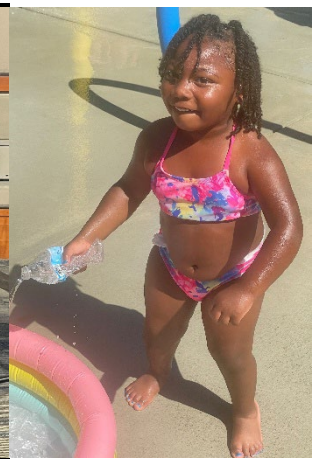




## University of Alabama at Birmingham Early Head Start Annual Report 2023-2024





**UAB** The University of  
Alabama at Birmingham.



The **University of Alabama at Birmingham Early Head Start Program (UAB EHSP)** is based on the program operation cornerstones outlined in the Head Start Program Performance Standards to promote school readiness of enrolled children through:

- education and child development,
- health, and
- family and community engagement.

The UAB EHSP uses these cornerstones as the foundation for providing high quality, comprehensive services to infants, toddlers and pregnant women. The overarching goal of the UAB EHSP is to provide the highest quality early learning experiences (school readiness) and child health services to infants and toddlers who live in high-risk environments. For these services to be maximally effective, family and community engagement services are provided to empower the families to focus on providing high quality early learning experiences for their children, enhancing family strengths, as well as addressing family needs.

**Mission:** The mission of the University of Alabama at Birmingham Early Head Start Program (UAB EHSP) is to form partnerships with families to support child development and family goals. Through continuous training and professional development and in collaboration with the community, we strive to enhance opportunities for children and families.

**Established:** The UAB EHSP has been continuously funded since 1998 to serve 88 infants and toddlers and their families or pregnant women challenged by poverty. The program provides services in Jefferson, St. Clair, and Walker Counties.

Please enjoy reading about all the wonderful and exciting work that the UAB EHSP has engaged in with children and families during this program year.

*Kristi Guest PhD*

Kristi Carter Guest, PhD

Director

UAB Early Head Start Program

## **Program Highlights for 2023 – 2024**

### ***Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment & Attendance (ERSEA):***

- *Eligibility:* 35% of enrolled participants were income-eligible for the program; 38% qualified as receiving Public Assistance (*SNAP/SSI/TANF*); 3% were foster children; 15% were homeless; and 7% were over-income.
- *Recruitment:* The program maintains an active waiting list to replace any dropped participants. August 2024, we transitioned twenty-three participants and ended the program year with twenty-five+ eligible recruits.
- *Selection:*
  - Selection Criteria ranking format approved by both the Governing Body and Policy Council November 13, 2024.
  - The average number of selection points for an eligible participant remains at 60.
- *Enrollment:*
  - Funded to serve 88 participants total, 80 home-based and 8 center-based.
  - We reported full enrollment to the Head Start Enterprise System by November 2023, and despite staff retention frustrations we were able to maintain full enrollment for the remainder of the program year aside from June 2024. In addition to the 30-day vacancy replacement allowance, we also added two reserved slots for pregnant women.
  - Cumulative enrollment reported on the Program Information Report (*PIR*) for 2023-2024 was 109, ten pregnant women and ninety-nine children.
  - Bilingual Family Partner maintained a full caseload of dual language learners (*DLLs*): 20 children cumulative; 16 children receiving services at the end of the program year.
- *Attendance:*
  - Jasper Area Family Services Center's (*JAFSC*) overall average daily attendance from September 5, 2023, to August 28, 2024, was 79.46%, which is almost a 1.5% increase from the previous program year and just slightly 5% below the Head Start Program Performance Standards (*HSPPS*) mandated minimum of 85%.
  - The total number of dropped participants for the entire program remained at 17% of the total cumulative enrollment (21/124 for previous program year compared to 18/109 for this program year).

