11 components, including those related to achievement, learning gains, middle school acceleration, graduation rate, and college and career acceleration.

> Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, school districts were provided the flexibility to opt in to have their school grade or school improvement rating officially recorded and reported. None of the school districts in the service area opted to receive a performance grade in the 2020-21 academic year.

While Hernando School District and Volusia County Schools' performance grade remained the same from the last recorded grade in 2019, Sumter School District's grade was reduced from A to a B in 2022.

Table 37. School District Performance Grades (2022)[lxvii]

School District	Grade
Hernando School District	B
Sumter District Schools	B
Volusia County Schools	B

Each of the 61 elementary schools in the service area also received a grade, which show disparities and educational needs evident at the neighborhood level. Table 38 reflects the ratings of each elementary school, by county.

Table 38. Elementary School Ratings by School District (2022)[lxviii]

School District	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Grade D	Grade I[33]	Total
Hernando School District	1 Chocachatti	2 Spring Hill Pine Grove	6 Brooksville Westside John D Floyd Deltona Moton Golf Coast	1 Eastside	1 Suncoast	11
Sumter School District	2 Bushnell Lake Panasoffkee	0	2 Webster Wildwood	0	0	4
Volusia School District	7 Ormond Chisholm	16 Citrus Grove Samsula	17 Indian River West Side	6 Person Orange City	0	46

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[33] Schools graded "I," either did not test at least 95 percent of eligible students or it is under review because of allegations that test security or administration was compromised, raising concerns of its validity or integrity.

	Pine Trail R.J Longstreet Sweetwater Coronado Cypress Creek	Timbercrest Forest Lake Debary Volusia Pines Port Orange Read-Patillo Spruce Creek Sugar Mill Tomoka Pathways Osteen Horizon George Marks Edgewater	Champion Palm Terrace Woodward Ave. Louis McInnis Deltona Lakes Enterprise Beachside S. Daytona Edith Starke Discovery Reading Edge Friendship Freedom Spirit Manatee Cove	Blue Lake Turie T. Small Sunrise Pride		

Educational assessment data provides insight into the achievement of groups of students within school districts. Table 39 provides English Language Arts assessment results, and Table 40 provides Mathematics assessment results by achievement level, by student type, and by school district.

Achievement levels range from Level 1, indicating "inadequate" performance, to Level 5, indicating "mastery; highly likely to excel in the next grade." Disparities in achievement continue by student groups, with the percent of students that have achieved the satisfactory level (Level 3) remaining lower among economically disadvantaged students and English language learners consistently across the service area and the state.

Table 39. English Language Arts Assessment by School District and % Achievement Level (2021-2022) [lxix, 34]

Geographic Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 3+
Hernando School District (All students)	24.2	26.9	25.3	18	5.5	48.8
Economically Disadvantaged	29	28.7	24	14.9	3.4	42.3
English Language Learners	37.9	28.2	20.7	11.2	2	33.9
Sumter District Schools (All students)	17.1	20.7	26.7	23.8	11.7	62.2
Economically Disadvantaged	23.1	23.8	27.9	19.2	6	53.1
English Language Learners	37	24.4	20.7	12.6	5.2	38.5
Volusia County Schools (All students)	28.3	23.3	23.4	18.1	6.9	48.4
Economically Disadvantaged	34.8	24.9	22.2	14.2	4	40.4
English Language Learners	47.6	24.8	18.1	8.2	1.4	27.7
Florida (all students)	24.6	22.2	23.7	20	9.5	53.2
Economically Disadvantaged	32	25	22.6	15.2	5.1	42.9
English Language Learners	39.5	24.5	20.2	12.1	3.7	36

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[34] Level 1, Inadequate: Highly likely to need substantial support for the next grade level; Level 2, Below Satisfactory: Likely to need substantial support for the next grade level; Level 3, Satisfactory: may need additional support for the next grade level; Level 4, Proficient: Likely to excel in the next grade; Level 5, Mastery: Highly likely to excel in the next grade.

Table 40. Mathematics Assessment Results by School District and % Achievement Level (2021-2022) [lxx]

Geographic Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 3+
Hernando School District (All students)	27.8	21.4	29.1	15.5	6.3	50.9
Economically Disadvantaged	33.2	22.8	27.9	12.1	4	44
English Language Learners	42.2	24.5	20.1	10.8	2.4	33.3
Sumter District Schools (All students)	19.6	17.7	28.7	21.3	12.7	62.7
Economically Disadvantaged	26	21	28.7	17.6	6.6	52.9
English Language Learners	31.4	18.9	27.3	11	11.4	49.7
Volusia County Schools (All students)	34.6	19.5	25.2	14.7	6.1	46
Economically Disadvantaged	41	20.5	23.1	11.7	3.8	38.6
English Language Learners	50.4	20.3	22.6	12.9	5.7	41.2
Florida (all students)	28.7	18.2	25.6	17.3	10.2	53.1
Economically Disadvantaged	36.4	20.5	24.5	13.2	5.4	43.1
English Language Learners	38.5	20.3	22.6	12.9	5.7	41.2

Health

Across the service area and across the United States, COVID-19 continues to impact the health and well-being of communities. Generally, the vaccination rate is lower than the statewide rate in the counties in the service area, with the exception of Sumter County (Table 41).

Florida is the country's third largest state, so it is expected that the number of deaths may be high in comparison with other states. In 2022, for the third consecutive summer, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that Florida has seen the most COVID-19 deaths in the country from May to August.[lxxi]

Table 41. COVID-19 Rates as of September 3, 2022

Geographic Area	Reported Cases[lxxii]	Reported Deaths[lxxiii]	% Of population ≥5 fully vaccinated[lxxiv]
Hernando County	50,187		58.5%
Sumter County	26,993		83.3%
Volusia County	139,598		63.6%
Florida	7,037,431	80,027	72.0%

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, ranks communities across many health and wellness factors. The overall rankings in health outcomes represent how healthy counties are within the state. The healthiest county in the state is ranked #1. According to the most recent rankings, some residents in communities in MFCS' service area do not have sufficient optimal health outcomes and experience negative health factors (Table 42).

Since the prior year, Sumter County's ranking was slightly less optimal than in 2021, while Volusia and Sumter counties both improved.

Table 42. Health Outcomes and Health Factors Ranking (Out of 67 Counties in Florida) (2022)[lxxv]

County	Health Outcomes Rank		Change
	2021	2022	
Hernando County	39	33	Improved (+6)
Sumter County	28	29	Worsened (-1)
Volusia County	40	36	Improved (+4)

As seen in Table 43, factors related to poor health, as well as the number of physically and mentally unhealthy days, are high across the service area. Rates that are highlighted are at or above the statewide average and reflect current trends in health outcomes that are generally more negative, particularly in Hernando and Volusia counties.

Table 43. Health Outcomes Data by Geographic Area[lxxvi,35]

Geographic Area	Years of Potential Life Lost (2018-2020)	% Poor or Fair Health (2019)	Physically Unhealthy Days[36] (2019)	Mentally Unhealthy Days[37] (2019)
Hernando County	9,200	22%	4.7	5.2
Sumter County	9,100	17%	4.0	4.6
Volusia County	9,800	21%	4.5	5.1
Florida	7,500	18%	4.0	4.5

For other health-related factors, including chronic diseases such as obesity and diabetes, rates are high across the service area (Table 44). Over time, the rate of smoking decreased or remained the same, and the rate of diabetes decreased in all counties in the service area.

For youth, ages 11-17 in the service area, the rates of smoking cigarettes have also been decreasing over time and currently ranges from 1.4% to 2%, while the use of electronic vape products in 2022 is more rampant and ranges more widely by County (8.5% in Sumter County, 10.5% in Hernando County and 16.6% in Volusia County). In the last five years the rate of 11-17 year old youth vaping has decreased in Hernando (-4.7%) and Sumter Counties (-0.4%), but increased by 4.2% in Volusia County.[lxxvii]

Table 44. Adult Health Factors by Geographic Area[lxxviii,38]

Geographic Area	% Smokers (Cigarette)		% Obese		% Diabetic	
	2018	2019	2017	2019	2017	2019
Hernando County	23%	21%	32%	33%	15%	11%
Sumter County	19%	17%	29%	30%	17%	10%
Volusia County	21%	21%	32%	29%	13%	11%
Florida	15%	15%	27%	26%	11%	9%
Top U.S. Performers	16%	15%	26%	30%		

Substance Abuse

There continue to be significant drug abuse challenges in Florida and overall increases in overdose deaths within the MFCS service area (Table 45); the rate of excessive drinking is also high (Table 46).

In Florida, the number of fatal overdoses in the second quarter of 2021 (3,798) was 44.7% higher compared to the second quarter of 2020 (2,099), and up 64.1% from 2019 (1,367).[lxxix] The synthetic opioid, fentanyl, remains a large contributor to the deaths as it was found to be present in more than 3,200 of Florida's 5,000 overdose deaths in 2019, according to data from the CDC.[lxxx]

Table 45. Drug Overdose Deaths and Mortality Rate by Geographic Area (2018-2020)[lxxxi,39]

Geographic Area	Number of Overdose Deaths (difference since 2017-2019)	Drug Overdose Mortality Rate (per 100,000)
Hernando County	168 (+35.7%)	29
Sumter County	68 (+36.7%)	17
Volusia County	693 (+49.2%)	42
Service Area	929 (+45.9%)	
Florida		27

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[35] Values and rates higher than the statewide rate are highlighted.

