

Coastal Plain Area E.O.A. Inc.

HEAD START PROGRAM



*COMMUNITY
ASSESSMENT*

2013-2014

The method and process for completing the Community Assessment involved the Director and Management Team, with the support of service providers and support teams such as the Health Services Advisory Committee, the Mental Health provider and demographics collected from Multi-sources.

*Special thanks to the following for their support in the development of the
Community Assessment for the year 2013-2014*

Coastal Plain Area EOA, Inc. - Community Action Agency

Board Chairman – Janis Jarvis

Executive Director – Bruni Hudson

Head Start Director –Tanya Thomas

Policy Council Chairman – Casey Roland

Entire Head Start Staff

Centers and Community

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT REPORT

For

Coastal Plain Area E.O.A., Inc.

HEAD START

Community Assessment Process

Program area needs are identified by surveying counties, compiling and analyzing demographics, and collecting shared information from community partners. These results help determine program options, goals, and plans of action to meet the needs of our families and children through delivery of services.

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Preface

CPAEOA, INC. DEVELOPMENT HISTORY AND EXPERIENCE

On January 14, 1965, the Coastal Plain Area Planning and Development Commission were awarded a Program Development Grant from the Office of Economic Opportunity. This enabled a Program Developer to begin the groundwork for a community based organization which would serve the poor and elderly. As a result, on April 8, 1965, Coastal Plain Area Economic Opportunity Authority, in concert with the laws of the State of Georgia, was incorporated as a private, non-profit corporation serving the ten counties of the Coastal Plain area of Georgia. On April 1, 1968, this agency replaced the Area Planning and Development Commission as the Office of Economic Opportunity grantee.

Since its inception, the human services programs of CPAEOA, Inc. have invested over one hundred million dollars of federal, state and local funds in ten counties which are served by the corporation. The agency has been instrumental in mobilizing local, state, federal and private resources to ensure that the services remain on the same level as community needs. Funding, as well as technical assistance has been provided to numerous service organizations within the Coastal Plain area.

CPAEOA, Inc. seeks to promote the educational, social and economic development of the citizens of the Second and Eighth U.S. Congressional Districts of Georgia, as they are presently apportioned, particularly with respect to those citizens who are economically disadvantaged, or who have been somehow deprived of the general economic prosperity and well-being of the country. In pursuance of this goal, it is the function and purpose of CPAEOA, Inc. to provide services and assistance to aid in the elimination of poverty and its causes. These services include (but are not limited to) the development of employment opportunities, individual motivational enhancements, job performance and productivity training. This agency is aware that by bettering the living, employment, and educational conditions in a community, the residents will respond in a positive manner.

In conjunction with area businesses and other governmental agencies, the Corporation is involved in programs which relate to employment, housing, financial management, and remedial services, as well as educational activities which benefit the individuals and families in the ten-county area. All programs offered are consistent with the mission, objectives and purposes of CPAEOA, Inc. Our primary goal is to help low-income persons achieve self-sufficiency with a sense of personal and community pride.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Introduction:

In accordance with 1305.3, the community needs for Coastal Plain Head Start have been determined through a collection of reliable data and information and analysis of the Head Start Service Area. Through this process we can obtain a clear image of the communities in the Service Area, its needs and resources. Program options, choices and operations are based on the Community Assessment.