### ***Education (Curriculum, Screening & Assessment, and School Readiness):***

- Our program takes a holistic approach with each child, and we individualize and meet children where they are in their development. Family Partners and Teachers continue to

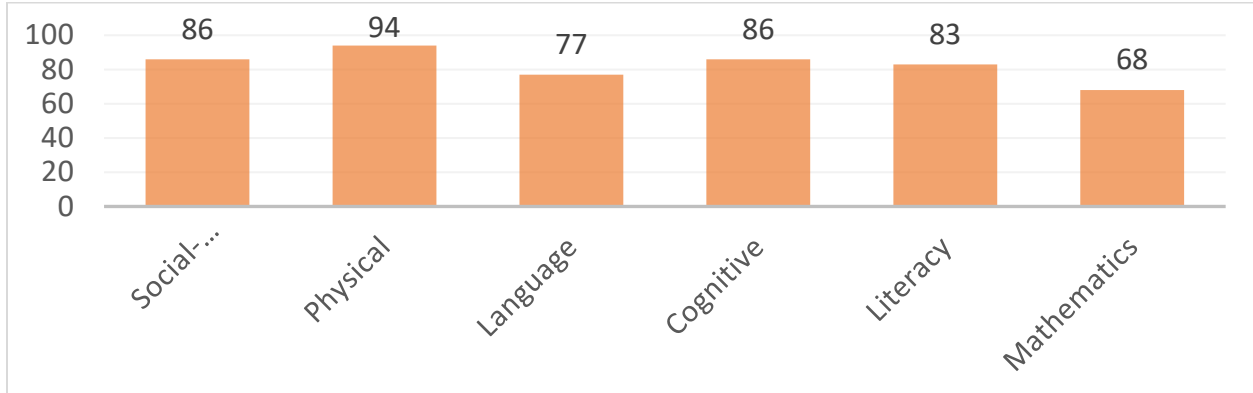
form partnerships with parents to establish individual children's goals that are in alignment with Head Start's Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) and the UAB EHS school readiness plan.

- 96% of home-based children had a Preliminary Individualized Development Plan (IDP). The eight center-based children did not have a Preliminary IDP pending IDP training scheduled for January 2024
- 98% of home-based children had Midyear IDPs
- 99% of **all** program children had End-of-Year IDPs
- 100% of all IDPs are aligned with ELOF
- 100% of Weekly Lesson Plans (*home-based and center-based*) incorporate pre-literacy.
- Program staff are equipped to work with all children to individualize based on development and to incorporate early intervention services for children with disabilities.
- Staff training on utilizing our home-based curriculum, *Partners for a Healthy Baby*, to fidelity is ongoing.
- Continued interactions during monthly Family Partner meetings to include opportunities for group planning time and peer-to- peer coaching.
- **Assessment:** Data by GOLD® checkpoint and developmental domain with a combined percentage of those meeting or exceeding the widely held expectations for children by age.
  - **Fall Checkpoint – home-based only (September-December):**
    - Social-Emotional **86%**
    - Physical **94%**
    - Language **77%**
    - Cognitive **86%**
    - Literacy **83%**
    - Mathematics **68%**
  - **Winter Checkpoint (January-April):**
    - Social-Emotional **79%**
    - Physical **76%**
    - Language **66%**
    - Cognitive **78%**
    - Literacy **71%**
    - Mathematics **61%**
  - **Spring Checkpoint (May-August):**
    - Social-Emotional **88%**
    - Physical **88%**
    - Language **80%**
    - Cognitive **90%**