[36] Average number of physically unhealthy days reported in past 30 days

[37] Average number of mentally unhealthy days reported in past 30 days

[38] Rates higher than the statewide rate are highlighted.

[39] Rates higher than the statewide rate are highlighted.

Neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) or neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome (NOWS) is also a concern in Florida. NAS/NOWS occurs when a pregnant woman uses drugs such as opioids during her pregnancy. In 2020, the statewide rate followed the three-year trend of declining rates of NAS, with 53.5 cases per 10,000 live births; while rates were lower in Sumter County (43.9) and higher in Hernando County (81.8) and Volusia County (76.2).[lxxxii]

Table 46. Alcohol Use by Geographic Area[lxxxiii,lxxxiv,40]

Geographic Area	% Excessive Drinking		"% of Driving Deaths With Alcohol Involvement	
	2018	2019	2015-2019	2016-2020
Hernando County	19%	22%	20%	20%
Sumter County	23%	21%	13%	14%
Volusia County	23%	24%	22%	22%
Florida	20%	20%	22%	22%
Top U.S. Performers	15%	15%	11%	10%

Healthcare and Clinical Care

Insurance and Access to Healthcare. The rate of uninsured individuals is high in Florida and in the service area, where the highest rates are in Hernando County for adults and in Sumter and Volusia counties for children under age 19 (Table 47).

Table 47. Percent of the Population that is Uninsured by Geographic Area and Year[lxxxv,lxxxvi]

Geographic Area	Adults (Under Age 65		Children (Under Age 19)	
	2018	2019	2018	2019
Hernando County	19%	18%	7%	7%
Sumter County	13%	14%	7%	8%
Volusia County	18%	19%	7%	8%
Florida	19%	19%	8%	8%

The ratio of primary care providers, dentists, and mental health providers to individuals in the counties in the service area are consistently more optimal as compared to the state of Florida (Table 48).

Table 48. Ratio of Health Care Providers by Geographic Area[lxxxvii,41]

Geographic Area	Primary Care Provider Ratio (2019)*	Dentist Ratio (2020)	Mental Health Provider Ratio (2021)
Hernando County	1,830:1	2,760:1	1,140:1
Sumter County	2,500:1	3,310:1	2,210:1
Volusia County	1,490:1	2,060:1	650:1
Florida	1,370:1	1,630:1	550:1
Top U.S. Performers	1,010:1	1,210:1	250:1

* Does not include nurse practitioners, physician's assistants, and clinical nurse specialists.

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[40] Rates greater than the statewide rate are highlighted.
[41] Ratios greater than the statewide rate are highlighted.

Infant and Maternal Health

Prenatal Care. Child health and well-being begins with adequate prenatal care. Births to mothers with no prenatal care is above the statewide rate in Volusia County (Table 49a), and access to first trimester prenatal care is low in Sumter County, below the statewide rate. Consistently, access to prenatal care is lower for mothers that identify as Black or Hispanic (Table 49b). MFCS Administrators note that if children were admitted to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at birth, that factor has been added for consideration in the HS/EHS program selection criteria.

Table 49a. Births to Mothers With No Prenatal Care (2020) [lxxxviii,42]

Geographic Area	Number	Rate
Hernando County	28	1.9
Sumter County	9	2.1
Volusia County	123	2.8
Florida	4,755	2.4

Table 49b. Prenatal Care (First Trimester) by Geographic Area, Percent of Total Births (2020) [lxxxix,43]

Geographic Area	All	White	Black	Hispanic
Hernando County	80.1%	81.8%	69.4%	79.3%
Sumter County	75.3%	76.7%	72.4%	70.8%
Volusia County	79.8%	82.6%	70.2%	78.3%
Florida	76.1%	78.3%	69.4%	76.4%

Teen Pregnancy. In Florida, the rate of births to teenage girls age 13 to 19 is 10.8 per 1,000 teenagers. Teen birth rates are high statewide and throughout the service area (Table 50). The teen birth rate in Sumter County has remained exceptionally high, and is among the highest in the state. While Hernando and Volusia counties are in the second quartile for this measure, relative to other counties in Florida, Sumter County is in the fourth quartile (e.g., teen pregnancy occurs less often in about three-quarters of all Florida counties). [xc]

Table 50. Teen Birth Rate (Ages 13-19), per 1,000, by Race and Ethnicity and Geographic Area (2020) [xci,44]

Geographic Area	All	Black	Hispanic	White
Hernando County	12.7	17.4	9.3	11.8
Sumter County	20.7	27.2	20.5	21.5
Volusia County	13.2	17.7	13.1	11.8
Florida	10.8	15.2	12.7	9.8

Low Birth Weight. In Florida, 8.7% of newborns are considered low birth weight. Table 51 describes the percent of newborn babies born at a low birth weight by county. While the percent of low birth weight babies is lower than the statewide average in Hernando and Volusia counties, disparities remain. The percent of babies born at a low birth weight is highest among Black individuals in all counties in the service area. Sumter County has rates of low birth weight for all races that are above the statewide rate.

Of note, in 2020 the rate of Black babies born in Hernando County with a low birth weight decreased 6% from the year prior, while increasing by 5.9% in Sumter County.

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[42] Rates higher than the statewide rate are highlighted.
[43] Rates lower than the statewide rate are highlighted.
[44] Rates higher than the statewide rate are highlighted.

Table 51. Low Birth Weight by Geographic Area, Percent of Total Births (2020)[xcii,45]

Geographic Area	Low Birth Weight			
	All	Black	White	Hispanic
Hernando County	8.5%	9.5%	8.5%	7.1%
Sumter County	9.4%	19.7%	7.4%	10%
Volusia County	8.0%	13.4%	7.0%	6.6%
Florida	8.7%	14.2%	7.1%	7.0%

Infant Mortality. Infant mortality rate trends range widely throughout the service area. The disparity between infant death rate among Black individuals and White individuals is extreme in Sumter County, with the infant death rate much higher for Black individuals (Table 52).

Table 52. Infant Death Rate (per 1,000) by Geographic Area and Race (2020)[xciii,46]

Geographic Area	All	Black	White
Hernando County	5.7	9.5	5.8
Sumter County	8.8	37.5	11
Volusia County	4.0	6.1	3.6
Florida	5.8	10.7	4.2

Access to care by licensed obstetricians to ensure a safe pregnancy and delivery can impact maternal and infant health. In Florida, the rate of licensed obstetricians to individuals (per 100,000) is 9.2. Across MFCS' service area, the rates are much lower; the rate is 4.2 in Hernando County, 3.0 in Sumter County, and 6.8 in Volusia County. [xciv]

Child Health and Wellbeing

Primary and Preventative Health. In the MFCS Head Start and Early Head Start programs, many children are not up-to-date on primary and preventative health care at enrollment. MFCS' services help to increase these rates, and there is significant improvement by the end of the program year (Table 53).

Table 53. Percent of MFCS Head Start/Early Head Start Children Up-to-Date on Age-Appropriate Preventative and Primary Health Care (EPSDT) (2021-2022)[xcv]

Program Option	At Enrollment	End of Enrollment Year
Head Start	44.7% (315 out of 704)	78.3% (551 out of 704)
Early Head Start	4.3% (20 out of 460)	13.5% (62 out of 460)

> MFCS administrators report that the COVID-19 pandemic challenged the ability of families to maintain immunization schedules for their children as many medical offices and clinics closed to routine care. MFCS leadership report that the health care system remains somewhat delayed and it can still take families multiple weeks to get appointments. Families prefer not to go to the health department or urgent care because those options can be more costly and have longer wait times.

Table 54 describes the percent of children at elementary benchmarks – kindergarten and seventh grade – who are up-to-date on age-appropriate immunizations. While Volusia and Sumter counties are in the second quartile for immunization levels in Kindergarten, Hernando County is in the fourth quartile.[xcvi]

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[45] Rates higher than the statewide rate are highlighted.
[46] Rates higher than the statewide rate are highlighted.

Table 54. Percent of Children Up-to-Date on Age-Appropriate Immunizations by Grade (2021) [xcvii,47]

Geographic Area	Kindergarten (Public and Private)	Seventh Grade (Public and Private)
Hernando County	90.8%	97%
Sumter County	96.3%	97.1%
Volusia County	93.3%	88.9%
Florida	93.3%	94.5%

Obesity and Chronic Diseases. Indicators from the MFCS 2021-2022 Head Start PIR Report indicate that the majority of enrolled children (62.9% or 398) are at a healthy weight. Yet, 37 children (5.8%) are classified as underweight, 86 children (13.6%) are overweight and 112 children (17.7%) are obese.

PIR data show that the overweight and obesity rates among Head Start children are higher than the obesity rate among 2- to 4-year-old WIC participants in Florida (13.3%) and the obesity rate of children 10 to 17 years old (15.8%).[xcviii] This highlights the importance of nutrition services provided by the Head Start and Early Head Start programs to help meet enrolled children's health needs.

The primary chronic health condition experienced by Head Start/Early Head Start children continues to be asthma. The prevalence rate in the service area is approximately 5.9-6.0%, and these rates are generally lower than the rates of the general population of middle and high school students as well as the adult population (with the exception of adults in Sumter County) (Table 55).