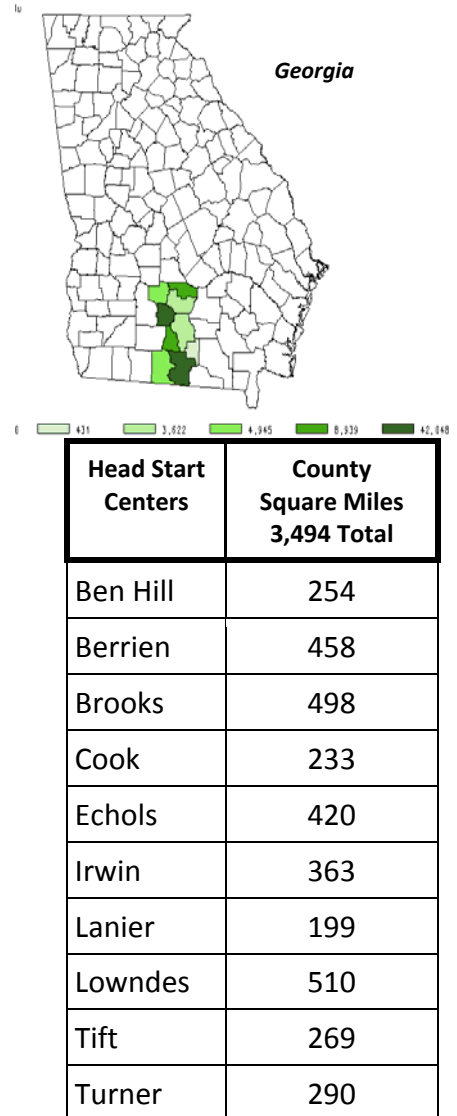
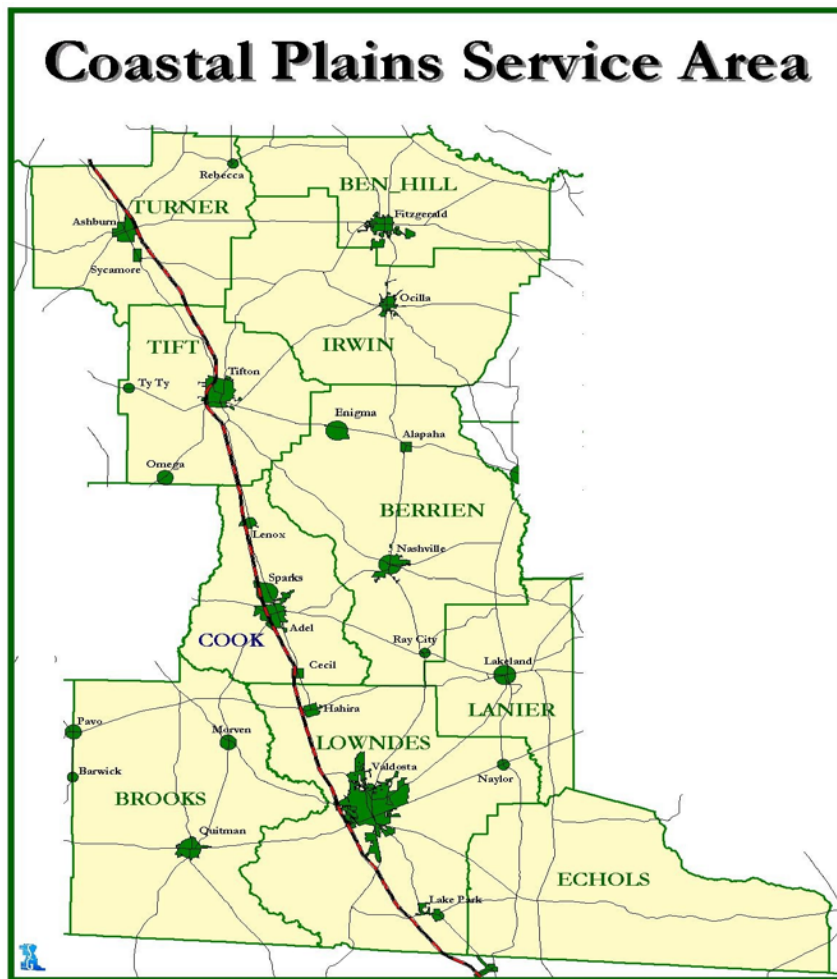
The process helps to determine the Agency's philosophy, mission, vision and long and short-range goals. The location of centers, including the criteria for determining priority in the recruitment and selection process for children and families is addressed through the Community Needs Assessment. The services to be provided and the resources available in the community are impacted by the data collected in the Assessment.

In turn, the data is analyzed to identify trends relevant to the Head Start population, major issues and concerns and their impact and significance for the program. Information from the Community Assessment assists management in planning quality improvement projects.

The basic data collected includes the following:

- General overview of the program, geographic area, site locations.
- Demographic location, relating to services and operations.
- Demographic information – eligible children and families.
- Demographic information – Racial and Ethnic.
- Other Childcare programs-how this impacts the availability of 3 and 4 year olds.
- Children with Disabilities.
- Needs of children and families defined by outside data (c.c. Census, etc.) Relates to health, education, transportation, etc.
- Needs of children and families as defined by families locally by surveys, partnerships, etc.
- Community Resources, such as employment, safety issues, domestic violence, child abuse, etc.
- Internal data on how services are delivered, program strengths, short and long-range goals, results and benefits.
- Issues for future planning with regard to short and long-range goals. Decisions by Management regarding location of Centers, hours and days of operation, and services provided.
- Surveys distributed to the community at large, families, staff, and Health Advisory Committee.