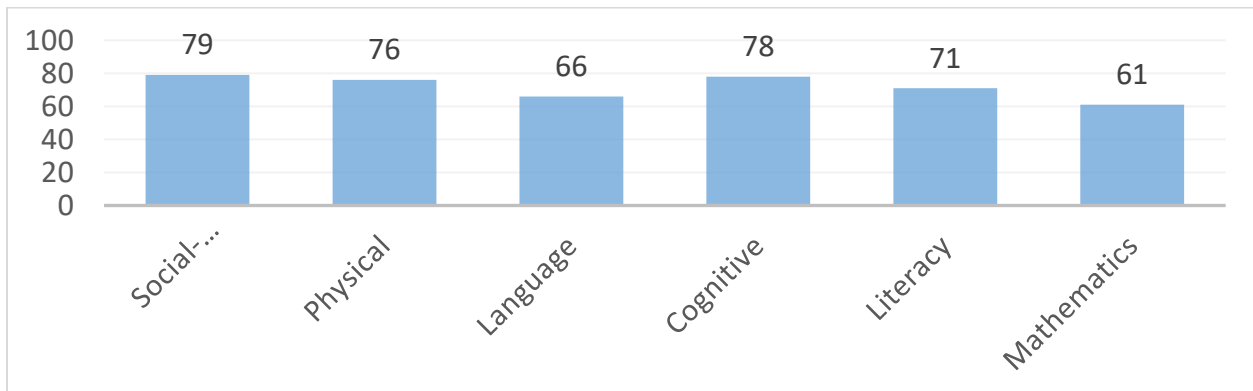


- Literacy **85%**
- Mathematics **80%**

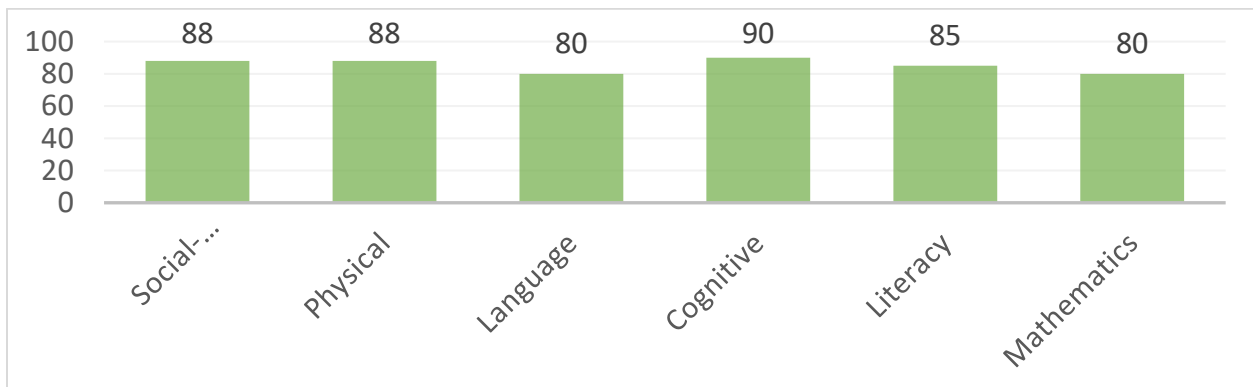
• **GOLD® Fall Assessment 2023-2024 – Widely Held Expectations (*Meeting + Exceeding*)**



• **GOLD® Winter Assessment 2023-2024 – Widely Held Expectations (*Meeting + Exceeding*)**



• **GOLD® Spring Assessment 2023-2024 – Widely Held Expectations (*Meeting + Exceeding*)**



- 100% of home visitors, teachers, and coordinators model positive and nurturing parent/child interactions.
- 114% (n=25) of socializations are completed for the program year (only required to offer 25 but we offered 25 opportunities for socializations this program year).