Table 55. Asthma Prevalence by Groups of Individuals and Geographic Area[48]

Geographic Area	MFCS Early Head Start (2021-22)[xcix]	MFCS Head Start (2021-22) [c]	Middle and High School Students[ci] (2020)	Adult Population[cii] (2019)
Hernando County			10.3%	9.6%
Sumter County	5.9% (27 children)	6.0% (42 children)	9.7%	4.6%
Volusia County			12%	7.5%
Florida			10.4%	7.4%

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[47] Rates lower than the statewide rate are highlighted.
[48] Rates higher than the statewide rate are highlighted.

Nutrition

Nutrition is a critical factor for children's healthy development, particularly given the high rates of childhood obesity in MFCS' service area. The rate of food insecurity did not change from the year prior and remains at 12%-14% in the service area; access to healthy foods also continues to be most limited in Hernando and Volusia counties (Table 56).

Table 56. Food Access by Geographic Area and Year[ciii,civ]

Geographic Area	Food Environment Index[49]		% Limited Access to Healthy Foods[50]		% Food Insecurity[51]	
	2015-2018	2019	2015	2019	2018	2019
Hernando County	6.8	6.9	14%	12%	14%	14%
Sumter County	8.0	8.0	4%	6%	12%	12%
Volusia County	7.0	7.2	13%	11%	14%	13%
Florida	6.9	7.0	7%	8%	13%	12%

Further, there are 38 low-income and low access census tracts (food deserts) in MFCS' service area (compared to 37 in 2020): 12 in Hernando County, 25 in Volusia County (new tract: 12127091025 in Osteen, central western part of the county), and one in Sumter County (Table 57).[cv,52]

Table 57. Census Tract Food Deserts in MFCS' Service Area by County (April 2021)[cvi]

Hernando County Census Tracts (12)
1. Tract 12053040400 (Brooksville, central Hernando County)
2. Tract 12053040502 (North Brooksville, central Hernando County)
3. Tract 12053040801 (High Point, central west part of county)
4. Tract 12053040802 (Brookridge, central west part of county, east of High Point)
5. Tract 12053040901 (Spring Hill, southwest part of county, south western section of Spring Hill) **New in 2021**
6. Tract 12053041003 (Spring Hill, southwest part of county, north central section of Spring Hill)
7. Tract 12053041006 (Spring Hill, southwest part of county, central section of Spring Hill)
8. Tract 12053041203 (Spring Hill, southwest part of county, western section of Spring Hill)
9. Tract 12053041204 (Spring Hill, southwest part of county, western section of Spring Hill)
10. Tract 12053041103 (Spring Hill, southwest part of county, western section of Spring Hill)
11. Tract 12053041104 (Spring Hill, southwest part of county, western section of Spring Hill)
12. Tract 12053041401 (Spring Hill, southwest part of county, south western section of Spring Hill)
Sumter County Census Tracts (1)
1. Tract 12119910401 (Lake Panasoffkee, center of county)
Volusia County Census Tracts (25)
1. Tract 12127080805 (Ormand Beach, east of I-95, central eastern part of the county)
2. Tract 12127081000 (Holly Hill, west of the Halifax River, central eastern part of the county)
3. Tract 12127081200 (Daytona Beach, east of Halifax River, on the Atlantic Coast, central eastern part of the county)
4. Tract 12127081300 (Daytona Beach, east of Halifax River, on the Atlantic Coast, central eastern part of the county)
5. Tract 12127082000 (Daytona Beach, west of the Halifax River, central eastern part of county)*
6. Tract 12127082100 (South Daytona Beach, central west and inland of Halifax River, eastern part of county)
7. Tract 12127082201 (Daytona Beach, west of the Halifax River, central eastern part of county)
8. Tract 12127082301 (Ormand Beach, immediately east of I-95, central eastern part of the county)

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[49] The Food Environment Index ranges from 0 (worst) to 10 (best) and equally weights two indicators of the food environment: limited access to healthy food and food insecurity. Rates lower than the statewide rate (worse) are highlighted.

[50] Rates greater than the statewide rate are highlighted.

[51] Rates greater than the statewide rate are highlighted.

[52] Food deserts are defined as low-income census tracts where a significant number or share of residents is more than 1 mile (urban) or 10 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket.

9. Tract 12127082401 (South Daytona Beach, west of the Halifax River, central eastern part of county)
10. Tract 12127082414 (Port Orange, west and inland of the Halifax River, central eastern part of county)
11. Tract 12127082503 (Port Orange, west and inland of the Halifax River, central eastern part of county)
12. Tract 12127082510 (Ponce Inlet, central eastern part of the county)
13. Tract 12127082511 (Port Orange, west of the Halifax River, central eastern part of the county)
14. Tract 12127082801 (Turnbull Shores, between Port Orange and New Smyrna Beach)
15. Tract 12127083006 (Edgewater, central eastern part of the county)
16. Tract 12127083008 (Edgewater, central eastern part of the county)
17. Tract 12127090102 (Seville and Pierson, Florida, northwest corner of county, including Lake George State Forest)
18. Tract 12127090202 (DeLeon Springs, Florida, northwest part of county)
19. Tract 12127090203 (DeLeon Springs, Florida, northwest part of county)
20. Tract 12127090702 (West Deland, central western part of county)
21. Tract 12127091018 (Deltona, central western part of the county)
22. Tract 12127091013 (Osteen, central western part of the county)
23. Tract 12127091024 (Osteen, central western part of the county)
24. Tract 12127091025 (Osteen, central western part of the county) **NEW in 2021**
25. Tract 12127091027 (Osteen, central western part of the county)

Nutrition needs are also evident in high rates of free and reduced lunch in school districts in the service area (Table 58), all above the state rate. In the 2021-2022 school year, rates of students eligible for free and reduced lunch increased across the service area, as compared to the previous year.

Table 58. Free and Reduced Lunch Rate by School District[cvii]

School District	2021-2022	Percent Increase from 2020-2021
Hernando School District	88%	5%
Sumter District Schools	69%	2.6%
Volusia County Schools	65%	7.2%
Florida	64%	1.4%

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Department of Agriculture universal free lunch program provided free meals to all students regardless of their income level; the program ended in June 2022.[cviii]

Social and Economic Factors Impacting Wellbeing

Home Value and Affordability

Median home value and affordability vary widely across the counties in the service area, ranging from $158,400 to $267,100 (Table 59). As indicated in the year prior, median monthly owner and renter costs remain at varying rates as well, though they are lower than the statewide average.

While Table 59 reflects increasing home values, owner costs, and median rent levels in 2020, the pandemic has had a tremendous extended impact on housing availability and costs through 2022.

Florida is facing an unprecedented housing market as the population growth for the state is the second highest in the country, and supply and demand has allowed housing costs to increase at an exponential rate. This lack of affordable housing is the primary cause of homelessness. [cix]

Between April 2021 and April 2022, Florida's single-family home costs increased 28.8%; and 34.6% of the homes sold in that time were purchased for cash. Purchasing a home in this type of market, with an increasing population seeking housing, has become impossible for many families. [cx]

The year-over-year rent increases in the state are among the highest, as are the percentage of cost burdened renters, as compared to the rest of the country. [cxi] With the exception of Hernando County, the percentage of households spending 35% or more of their monthly income on rent, is above the statewide rate in the MFCS service area (Table 60).

Table 59. Median Home Value and Costs by Geographic Area (2019-2020) [cxii]

Geographic Area	Median Home Value[53]		Median Owner Costs		Median Rent	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Hernando County	$142,500	$158,400	$1,105	$1,157	$984	$996
Sumter County	$258,600	$267,100	$1,291	$1,328	$914	$935
Volusia County	$175,000	$194,900	$1,272	$1,316	$1,046	$1,097
32114	$107,400	$122,500	$1,029	$1,036	$879	$928
Florida	$215,300	$232,000	$1,503	$1,539	$1,175	$1,218

Table 60. Housing Characteristics by Geographic Area (2020) [cxiii,54]

Geographic Area	Rental Vacancy Rate[55]	Households Spending 30% to 34.9% of Monthly Income on Rent	Households Spending 35% or More of Monthly Income on Rent
Hernando County	6.7%	10.3%	45.8%
Sumter County	22.4%	6.9%	56.1%
Volusia County	6.5%	8.2%	47.4%
32114	5.0%	7.5%	47.4%
Florida	8.2%	9.6%	46.8%

Florida continues to have a high percentage of households that are experiencing severe housing problems (Table 61).

Table 61. Percentage of Households with at Least 1 of 4 Housing Problems[56] by Geographic Area and Year[cxiv,cxv]

Geographic Area	2013-2017	2014-2018
Hernando County	14%	13%
Sumter County	11%	11%
Volusia County	17%	17%
Florida	20%	19%
Top U.S. Performers	9%	9%

On September 28, 2022, Hurricane Ian made landfall in Florida. Initial estimates indicate that in Volusia County, about 6,000 homes have been inundated, 1,000 businesses, hotels, and motels damaged, with an additional 1,000 homes along the St. Johns River in danger of flooding. Quail Hollow Mobile Home Park, in New Smyrna Beach, reportedly has some of the many homes in Volusia County affected by flooding. Volusia County officials report initial damages from Hurricane Ian have reached nearly $300 million, and these are not the final numbers, with single-family homes taking the most damage, incurring an early estimate of $166 million in damages.[cxvi] MFCS Administrators report that the area of "Caroline Village" in Volusia County had four feet of flooding and residents lost most of their possessions (including vehicles) and many municipal buildings (e.g. public library etc.) were damaged and homes in the area became inhabitable; the affordable housing units in the area were also damaged and while the area is rebuilt, many families have had to relocate or move into emergency housing.