Geographic Description of Service Area



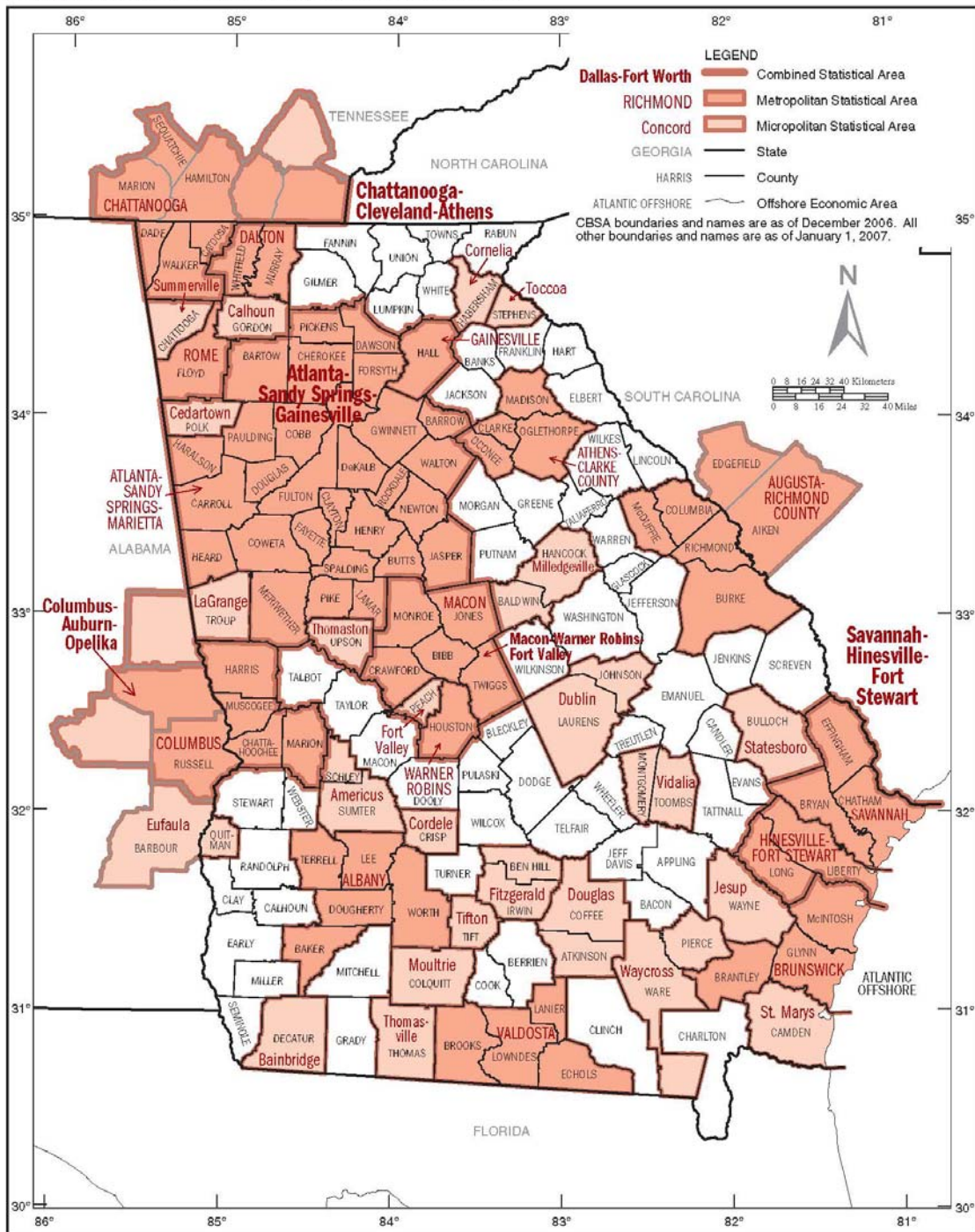
This map shows the geographic area of the Coastal Plain Area EOA Head Start Program. We currently operate in nine (9) Counties located in South Central Georgia, which covers a total of 3,494 miles. The service delivery area includes approximately 36 cities, towns, townships and unincorporated areas. The above chart depicts the land size on a county-by-county basis.