***Parent Involvement Activities:***

- Offered UAB EHSP families the opportunity to participate in 25 socialization activities throughout the program year, such as the parent involvement activities below:
  - Welcome Socialization with the Shar-Itt Petting Farm
  - The Great Pumpkin Patch in Hayden, where each family took home a pumpkin after exploring the various activities offered at the pumpkin patch
  - “1,2,3 Play with Me” socializations for play and story time (in English and Spanish) at the Birmingham Public Library
  - Fire Prevention with Fire Fighters/Trunk or Treat Fall Festival
  - Meal of Thanks Socialization at the Lee Community Center when families had lunch together, and table activities for children including placemats with crayons, and “Llama Llama Gives Thanks” board books
  - Winter Wonderland Socialization when families had the opportunity to ride the trackless train, make snowmen ornaments, take pictures with Santa, and each child received a backpack bag with a social/emotional toy (Arthur, Elmo, Biscuit, or Paddington Bear stuff animal) and “Snow Kisses” book
  - African Drumming Socialization, where families learned about West African culture including a drumming, story and dancing experience with Sahi On Ko Djony
  - Vocabby’s World Socializations where our program children learn new words through music, song, movement, crafts, and stories at Art Play
  - Building Blocks of the Symphony, where Families were engaged and participated in the Building Blocks of the Symphony with the Alabama Symphony: words and definitions shared included melody, harmony, tempo, emotions in music (happy/sad), and how sounds are made: articulations, dynamics/sounds (loud/quiet), and tempo (fast or slow).
  - Spring Wellness and Community Resource Fair at the Lee Community Center, where families had the opportunity for free play, to learn about various community resources (i.e., Operation Hope, The Birmingham Public Library, Pediatric Dentistry, STRIVE Birmingham (job readiness training and placement), One Roof, BirthWell Partners Community Doula Project, etc.), and receive massages
  - Egg Hunt at Railroad Park where families hunted for eggs, took pictures with the bunny, and rode the trackless train.
  - Fun Day at the Pelham Splash Pad
- UAB ESHP families were offered parenting sessions utilizing the Ready Rosie and Partners for a Healthy Baby Curriculum.

### **Health Services:**

- 96% of program children (n=95) have ongoing, continuous health care.
- 98% of program children (n=97) have health insurance.
  - 93% of program children (n=92) have Medicaid.
  - 2% of program children (n=2) did not have health insurance.
- Medical/well child visits data indicated:
  - 68% of program children (n=67) were up-to-date on Alabama Medicaid EPSDT periodicity schedule for well-child check-ups at the *end* of the program year.
  - 32% of program children (n=32) were behind Alabama Medicaid EPSDT periodicity schedule for well-child check-ups at the *end* of the program year.
  - With the COVID-19 pandemic continuing to lessen in impact, parents are getting their children up to date on medical/well child visits.
- Immunizations data showed:
  - 53% of program children (n=53) are up-to-date on the CDC recommended immunizations schedule.
  - 34% of program children (n=34) have received all immunization possible at this time but who have not received all immunizations appropriate for their age.
  - 8% of program children (n=8) are behind on the CDC recommended immunizations schedule.
  - 4% of program children (n=4) meet state guidelines for an exemption from immunizations.
  - With the COVID-19 pandemic continuing to lessen in impact, parents are getting their children up to date on immunizations.
- Dental services and dental screenings data revealed:
  - 66% of children over 1 year of age (n=46) have access to oral health care at the end of the program year.
  - 34% of children over 1 year of age (n=24) did not report having an oral health care provider.
  - 31% of children over 1 year of age (n=22) received a dental exam.
  - 69% of children over 1 year of age (n=48) did not receive a dental exam.
- Pregnancy medical insurance for 10 Pregnant women served this program year revealed:
  - 100% of pregnant women have ongoing medical care (n=10).
    - 90% (n=9) have Medicaid health insurance
    - 10 (n=1) has private health insurance
- Pregnancy medical and wellbeing services:
  - 100% of pregnant women received prenatal care (n=10).
  - 100% of pregnant women received education on fetal development (n=10).
  - 100% of pregnant women received education on the benefits of breastfeeding (n=10).
  - 100% of pregnant women received education on infant care and safe sleeping practices (n=10).