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[53] Values lower than the statewide value are highlighted.
[54] Household spending rates greater than the statewide rate are highlighted.
[55] Rental vacancy rates lower than the statewide rate are highlighted.
[56] Overcrowding, high housing costs, lack of kitchen facilities, or lack of plumbing facilities

Income Inequality

In the MFCS service area, the median household income is below the statewide rate, with the exception of Sumter County, where the retirement community, The Villages, is located, which likely impacts this county level data (Table 62).

Table 62. Median Household Income by Geographic Area (2020) [cxvii,57]

Geographic Area	Median Household Income
Hernando County	$50,280
Sumter County	$59,618
Volusia County	$52,407
Florida	$57,703

A higher income inequality ratio indicates greater division between the top and bottom ends of the income spectrum. Income inequality continues to be high in Florida; the greatest income inequality in the service area remains in Volusia County (Table 63).

Table 63. Income Inequality by Geographic Area (2015-2019) [cxviii]

County	80th percentile income	20th percentile income	Income inequality ratio
Hernando County	$92,038	$22,195	4.1
Sumter County	$101,755	$27,360	3.7
Volusia County	$95,441	$22,301	4.3
Florida			4.6
Top U.S. Performers			3.7

Community Safety and Incarceration

The rate of violent crime in the service area varies; though consistently below the statewide rate across counties, the rate is the highest in Volusia County (Table 64). The rate of juvenile arrests also aligns with this trend as Volusia County reflects the highest rate, 40% higher than the statewide rate (Table 65). Domestic violence offenses are also highest in Volusia County, where they are over 30% higher than the statewide rate (Table 66).

Table 64. Number of Reported Violent Crime Offenses (per 100,000) by Geographic Area (2014-2016) [cxix]

Geographic Area	Violent Crime Rate
Hernando County	258
Sumter County	212
Volusia County	428
Florida	484

Table 65. Rate of Juvenile Arrests (per 1,000) by Geographic Area and Year [cxx, cxxi,58]

Geographic Area	2018	2019
Hernando County	23	23
Sumter County	34	35
Volusia County	48	40
Florida	26	24

Table 66. Total Domestic Violence Offenses, Rate per 100,000 Population, by Geographic Area (2018-2020) [cxxii,59]

Geographic Area	2018	2019	2020	Three-Year Trend
Hernando County	492.4	576.3	496.4	Fluctuating

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[57] Values greater than the statewide value are highlighted.
[58] Rates greater than the statewide rate are highlighted.
[59] Rates lower than the statewide rate are highlighted.

Sumter County	267.1	385.0	363.1	Fluctuating
Volusia County	812.1	791.8	716.0	Declining
Florida	500.6	495.1	492.2	Declining

In MFCS' service area, the incarceration rate is similar to rates from the prior year, and remain higher than the statewide rate. The rate is highest in Sumter County, where the rate increased from 3.0 in 2021 to 3.9 in 2020, though the greatest numbers of incarcerated individuals still reside in Volusia County (Table 67).

Table 67. Florida County Detention Facilities, Average Daily Population and Incarceration Rate, July 2022[cxxiii],[60]

Geographic Area	Average Daily Population at County Detention Facilities	Incarceration Rate per 1,000 County Population
Hernando County	661	3.4
Sumter County	528	3.9
Volusia County	1,516	2.7
Florida	54,585	2.5

As reported by the Florida Department of Corrections, there are three correctional facilities in MFCS' service area:[cxxiv]

- Hernando Correctional Institution, serving adult females (Hernando County)
- Sumter Correctional Institution, serving adult males (Sumter County)
- Tomoka Correctional Institution, serving adult males (Volusia County)

There is also one federal correctional institution in the service area, Federal Correction Complex – Coleman, located in Sumter County.

EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING

Labor Force, Industries, and Occupations

In MFCS' service area, the percent of the population in the labor force ranges from 22.6% in Sumter County (which includes many retirees) to 53.4% in Volusia County.

In 2020, the statewide rate of the population over age 16 in the labor force increased 11.6% (it decreased by 11.4% in 2019). Overall, though the county rates did not experience much fluctuation, the service area continues to have a lower percent of the population in the workforce than the statewide rate. Also as described in Table 68, many young children within the general population continue to have both parents in the labor force.

Table 68. Percent of the Population in Labor Force (Age 16+) by Geographic Area (2020)[cxxv]

Geographic Area	Population Age 16+	Population Age 16+ (Females only)	Households with Children Under Age 6, All Parents in Family in Labor Force
Hernando County	48.8%	45.1	66.5%
Sumter County	22.6%	22.1	66.1%
Volusia County	53.4%	49.8	67.3%
32114	52.8%	50.2	53.0%
Florida	58.9%	54.5	68.1%

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[60] Rates greater than the statewide rate are highlighted.

Individuals are employed in a variety of occupations and industries in MFCS' service area, and a majority of individuals continue to be private wage and salary workers (Table 69).

Table 69. Number of Employed Individuals (Age 16+) and Percentage of the Employed Workforce by Class of Worker and Geographic Area (2020)[cxxvi],[61]

Class of Worker	Hernando County		Sumter County		Volusia County		Florida
Private wage and salary workers	58,571	80.7%	21,552	82.5%	194,692	83.2%	82.2%
Government workers	9,944	13.7%	2,446	9.4%	25,210	10.8%	11.7%
Self-employed in own not incorporated business workers	3,760	5.2%	1,848	7.1%	13,626	5.8%	5.9%
Unpaid family workers	272	0.4%	268	1.0%	578	0.2%	0.2%
Total	72,547	100.0%	26,114	100.0%	234,106	100.0%	100.0%

The top occupations across the service area continue to be management, business, science, and arts occupations; sales and office occupations; and service occupations (Table 70). Across all counties in the service area, the top industry of employed individuals is "educational services, and health care and social assistance" (Table 71).

Table 70. Number of Employed Individuals (Age 16+) and Percentage of the Employed Workforce by Occupation and Geographic Area (2020)[cxxvii],[62]

Occupation	Hernando County		Sumter County		Volusia County		Florida
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	23,581	32.5%	8,238	31.5%	76,274	32.6%	36.4%
Service occupations	15,058	20.8%	5,638	21.6%	47,259	20.2%	19.6%
Sales and office occupations	17,898	24.7%	6,655	25.5%	61,083	26.1%	24.3%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	7,612	10.5%	2,598	9.9%	24,202	10.3%	9.3%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	8,398	11.6%	2,985	11.4%	25,288	10.8%	10.4%
Total	72,547	100.0%	26,114	100.0%	234,106	100.0%	100.0%

Table 71. Number of Employed Individuals (Age 16+) and Percentage of the Employed Workforce by Industry and Geographic Area (2020)[cxxviii],[63]

Industry	Hernando County		Sumter County		Volusia County		Florida
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	667	0.9%	432	1.7%	1,481	0.6%	0.9%
Construction	6,680	9.2%	2,036	7.8%	20,179	8.6%	7.9%
Manufacturing	4,089	5.6%	1,317	5.0%	13,172	5.6%	5.1%
Wholesale trade	1,086	1.5%	317	1.2%	5,763	2.5%	2.6%
Retail trade	10,048	13.9%	4,422	16.9%	32,239	13.8%	12.5%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	4,695	6.5%	1,346	5.2%	11,905	5.1%	5.8%
Information	916	1.3%	363	1.4%	3,771	1.6%	1.7%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	4,387	6.0%	1,699	6.5%	17,445	7.5%	7.7%

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[61] The county with the most individuals in each "class of worker" is highlighted.
[62] Rates greater than the statewide rate are highlighted. The top three occupations are in bold text.
[63] Rates greater than the statewide rate are highlighted. The top three industries are in bold text.

Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	8,135	11.2%	2,741	10.5%	27,011	11.5%	13.3%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	17,074	23.5%	5,110	19.6%	51,617	22.0%	21.1%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	7,427	10.2%	3,500	13.4%	27,731	11.8%	12.0%
Other services, except public administration	3,285	4.5%	1,795	6.9%	11,463	4.9%	5.3%
Public administration	4,058	5.6%	1,036	4.0%	10,329	4.4%	4.3%
Total	72,547	100.0%	26,114	100.0%	234,106	100.0%	100.0%

Unemployment

According to data on unemployment, in MFCS' service area, most counties have an unemployment rate higher than the statewide rate, as highlighted in Table 72.