- Pregnancy Oral Health data for 10 Pregnant women served this program year showed:
  - None of the pregnant women reported having dental care (n=10).
  - A list of dental providers for adults was included in the pregnancy handouts.
- Continued to encourage access to dental homes with list of providers for families regarding dental services available in their community and continued collaboration with UAB Pediatric Dentistry to provide education and screening services.
- Program continued collaboration with a nutrition consultant, Maegan Guven, who is a Registered Dietician and consultant with UAB for all nutritional screenings.

### ***Mental Health:***

- Maintained and utilized Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional-2 (ASQ:SE-2) screenings annually to identify children at risk for socio-emotional difficulties and in need of further services (as recommended by Head Start and the American Academy of Pediatrics).
  - 80 infants and toddlers have at least one ASQ:SE-2
  - Of all screened, 7 children had to be rescreened due to social-emotional concerns
  - Health Coordinator followed up with families or home visitors to address concerns unless the child had a disability and already received EI services.
  - All Teachers and Home Visiting staff received assistance from a mental health consultant through observation and consultation.
- Continued to promote the mental health and wellness of mothers
  - 43 completed Beck Depression Inventories-2 (BDI-2) with program mothers
    - 2 women had depression concerns
    - 1 woman are receiving counseling services and 1 refused services
  - 11 completed Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale with women (completed each trimester and postnatal)
    - 1 woman had depression concerns
    - 0 woman is receiving counseling services due to personal reasons
- Mental Health consult regarding 9 children for child behavior concerns
- 100% Mental Health Checklists (n=3) were not completed in the classroom.

### ***Disability Services:***

- 99 children (100%) have screenings for developmental progress with the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3).
  - Of all children screened, 6 children (6%) were identified as needing a developmental screening recheck.
  - Of all children screened, 18 children (18%) were identified as having developmental concerns and those were all served by intervention providers.
- 44 children were newly enrolled since last program year and all 44 (100%) received a developmental screening within 45 days of entry into the program



- Of these 44 children, 9 (21%) were identified as needing follow-up screenings or a formal assessment to determine if the child had a disability.
- During the year, we served 19 (19%) children with documented disabilities.
  - Of those 19 children, eligibility was determined prior to the program year for 12 (63%) and 7 (37%) were eligible within the current program year.
  - All 19 children are receiving special services.
    - 15 (79%) children with IFSPs (Early Intervention)
    - 4 (21%) children with IEPs (School Services)
- Additionally, we served 2 more child with disabilities through The Bell Center and a Private SLP provider.
- We consistently meet and exceed the required 10% service to children with disabilities.
- Classroom environment is based on individual needs of each child to help every child grow and develop at their own pace.
- Family Partners, Teachers, and Disability Services Coordinator continued to have an excellent collaborative relationship with local early intervention programs.
  - Staff include IFSP/IEP goals with program education goals and often share visits with early intervention service providers.
- Staff regularly attend IFSP, IEP, and/or therapy meetings.
- Classroom environment is based on individual needs of each child to help every child grow and develop at their own pace.
- We have a strong network of community resources for children with disabilities.
- Timely referrals were made for children in need of developmental services.
- The Disability Services Coordinator serves on the Alabama Early Intervention District Council and serves on the Alabama Early Intervention & Preschool Conference Planning Committee.
- Continue to make referrals and help families navigate the intake packets for UAB Civitan-Sparks Clinics for children who need more comprehensive developmental evaluations. We have an interagency agreement with UAB Civitan-Sparks Clinics to get our children seen expeditiously.

### ***Family Engagement Services:***

- During the program year, UAB EHSP served 74 families.
  - 69% of families are single-parent families
  - 31% of families are two-parent families
  - 47% of families report being unemployed, retired or disabled at time of enrollment; this number decreased to 19% at the end of the program year
  - 53% of families report at least one parent is employed, in job training, or in school at enrollment; this number decreased to 41% at the end of the program year
- 100% of home visitors and teachers support parents as the primary teachers of their children.
- Strong parent involvement occurs in choosing individual goals for their children for their Individual Development Plans.