Table 72. Unemployment Rate by Geographic Area and Month/Year (2020-2022)[cxxix,64]

Date	Hernando County	Sumter County	Volusia County	Florida
January 2020	4.1%	4.8%	3.5%	2.8%
April 2020	14.1%	12%	14.2%	13.2%
July 2020	12.3%	12.1%	11.9%	12.5%
December 2020	6.5%	7.0%	6.2%	6.5%
January 2021	6.6%	6.6%	6.1%	6.0%
April 2021	5.3%	5.4%	4.9%	5.1%
July 2021	5.7%	5.8%	4.9%	4.5%
December 2021	3.4%	3.6%	3.1%	3.5%
January 2022	4.2%	4.8%	3.8%	3.5%
February 2022	3.8%	4.2%	3.3%	3.3%
March 2022	3.2%	3.6%	2.8%	3.2%
April 2022	2.9%	3.0%	2.5%	3.0%
May 2022	3.0%	3.4%	2.6%	2.9%
June 2022	3.7%	4.2%	3.2%	2.8%
July 2022	3.5%	4.2%	3.1%	2.7%

A majority of MFCS Head Start/Early Head Start families are employed, but not quite to the same degree as the larger population; unemployment rates for enrolled families remain well above the countywide unemployment rates. Employment status among enrolled families is detailed in Table 73. In Early Head Start, 59.6% of families and in Head Start, 61.4% of families have at least one parent who is employed, in job training, or in school. Among EHS families, 37.2% and among Head Start families, 34.2% have no parent that is working, in job training, or in school.

Table 73. Children First Head Start/Early Head Start Families Employment Status (2021-2022)[cxxx]

Early Head Start	At Enrollment
At least one parent/guardian is employed, in job training, or in school	240 out of 403 (59.6%)
Neither/No parent/guardian is employed, in job training, or in school	150 out of 403 (37.2%)
Head Start	At Enrollment
At least one parent/guardian is employed, in job	399 out of 650 (61.4%)

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[64] Rates higher than the statewide rate are highlighted. County rates are not seasonally adjusted; state rate is seasonally adjusted.

training, or in school	
Neither/No parent/guardian is employed, in job training, or in school	222 out of 650 (34.2%)

In Florida, businesses continue to have robust employment opportunities, and in March 2022, employers reported adding jobs for 22 consecutive months. The state unemployment rate remained below the national rate for 15 consecutive months. Florida's economic indicators have continued a positive trajectory and are surpassing pre-pandemic rates.

In February 2022, there were nearly 452,000 jobs posted online in the state. Floridians in search of new job opportunities can utilize the CareerSource Florida network for help.[cxxxi]

Employers

The top employers in the service area remain a mix of public and private entities, including local governments and schools, health systems, and retail companies (Table 74).

Table 74. Top Employers by County and Number of Employees

Geographic Area	Top 10 Employers and Number of Employees	
Hernando County[cxxxii]	Hernando County Schools – 3,002 Hernando County Government – 1,200 Walmart Super Centers – 1,350 Citrus Memorial Health Care Systems – 1,320 Oak Hill Hospital- 1,089 Publix – 1,050 Hernando Healthcare– 1,032 Wal-Mart Distribution Center – 1,020 Heart Institute at Oak Hill Hospital – 947 Board of Commissioners – 753	
Sumter County[cxxxiii]	The Villages Regional Medical Center – 1,129 Coleman Federal Prison – 1.204 Sumter District Schools – 815 Publix – 800 T&D Family of Companies – 660 The Villages Community – 600 Winn-Dixie – 573 Sumter Correctional Institute – 500 Walmart Stores – 485 SECO Energy – 409	
Volusia County[cxxxiv,65]	Public Sector Volusia County Schools Volusia County State of Florida Daytona State College City of Daytona Beach United States Postal Service Florida Dept. of Transportation City of New Smyrna Beach City of Port Orange City of DeLand	Private Sector AdventHealth System Halifax Hospital System Publix Supermarkets Walmart Associates Stetson University Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Florida Healthcare Plans Skyes communications Winn Dixie Super Markets Brunswick Corporation

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[65] Number of employees not available from source.

Projected Employment Trends

The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity projects the fastest-growing industries and occupations by County through 2029. In Hernando and Volusia counties, the projected fastest growing industry is "Management of Companies and Enterprises," while Sumter County projects the greatest growth in the "Arts, Entertainment and Recreation" sector. The top growing occupation across the board is "Nurse Practitioner" (Table 75).

Table 75. Projected Fastest-Growing Industries and Occupations (2021-2029)[cxxxv]

County	Fastest-Growing Industries (% Estimated Growth)	Fastest-Growing Occupations (% Estimated Growth)
Career Source Pasco Hernando Counties	Management of Companies and Enterprises (48.1%) Professional and Technical Services (34.8%) Accommodations and Food Services (22.3%) Information (21%) Transportation and Warehousing (17.9%)	Nurse Practitioners (62.3%) Information Security Analyst (42.3%) Software Developer and Quality Assurance (41.9%)
Career Source Central Florida (Lake, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, and Sumter Counties)	Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (40.7%) Accommodation and Food Service (32%) Real Estate, Rental, Leasing (26.3%) Professional and Technical Services (25.5%) Health Care and Social Assistance (22.6%)	Nurse Practitioners (66.2%) Cooks, Restaurant (47%) Bus Driver (46.5%)
Career Source Flagler and Volusia County	Management of Companies and Enterprises (26%) Accommodation and Food Service (19.5%) Professional and Technical Services (18.1%) Real Estate, Rental, Leasing (17.8%) Administrative and Waste Services (14.5%)	Nurse Practitioners (102.5%) Film and Video Editor (79.9%) Physician's Assistant (77.2%)

Transportation

Public transportation is offered throughout the counties by different bus services, yet these services are often only available on fixed-routes, for a limited number of hours during the day, and/or are only available on-call.

The percent of households with limited access to personal vehicles has remained steady, with lower rates than the statewide rate in all counties in the service area and particularly high rates in zip code 32114 where individuals have to rely more heavily on alternative transportation (Table 76).

Table 76. Households with No Vehicle Available by Geographic Area (2020) [cxxxvi,66]

Geographic Area	Percent of Households with No Vehicle Available
Hernando County	4.8%
Sumter County	3.2%
Volusia County	5.7%
32114	17.3%
Florida	6.1%

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[66] Rates greater than the statewide rate are highlighted.

In 2020, most residents in the service area drive themselves to work in their own cars (Table 77), adding to the cost of living for the area. Commute times rarely exceed 30 minutes (Table 78). Zip code 32114 has a substantial percentage of residents that have no access to a personal vehicle; this area was significantly impacted by flooding from Hurricane Ian in September 2022 and it is likely that a great number of residents in this zip code lost access to a personal vehicle due to the storm.

Table 77. Transportation to Work by Geographic Area (2020) [cxxxvii,67]

Geographic Area	Car, truck, or van – drove alone	Car, truck, or van – carpooled	Public transportation	Walked	Other means	Worked from home
Hernando County	78.9%	9.4%	0.3%	1.0%	1.8%	8.5%
Sumter County	72.8%	5.8%	0.1%	1.3%	8.6%	11.4%
Volusia County	79.6%	7.8%	0.9%	1.2%	2.3%	8.1%
32114	70.3%	12.1%	6.1%	3.9%	5.0%	2.6%
Florida	77.7%	9.2%	1.6%	1.4%	2.3%	7.8%

Table 78. Mean Travel Time to Work by Geographic Area (2020) [cxxxviii,68]

Geographic Area	Minutes
Hernando County	30.4
Sumter County	26.5
Volusia County	26.3
32114	19.0
Florida	27.9

AGENCIES SERVING ELIGIBLE CHILDREN

Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Programs

In MFCS' service area, there are 399 child care and family child care programs available to families, with the capacity to serve 27,356 children, birth to school age. It must be noted that the data provided represents the "licensed capacity" of child care programs, though it is likely that many remain under-enrolled (below licensed capacity) due to potential staffing shortages that have been evident nationwide as a result of the pandemic.

November 2021 vs. September 2022

+80	*Child Care Programs*
+1,072	*Child Care Slots*
+5	*VPK Providers*
+9	*School Readiness Providers*
+25	*Programs Licensed to Serve Infants*
+1	*Gold Seal Providers*

Almost 49% (194) of providers are participating in VPK, and 50.1% (201) are School Readiness providers (accepting child care subsidies). Only 45.9% of programs are licensed to serve infants (Table 79). Out of 399 child care programs, there are 24 Gold Seal providers (Table 80).

From the start of the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020) to November 2021, the service area saw a reduction of 32 child care programs, representing a loss of 2,051 slots (7.2% decrease in capacity). As time has passed, some level of recovery has occurred. Between November 2021 and September 2022, the

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[67] Rates greater than the statewide rate are highlighted.
[68] Values greater than the statewide value are highlighted.

capacity of the child care system in the service area has increased with the gain of 80 child care programs, representing 1,072 child care slots.

Overall, since the start of the pandemic, the child care capacity has been reduced in the service area by 3.5% (from 28,335 slots in March 2020 to 27,356 in September 2022).

Additional details regarding child care by program type and zip code are available in Appendix C.

Table 79. Summary of Child Care Capacity and Net Change (2021-2022) in Programs by County (September 2022)[cxxxix]

Geographic Area	Number of Programs (Capacity)	Net Change in Programs from 11/21	Programs Participating in VPK	Net Change VPK from 11/21	School Readiness Providers	Net Change School Readiness from 11/21	Programs Licensed to Serve Infants	Net Change Programs Licensed to Serve Infants from 11/21
Hernando County	66 (6,734)	n/a (+119)	37	-3	50	+3	32	+10
Sumter County	22 (1,618)	+1 (+93)	9	+4	14	+1	14	-1
Volusia County	221 (19,004)	-11 (-890)	148	+4	137	+5	137	+16
Service Area Total	399 (27,356)	+80 (+1,072)	194	+5	201	+9	183	+25

Table 80. Number of Gold Seal and Head Start Programs by County (as of September 2022)[cxl]

Geographic Area	Gold Seal (net change from 11/21)	Head Start (net change from 11/21)
Hernando County	3 (n/a)	2 (n/a)
Sumter County	0 (n/a)	1 (n/a)
Volusia County	21 (+1)	17 (+1)
Service Area Total	24 (+1)	20 (+1)

As described in Table 81, child care capacity (27,356) is lower than the total number of children birth to age 5 in the service area (34,769). Child care capacity includes school age children, and therefore the number of slots actually available for young children is even lower.

Table 81. Number of Children Birth to Age 5 Compared to Capacity of Child Care Programs by County

Geographic Area	Capacity of Child Care Programs (Includes School Age Children)	Number of Children <5 Years Old	Number of Children <5 Living in Poverty
Hernando County	6,734	8,515	1,967
Sumter County	1,618	2,318	842
Volusia County	19,004	24,936	5,200
Service Area Total	27,356	34,769	8,009

MFCS is the primary provider of Head Start/Early Head Start in the service area. Redlands Christian Migrant Association operates a Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program with two sites in Volusia County: Volusia Child Development Center (Seville, FL) and Seville Child Development Center (Seville, FL). Further, MFCS serves some families from neighboring counties outside the service area; some families from within the service area attend programs in neighboring counties.

MFCS waitlist data show that, as of November 2022, there were 254 children on the waitlist for Head Start and 294 children on the waitlist for Early Head Start. Of note, Chisolm HS/EHS in Volusia County has grown their waitlist substantially by partnering with local businesses that have recruited families in the area; the

Hope Place HS/EHS program, also in Volusia County has also had a continuous influx of applicants on the waiting list feeding from the homeless shelter. The Spring Hill HS/EHS program in Hernando County also has a large waitlist (currently 118 as of 11/2022) and remains an area with high overall need. MFCS continually examines the possibility of adjusting its eligibility criteria for the coming program year, as many families that are over-income are experiencing extraordinary circumstances, as a result of the pandemic and natural disasters (e.g. Hurricane Ian). [cxli]

Home Visiting

Home visiting services continue to be very limited in MFCS' service area. The Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program coordinates home visiting services provided by local agencies to high-need families in communities across Florida, through three evidence-based models: Healthy Families America, Nurse-Family Partnership, and Parents as Teachers. MIECHV home visiting services are not funded in Hernando, Sumter, or Volusia counties. [cxlii]

Healthy Families provides visiting services in Volusia County, and Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties implements HIPPY USA in Hernando County (Table 82). Updated data on home visiting enrollment is not readily available.

Table 82. Home Visiting Services by County

County	Home Visiting Services	Enrollment
Hernando County[cxliii]	Program: HIPPY USA Implemented by: Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties Eligibility criteria (voluntary): Parents of children ages 2 to 5 In addition, Healthy Start of North Central Florida Coalition implements Connect, services for expectant families or families with young children (e.g., childbirth education, breastfeeding support, family planning, infant safety).	3 (as of April 2020)[cxliv]
Sumter County[cxlv]	Home visiting services are not offered. Healthy Start of North Central Florida Coalition implements Connect.	n/a
Volusia County[cxlvi]	Program: Healthy Families Implemented by: Healthy Start Coalition of Flagler and Volusia Counties (Healthy Families Florida statewide home visiting program sponsored by the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida and the Florida Department of Children and Families) Eligibility criteria (voluntary): Expecting a new baby or have a baby less than 3 months old; experiencing a stressful situation	~125[cxlvii]

Publicly Funded Preschool

The Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK) in Florida is the state-funded preschool program designed to provide high-quality educational experiences to enhance school readiness for eligible 4-year-old children. The program was one of the first in the country to offer free pre-kindergarten for all 4-year-olds, regardless of family income.[cxlviii]

The program aims to prepare children across all five of the developmental domains that are critical to children's overall well-being and success as they enter kindergarten and beyond. VPK helps build a strong foundation for school using educational material corresponding to various stages in a child's development.

Since the program began in 2005-06, more than 2.5 million children have benefited from VPK; as the Florida Department of Education data shows participating children are much more ready for kindergarten than children who do not participate in VPK. By program year 2019-20, 171,199 children were served by 6,501 private, public, and charter schools and private child care centers offering VPK, representing 71% of 4-year-olds in Florida. [cxlix]

New in the 2022-23 program year, the Florida Department of Education (Division of Early Learning), requires all VPK programs (public and private) to implement the Coordinated Screening and Progress Monitoring Program known as Florida's Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) using Star Early Literacy, replacing all components related to the Florida VPK Assessment and the Bright Beginnings Online Reporting System. Aligned to the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards, Star Early Literacy is an assessment that is part of a unified, coordinated progress monitoring system to be administered in the Fall, Winter, and Spring of each program year. Star Early Literacy measures both early literacy and early numeracy in a single assessment, providing reliable and valid data. The Division of Early Learning, in collaboration with contractor Renaissance Learning, Inc., provided training sessions for VPK programs throughout the summer of 2022, which is a requirement for assessors before administering the FAST, utilizing Star Early Literacy. [cl]

At the end of the VPK program year, each provider will receive a "Readiness Rate," ranging from 60-100, which aims to measure how well a VPK provider prepares 4-year-old children for kindergarten based upon the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards. The score is derived from the percentage of the provider's students who are assessed as ready for kindergarten with points added for learning gains. If a provider falls below the minimum "Readiness Rate" of 60, the provider is placed on probation for three years and is required to submit improvement plans to the Division of Early Learning. [cli]

As detailed in Appendix C, there are 194 VPK providers in the service area (an increase of five from November 2021). MFCS administrators report that public schools are also struggling with staffing, and fewer 4-year-old children appear to be attending preschool programs than in the past.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE COMMUNITY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

As reported in the April 2020 Community Assessment and the December 2021 Annual Update, in the MFCS service area, there are many social services resources available to families. In addition to its own services, MFCS also maintains key partnerships in order to provide resources to families. The list of comprehensive services available to families include a range of community education resources, health, mental health, oral health, and nutrition services within each county, social services (e.g., clothing, food, housing, or public assistance coordination) and services for vulnerable populations (young children with disabilities, children who have experienced abuse and neglect or domestic violence, families experiencing homelessness, foster children, incarcerated parents, and/or grandparents caring for grandchildren).

MFCS administrators report increased levels of behavior challenges in the classroom as children are continuing to have difficulty transitioning into a classroom setting, following the initial classroom closures due to COVID-19 mitigation efforts.

MFCS employs three Inclusion Specialists and three coaches. Additionally, the program doubled the number of Behavior Specialists in the prior year to support the staff and enrolled children as many classrooms are in crisis with multiple children engaging in challenging behaviors. Due to program staffing challenges, the Behavior Specialists have often served as a third support staff in a classroom where a child is experiencing serious behavior issues, thus limiting the specialist's ability to serve the full program.

In addition to the particularly high level of enrolled children with disabilities, ranging from 18% to nearly 20%, there are many children with suspected disabilities not yet evaluated or diagnosed due to lags in the evaluation process. MFCS leadership note that they are working diligently to have children evaluated in a timely manner in order to ensure the earliest interventions.

MFCS leadership continues to explore ways to better support teaching staff through direct communication and survey, in order to understand the perspective of the teachers and what exact supports they would find helpful and supportive.

PARENT, STAFF, AND COMMUNITY INSIGHTS

Parents and staff were surveyed in 2021 to help guide decisions around program options and service delivery amidst the pandemic. MFCS continues to engage families and staff in partnership through daily informal communication. Improving staff communication was at the forefront of the 2022 intentional reorganization that realigned staffing positions to improve staff supports and collaborative efforts.

REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the rich data and key findings of MFCS 2020 Community Assessment and reflection from MFCS administrators, the following recommendations will be considered to improve services to children in the agency's service area. Each year, the agency strives to make progress toward the recommendations and continuous strategic planning ensures the work moves forward.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Program design. Review slot allocations and program types as a strategy to address enrollment challenges and in response to community-wide trends (e.g., increased availability of VPK, growing EHS waitlist, lack of licensed centers and programs serving infants and pregnant women). Explore transitioning some Head Start slots to Early Head Start. While doing so, continue to build upon MFCS' successful partnerships to support full enrollment and meet the needs of the most vulnerable children and families. This includes a continued focus on prioritizing enrollment of vulnerable children, including those living in single-parent families.

    a. **Progress:** Finalized slot conversion and increased services to EHS families in order to best meet the evolving needs of the community; EHS services provided for 32 additional children.

    b. **Our work moving forward:** Continue strategic planning and partnership efforts to be responsive to the demonstrated community need. Maintain a focus on creating additional stability in the Head Start classrooms, through the provision of continuity of care utilizing stable and consistent staffing levels. Interested in exploring potential consolidation of EHS programs and a potential reduction of slots.

Recommendation 2: Extended hours. Continue to provide support avenues for families to access care for extended hours so that they may work or attend school. Families' need for care during extended hours (early and later hours) was confirmed through the parent and staff surveys. Coupled with high unemployment and the multiple barriers faced by families to work, attend school, or participate in training, this strategy becomes essential to helping families move toward self-sufficiency.

    a. **Progress:** Continued to prioritize the staffing of extended-day programming for the families most in need, such as in the transitional housing program (HOPE Place EHS/HS) and in the Jo Sheppard, Spring Hill, and Malloy HS/EHS locations, where many parents are employed in the agricultural sector or are working and require extended hours.

    b. **Our work moving forward:** Continue to evaluate how to best meet the need and demand for extended-day programming at various locations, in light of restricted staffing resources.