- UAB EHSP assists and empowers parents and caregivers in defining, setting, and accomplishing their family goals.
  - 96% of preliminary family Strengths and Needs Assessments were complete
  - 84% of mid-year family Strengths and Needs Assessments were complete
  - 94% of end-of-year family Strengths and Needs Assessments were complete
  - Preliminary and Mid-Year data revealed the same top 3 areas of need, with Mid-Year data revealing a tied score for both Adult Education and Mobility:
    - 1) Employment
    - 2) Financial Security
    - 3) Adult Education and Mobility (both for Mid-Year)
  - End-of-year data revealed these top 3 areas of need:
    - 1) Employment
    - 2) Financial Security
    - 3) Housing
- To address these needs, the UAB EHSP provided the following services/referrals the most often to families:
  - Parenting education
  - Health education/Mental health services
  - Child development education
  - Housing/utility financial assistance
  - Diapers
  - Transportation
- Homelessness impacted 19% (n=14) of families in the UAB EHSP during the program year and 93% (n=13) of those families acquired housing during the program year.
- A small percentage of children enrolled are in foster care (3%) this program year.

***Community Partnerships:***

- Continued partnering with Mitchell's Place for professional development for home-based and center-based staff regarding children's behavior. Emilie Stahlhut with Mitchell's Place continued to provide home-based coaching in addition to continuing to perform center-based coaching.
- Continued partnership with Jasper Area Family Services Center for our center-based services; partnered with Operation Hope, Lee Community Center, Childcare Resources, Birmingham Public Library, and UAB ArtPlay for socialization and parenting activities/information.
- Continued to work with other Head Start programs in Jefferson and St. Clair Counties to facilitate smooth transitions from UAB Early Head Start to Head Start. Updated an Interagency Agreement with Childcare Resources Head Start and St. Clair County Head Start.

- Staff serve on multiple community boards and provide awareness of program services and community trainings:
  - Coordinators attend meetings including the Medicaid Assistants Meeting, CDI Head Start Serving Jefferson County Health Services Advisory Board, Children's Policy Council Early Care and Education Work Group, Children's Policy Council First Friday Forum, National Alliance of Mental Illness Monthly Education Meetings, HEALthy Brain and Child Development Study Community Advisory Board, Birthwell Partners Board of Directors, St. Clair County Department of Human Resources Provider Resource Fair, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services Community Resource Fair, Promoting Positive Early Experiences and Relationships in Alabama: a Team-Based Approach (PPEER), Alabama Early Intervention & Preschool Conference Planning Committee, Alabama Early Intervention District Coordinating Council, Alabama Early Intervention District Coordinating Council Training Subcommittee, Alabama Head Start Association (AHSA) Board meetings quarterly, and AHSA Training Subcommittee.
- Maintained our collaboration with BirthWell Partners community doulas for pregnant mothers and our Health Coordinator continued to serve on BirthWell Partners Board of Directors.
- Families are informed of great community resources by program staff.
  - General resources have been shared with home visitors for families and posted to our program Facebook page for families to easily access.

***Communication:***

- Relationships with our UAB EHS families to support them and link them to resources and services in the community.
- We develop personal relationships with program families in their natural environment and through socialization events.
- Team approach to services is a strength. Staff has a team of coordinators to help with any questions or concerns.
- Fully staffed during the majority of the program year.
- Home visitors focus on the family to show our long-term investment to support children and families. There is strong continuity with the families we serve. Parents in our program are very invested and engaged with their children. The literacy program enhancements with books and activities have facilitated parent engagement.
- UAB EHS Governing Body praised our program for the great leadership skills demonstrated and great communication skills evidenced with the Governing Body.
- UAB EHS Policy Council praised our program for the management and communication skills demonstrated by program staff with the Policy Council.
- Maintained and advertised our UAB Early Head Start Program Facebook page to enhance public awareness and communication with program families about program and community events.
- Continued updates of the UAB Early Head Start Program website, which includes the Program's Annual Report.