Recommendation 3: Enhanced communication. Implement enhanced communication strategies among program administrators, management, and staff, to ensure clear, consistent, and timely communications. Ensure lines of communication and processes for sharing feedback are available to all Head Start/Early Head Start employees.

    a. **Progress:** Supported by the staff reorganization, continued to ensure transparency with staff utilizing direct lines of interaction and feedback processes, to allow MFCS to understand what staff need in order to be successful. MFCS continually made intentional and strategic modifications to staffing plans to best provide coverage in classrooms, while minimizing the risk of staff burnout.

b. **Our work moving forward:** MFCS has begun a comprehensive update of all Policies and Procedures which should have a significant impact on improving communication (estimated for completion by May 2023).

Recommendation 4: HS/EHS staff job-specific professional needs. Continue to explore with staff what would be most helpful to them related to job-specific training (as identified in the Staff Survey). Leverage enhanced communication strategies (Recommendation 3) to confirm processes for staff to request materials/supplies, and to learn more from staff about materials and supplies needed to help them be successful in their professional role.

a. **Progress:** Began work to restructure agency positions and organizational positioning to provide optimal support for all employees in order to ultimately provide higher quality services to enrolled children and families.

b. **Our work moving forward:** Continue to survey staff to gather their perspective and understand their needs. Continue to work to define and support a zero tolerance policy to ensure staff are supported.

Recommendation 5: County and Local-Level Stakeholder Groups. Determine if there are county or local-level stakeholder groups with Boards or leadership/advisory committees on which MFCS administrators may serve. Participate in stakeholder groups to keep abreast of county, zip code, and neighborhood level needs, programs, and initiatives. Focus on hard-to-solve issues such as families' barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment (e.g., child care, transportation), and understanding the need for substance abuse and mental health treatment within the service area.

a. **Progress:** Continued to maintain participation in multiple community groups. Policy Council representatives are members of working groups for the Hernando Public Schools, Volusia County Schools and the Early Learning Coalition of Hernando/Pasco Counties, Inc. MFCS also has strong representation the Housing Authority and Health Services Council and is a member of multiple local Chambers of Commerce organizations. The MFCS ERSEA Manager also participates in multiple stakeholder groups to help create partnerships across communities, including: the Dolly Parton Imagination Library of Volusia and Flagler Counties Committee, the Homeless Steering Committee for Volusia County Schools, the Healthy Start Home Visiting Advisory Board and the Board for West Volusia Salvation Army.

b. **Our work moving forward:** Continue exploration and relationship-building to ensure representation in the community to work toward the creation of solutions to effectively support enrolled children and families with the most difficult barriers they face. In order to strengthen community partnerships, the ERSEA Team/Committee participants continue to join additional community groups.

Recommendation 6: New and continued community partnerships. Continue to build community partnerships and leverage agency services to increase access to comprehensive services in MFCS sites. Consider if there are service providers outside the service area that could help to fill some of the gaps within the service area (e.g., health/dental in Sumter County).

a. **Progress:** The Medical Oral Health Coordinator worked to create a new dental partnership with Family Health Source to bolster clinical services in the service area and in bordering counties.

b. **Our work moving forward:** Continue to communicate and brainstorm solutions with local resource providers and enrolled families to monitor the pulse of on-going and one-time family needs as pandemic related funds and services potentially reduce or expire.

Recommendation 7: Housing and homelessness. Continue to advocate for and provide support to families experiencing homelessness and those on the brink of homelessness. Maintain strong relationships with local school districts as sources of referrals and to ensure coordinated services to families with children in the early learning and public-school systems. Continue to partner with other organizations that provide housing support.
    a. **Progress:** Strengthened partnerships with community programs to continue to prioritize maintaining support for families experiencing homelessness in the HS/EHS program, transitional housing facilities, HOPE Place, etc. in order to provide families with temporary housing based on need.
    b. **Our work moving forward:** Continue to collect data to understand the changing needs of the homeless population as impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and other impacts (e.g., Hurricane Ian). MFCS continues to develop new partnerships.

Recommendation 8: Impact of COVID-19. Regularly review community data to adapt to the impact of COVID-19 on communities. Consider data such as unemployment, domestic violence, child welfare, and homelessness. Leverage partnerships and community resources to support vulnerable families, including those on the verge of homelessness, single parents, and families who may need job search or immigration support.
    a. **Progress:** Completed the 2022 Community Assessment Data Update to supplement the MFCS 2021 Community Assessment Data Update to provide new and enhanced data to ensure the most current and comprehensive community level information is used for planning.
    b. **Our work moving forward:** Continue to collect and review community and family level data to understand how to be most responsive to families in the service area as the pandemic's longer-term effects impact the service area (e.g., reduced staffing, elevated mental health issues).

LOOKING AHEAD

Building on the 2020 Community Assessment and 2021 Annual Update, MFCS will leverage data and key findings from the 2022 Annual Update to improve the ability of the Head Start and Early Head Start programs to meet children and families' needs. The MFCS Governing Board, Policy Council, staff, and parents will be provided with data from the Annual Update and be engaged in dialogue about how to use this information to establish or modify short- and long-term goals for the programs.

The HSPPS requirement to annually review and update the Community Assessment provides MFCS with an opportunity to continuously reflect and improve upon data monitoring, data use, and implementation of data-driven, outcomes-oriented goals. With 2022 Annual Update data serving as a driving factor for understanding and meeting community needs, and providing the most up-to-date and accurate reflection of community needs, MFCS will continue its dedication to eliminating the causes of poverty through a comprehensive delivery approach.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: MFCS Head Start/Early Head Start Funded Enrollment

Geographic Area	Head Start	Early Head Start I	Early Head Start II	Early Head Start III	Early Head Start IV	Total
Spring Hill HS/EHS Spring Hill, FL 34609	131	n/a	32	n/a	8	171
Hernando HS/EHS Brooksville, FL 34601	94	32	8	n/a	n/a	134
Hernando County	225	32	40	0	8	305
Bushnell HS Bushnell, FL 33513	35	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	35
Sumter County	35	0	0	0	0	35
Blue Lake HS DeLand, FL 32724	18	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	18
Chisholm HS/EHS New Smyrna Beach, FL 32169	55	n/a	8	n/a	n/a	63
Coleman HS Orange City, FL 32763	71	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	71
DeLand EHS DeLand FL, 32720	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	24	24
Deltona Lakes HS Deltona, FL 32725	20	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	20
EVEC HS/EHS Daytona, FL 32114	63	8	n/a	n/a	n/a	71
Fairview HS/EHS Daytona Beach, FL 32114	20	8	n/a	24	n/a	52
Highland EHS Holly Hill, FL 32117	n/a	n/a	16	n/a	n/a	16
Holly Hill HS/EHS Holly Hill, FL 32117	66	n/a	32	n/a	n/a	98
Hope Place HS/EHS Daytona Beach, FL 32117	54	n/a	16	16	n/a	86
Jo Sheppard HS/EHS Pierson FL 32180	37	16	n/a	n/a	n/a	53
Malloy HS/EHS De Leon Springs, FL 32130	54	8	8	n/a	n/a	70
Oak Ridge HS/EHS Holly Hill, FL 32117	37	16	n/a	n/a	n/a	53
Port Orange HS/EHS Port Orange, FL 32129	37	24	n/a	n/a	n/a	61
Tomoka Elementary HS Ormond Beach, FL 32174	18	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	18
Westside HS Daytona Beach, FL 32117	17	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	17
Woodward HS DeLand, FL 32720	18	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	18
WVEC HS DeLand, FL 32720	37	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	37
Volusia County	622	80	80	40	24	846
Service Area Total	882	112	120	40	32	1,186

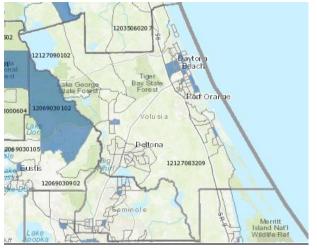# Appendix B: Qualified Opportunity Zone Census Tracts

Figure B1. Hernando County Qualified Opportunity Zone Tracts

Figure B2. Sumter County Qualified Opportunity Zone Tracts

Figure B3. Volusia County Qualified Opportunity Zone Tracts

Appendix C: Licensed Child Care and Family Child Care Capacity

Appendix Table C1. Number (and Capacity) of Child Care Facilities by Zip Code and County as of September 2022[clii]

Geographic Area	Number of Child Care Facilities (Capacity)	Number of Child Care Facilities Participating in VPK	Number of Child Care Facilities / Head Start	Number of Child Care Facilities / School Readiness Providers	Number of Child Care Facilities Serving Infants
34601 (Brooksville)	10 (866)	8	1	6	7
34602 (Brooksville)	3 (224)	2	0	2	1
34604 (Brooksville)	2 (231)	0	0	1	1
34606 (Spring Hill)	9 (1,270)	7	0	8	3
34607 (Spring Hill)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34608 (Spring Hill)	6 (746)	4	0	5	2
34609 (Spring Hill)	19 (2,618)	12	1	18	8
34613 (Brooksville)	5 (657)	4	0	5	3
34614 (Brooksville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
Hernando County	54 (6,612)	37	2	45	25
32162 (The Villages)	2 (466)	1	0	0	0
33513 (Bushnell)	7 (410)	4	1	5	5
33514 (Center Hill)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
33521 (Coleman)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
33538 (Lake Panasoffkee)	1 (74)	0	0	1	1
33585 (Sumterville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
33597 (Webster)	1 (87)	0	0	1	1
34484 (Oxford)	2 (228)	2	0	2	1
34785 (Wildwood)	5 (313)	2	0	4	5
Sumter County	18 (1,578)	9	1	13	13
32114 (Daytona Beach)	17 (1,821)	15	3	14	11
32117 (Daytona Beach)	16 (1,290)	11	5	10	11
32118 (Daytona Beach)	2 (205)	2	0	2	0
32119 (Daytona Beach)	7 (701)	6	0	4	4
32124 (Daytona Beach)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32127 (Port Orange)	8 (1,820)	8	0	6	5
32128 (Port Orange)	2 (357)	1	0	0	0
32129 (Port Orange)	4 (493)	3	1	3	4
32130 (De Leon Springs)	2 (230)	2	1	2	1
32132 (Edgewater)	6 (290)	4	0	4	1
32141 (Edgewater)	2 (157)	2	0	2	2
32168 (New Smyrna Beach)	7 (475)	7	1	2	2
32169 (New Smyrna Beach)	3 (288)	3	0	3	1
32174 (Ormond Beach)	16 (2,017)	11	0	11	9
32176 (Ormond Beach)	5 (949)	4	0	1	2
32180 (Pierson)	2 (167)	2	1	2	1
32190 (Seville)	3 (216)	2	2	1	2
32713 (Debary)	4 (468)	4	0	2	2
32720 (Deland)	16 (1,463)	13	2	9	9
32724 (Deland)	9 (973)	8	0	7	7
32725 (Deltona)	16 (1,900)	14	0	14	7
32738 (Deltona)	7 (656)	5	0	7	5
32744 (Lake Helen)	4 (286)	3	0	3	0
32759 (Oak Hill)	1 (30)	1	0	0	0
32763 (Orange City)	12 (1,264)	12	1	11	7
32764 (Osteen)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
Volusia County	171 (18,489)	143	17	120	93
Service Area Total	243 (26,679)	189	20	178	131

Appendix Table C2. Number (and Capacity) of Licensed Family Day Care Homes by Zip Code and County as of September 2022[cliii]

Geographic Area	Number of Licensed Family Day Care Homes (Capacity)	Number of Licensed Family Day Care Homes Participating in VPK	Number of Licensed Family Day Care Homes / Head Start	Number of Licensed Family Day Care Homes / School Readiness Providers	Number of Licensed Family Day Care Homes Serving Infants
34601 (Brooksville)	4 (40)	0	0	3	2
34602 (Brooksville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34604 (Brooksville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34606 (Spring Hill)	1 (10)	0	0	0	1
34607 (Spring Hill)	0 (0	0	0	0	0
34608 (Spring Hill)	5 (50)	0	0	1	2
34609 (Spring Hill)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34613 (Brooksville)	1 (10)	0	0	0	1
34614 (Brooksville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
Hernando County	11 (110)	0	0	4	6
32162 (The Villages)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
33513 (Bushnell)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
33514 (Center Hill)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
33521 (Coleman)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
33538 (Lake Panasoffkee)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
33585 (Sumterville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
33597 (Webster)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34484 (Oxford)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34785 (Wildwood)	1 (10)	0	0	1	1
Sumter County	1 (10)	0	0	1	1
32114 (Daytona Beach)	2 (20)	0	0	2	2
32117 (Daytona Beach)	4 (40)	0	0	3	3
32118 (Daytona Beach)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32119 (Daytona Beach)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32124 (Daytona Beach)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32127 (Port Orange)	2 (20)	0	0	0	1
32128 (Port Orange)	1 (10)	0	0	1	1
32129 (Port Orange)	1 (10)	0	0	1	1
32130 (De Leon Springs)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32132 (Edgewater)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32141 (Edgewater)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32168 (New Smyrna Beach)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32169 (New Smyrna Beach)	1 (10)	0	0	0	1
32174 (Ormond Beach)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32176 (Ormond Beach)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32180 (Pierson)	1 (10)	0	0	0	1
32190 (Seville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32713 (Debary)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32720 (Deland)	3 (30)	0	0	1	2
32724 (Deland)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32725 (Deltona)	4 (40)	0	0	0	2
32738 (Deltona)	2 (20)	0	0	1	2
32744 (Lake Helen)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32759 (Oak Hill)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32763 (Orange City)	1 (10)	0	0	0	1
32764 (Osteen)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
Volusia County	22 (220)	0	0	9	17
Service Area Total	34 (340)	0	0	14	24

Appendix Table C3. Number (and Capacity) of Large Family Child Care Homes by Zip Code and County as of September 2022[cliv]

Geographic Area	Number of Large Family Child Care Homes (Capacity)	Number of Large Family Child Care Homes Participating in VPK	Number of Large Family Child Care Homes / Head Start	Number of Large Family Child Care Homes / School Readiness Providers	Number of Large Family Child Care Homes Serving Infants
34601 (Brooksville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34602 (Brooksville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34604 (Brooksville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34606 (Spring Hill)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34607 (Spring Hill)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34608 (Spring Hill)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34609 (Spring Hill)	1 (12)	0	0	1	1
34613 (Brooksville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34614 (Brooksville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
Hernando County	1 (12)	0	0	1	1
32162 (The Villages)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
33513 (Bushnell)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
33514 (Center Hill)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
33521 (Coleman)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
33538 (Lake Panasoffkee)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
33585 (Sumterville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
33597 (Webster)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34484 (Oxford)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34785 (Wildwood)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
Sumter County	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32114 (Daytona Beach)	2 (24)	1	0	2	2
32117 (Daytona Beach)	1 (12)	1	0	1	0
32118 (Daytona Beach)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32119 (Daytona Beach)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32124 (Daytona Beach)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32127 (Port Orange)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32128 (Port Orange)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32129 (Port Orange)	1 (12)	1	0	1	0
32130 (De Leon Springs)	1 (12)	0	0	1	1
32132 (Edgewater)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32141 (Edgewater)	2 (24)	2	0	2	2
32168 (New Smyrna Beach)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32169 (New Smyrna Beach)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32174 (Ormond Beach)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32176 (Ormond Beach)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32180 (Pierson)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32190 (Seville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32713 (Debary)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32720 (Deland)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32724 (Deland)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32725 (Deltona)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32738 (Deltona)	1 (12)	0	0	0	1
32744 (Lake Helen)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32759 (Oak Hill)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32763 (Orange City)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32764 (Osteen)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
Volusia County	8 (96)	5	0	7	6
Service Area Total	9 (108)	5	0	8	7

Appendix Table C4. Number (and Capacity) of Registered Family Day Care Homes by Zip Code and County as of September 2022[clv]

Geographic Area	Number of Registered Family Day Care Homes (Capacity)	Number of Registered Family Day Care Homes Participating in VPK	Number of Registered Family Day Care Homes / Head Start	Number of Registered Family Day Care Homes / School Readiness Providers	Number of Registered Family Day Care Homes Serving Infants
34601 (Brooksville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34602 (Brooksville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34604 (Brooksville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34606 (Spring Hill)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34607 (Spring Hill)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34608 (Spring Hill)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34609 (Spring Hill)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34613 (Brooksville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34614 (Brooksville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
Hernando County	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32162 (The Villages)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
33513 (Bushnell)	1 (10)	0	0	0	1
33514 (Center Hill)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
33521 (Coleman)	1 (10)	0	0	0	1
33538 (Lake Panasoffkee)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
33585 (Sumterville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
33597 (Webster)	1 (10)	0	0	0	1
34484 (Oxford)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
34785 (Wildwood)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
Sumter County	3 (30)	0	0	0	3
32114 (Daytona Beach)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32117 (Daytona Beach)	1 (10)	0	0	1	1
32118 (Daytona Beach)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32119 (Daytona Beach)	1 (9)	0	0	0	1
32124 (Daytona Beach)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32127 (Port Orange)	2 (20)	0	0	0	0
32128 (Port Orange)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32129 (Port Orange)	3 (30)	0	0	0	2
32130 (De Leon Springs)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32132 (Edgewater)	2 (20)	0	0	0	1
32141 (Edgewater)	2 (20)	0	0	0	2
32168 (New Smyrna Beach)	2 (20)	0	0	0	1
32169 (New Smyrna Beach)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32174 (Ormond Beach)	1 (10)	0	0	0	0
32176 (Ormond Beach)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32180 (Pierson)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32190 (Seville)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32713 (Debary)	1 (10)	0	0	0	1
32720 (Deland)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32724 (Deland)	2 (20)	0	0	0	1
32725 (Deltona)	1 (10)	0	0	0	0
32738 (Deltona)	2 (20)	0	0	0	2
32744 (Lake Helen)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32759 (Oak Hill)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32763 (Orange City)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
32764 (Osteen)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0
Volusia County	20 (199)	0	0	1	12
Service Area Total	23 (229)	0	0	1	15

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