- Conducted regular and ad hoc staff and coordinator's meetings to address areas of need.

**Record Keeping and Reporting:**

- Continued having a UAB undergraduate work study part-time doing Data Entry to facilitate record keeping and reporting.
- Continuing to use ChildPlus for data tracking and staff are using UAB EHS and ChildPlus reports for ongoing monitoring.
- Conduct bimonthly family/child reviews of all enrolled children and their families with coordinators.
- Conduct monthly child reviews with teachers reviewing center-based children with coordinators.
- Sign in sheets are completed for each meeting held to document attendance.

**Financial Audit/Annual Audit:** There were no findings in our annual A 133 fiscal audit conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers for the year ending September 30, 2023.

**Funding awarded by ACF for 2023-2024: \$1,305,514**  
**Program Budget for the 2023-2024 fiscal year**

| <b><u>Budget Category</u></b>   | <b><u>Funds Budgeted</u></b> |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Cell Phone Charges              | \$6,000.00                   |
| Conference Travel               | \$1,500.00                   |
| Disability Services             | \$1,000.00                   |
| Educational Supplies            | \$6,000.00                   |
| Health Services                 | \$500.00                     |
| Family Services                 | \$500.00                     |
| Local Travel                    | \$42,000.00                  |
| Mental Health Services          | \$500.00                     |
| Nutrition/Food for Events       | \$18,487.00                  |
| PIPA                            | \$6,500.00                   |
| Supplies/Socialization Supplies | \$38,065.00                  |
| Child Services Consultant       | \$18,000.00                  |
| TA/Training                     | \$24,192.00                  |
| Walker County Subcontract       | \$169,551.00                 |
| Salaries and Wages              | \$629,254.00                 |
| Fringe Benefits                 | \$222,360.00                 |
| <b>Total Direct Cost</b>        | <b>\$1,184,409.00</b>        |
| <b>Indirect Cost</b>            | <b>\$121,105.00</b>          |
| <b>Account Total</b>            | <b>\$1,305,514.00</b>        |

**ACF Funds for the UAB EHSP (Total award \$1,305,514 for 2023-2024)**  
**Program Funds expended for the 2023-2024 fiscal year**

| <b><u>Budget Category</u></b>   | <b><u>Expended</u></b> |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Cell Phone Charges              | \$5,739.75             |
| Conference Travel               | \$1,500.00             |
| Disability Services             | \$946.60               |
| Educational Supplies            | \$6000.00              |
| Health Services                 | \$500.00               |
| Local Travel                    | \$29,919.84            |
| Family Services                 | \$500.00               |
| Mental Health Services          | \$500.00               |
| Nutrition/Food for Events       | \$18,487.00            |
| PIPA                            | \$6,500.00             |
| Supplies/Socialization Supplies | \$46,916.31            |
| Child Consulting Services       | \$15,943.00            |
| TA/Training                     | \$25,680.00            |
| Walker County Subcontract       | \$167,404.36           |
| Salaries and Wages              | \$589,392.19           |
| Fringe Benefits                 | \$200,369.15           |
| <b>Total Direct Cost</b>        | <b>\$1,116,298.20</b>  |
| <b>Indirect Cost</b>            | <b>\$113,225.05</b>    |
| <b>Account Total</b>            | <b>\$1,229,523.25</b>  |

Local Travel - staff mileage (home visitors and coordinators travel)

Nutrition Services - food for socializations, policy council, parenting, and health advisory committee meetings

Parent Committee funds - uber service to parent functions, parent trainings, parent mileage reimbursements, etc.

Supplies – supplies needed for socializations, office supplies, etc.

**UAB's financial contribution (in kind and match): \$350,685.09**

**Total account and in-kind match: \$ 1,580,208.34**