The vastness of these counties sometimes creates unique transportation challenges, which are addressed in the goals and objectives section of this assessment.

The land area is characterized by flat rolling farmlands, forests and timberlands. Farmland is slowly giving way to small industrial business, hotels, motels, and eating facilities along Highway I-75 which extends north and south for approximately 90 miles along the counties of Turner, Tift, Cook, and Lowndes.

The service area contains predominantly rural communities. Out of the nine counties in which we serve, seven have a population in excess of 10,000 per the 2010 Census. Valdosta is the only city in which we serve that is metropolitan status.

GEORGIA - Core Based Statistical Areas and Counties



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE Economics and Statistics Administration U.S. Census Bureau

Geographic Description with regard to growth location and Service

While **Lowndes County** and the surrounding area identified in the Metropolitan Statistical Area for 2005 have been able to access more funds to meet the growth and trends in this South Georgia area, the same issues and concerns remain.

Lowndes County is conveniently located on Interstate 75, which runs from Florida to Canada and provides easy access to Macon and Atlanta. There are eight exits serving Valdosta. State Highways 84 and 133 are the major east-west routes. Interstate 10, which connects Jacksonville with Los Angeles, is less than an hour away. Driving time to Atlanta or Orlando is four hours; it is two hours to Jacksonville, and 1.5 hours to Tallahassee.

Greater Valdosta is the business, cultural, educational, medical, leisure, and retail hub for eleven South Georgia and North Florida counties and more than 1.2 million citizens. With its upcoming Metro status Valdosta, Georgia's tenth largest city and Lowndes County is quickly becoming the fastest growing area in Georgia and is home to Moody Air Force Base, Grand Bay Wildlife Management Area, Valdosta State University, and two Regional Medical Centers.

The total population of the Greater Valdosta Area is 252,306. With a population of 109,233, Lowndes County covers 510 square miles. Valdosta is home to 54,518 residents, including 26,283 Moody Air Force Base active-duty personnel, retirees and their families.

Lowndes County is served by air, land and sea transportation. Valdosta Regional Airport, a growing regional airport just off Interstate 75, offers daily flights to Atlanta on Atlantic Southeast Airlines, a Delta Airline Connector. CSX, Norfolk Southern and Valdosta Railway provide freight rail service. One commercial and four charter and commuter bus lines provide regional and national connections. Taxi service is available for local travel. The ports of Savannah, Georgia; Brunswick, Georgia and Jacksonville, Florida, are within two hours of Lowndes County. During a recent visit to Valdosta by the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Transportation he commented, "Valdosta is to be highly commended for its Traffic Management Center. In some ways, such as traffic signal coordination, Valdosta is ahead of even Atlanta."

The **greater Valdosta Area** has also embraced the strengths of its location and people to move boldly forward as a center of business, education and recreation for the entire Southeast, with programs to improve state education, recreational opportunities, housing and community services.

Valdosta is known for its diverse *Metropolitan* area. The city is known as the center for business, industry, retail, culture, education, health care, leisure and tourism activities for a 9-county area with 252,306 residents. This diverse economic base placed **Valdosta** on the map as Georgia's 14th largest city and a *Metropolitan Area*. Valdosta was also chosen by Relocate-America in 2008-2009 as one of the top 100 places to live. 16 miles north of Valdosta is the growing community of **Hahira**. **Hahira** is known for its warm, hardworking, productive Citizens, excellent school system, low crime rate, and relaxed friendly lifestyle. This area also produces

peanuts, soybeans and tobacco. Hahira is today a city nearing 1,700 citizens located in South Georgia along I-75.

Brooks County is part of the *Valdosta Metropolitan Statistical Area*. The workforce for the metro area is regional in scope, which provides a large pool of resources from which to recruit.

The county seat for **Brooks County** is Quitman, which is the center hub of the county. Brooks County has a population of 16,243. Quitman has a population of 2,513. Brooks County covers 497 square miles.

A well-diversified economy based on manufacturing agricultures and tourism makes **Brooks County** a stable environment. One of the largest dairy counties in the state, **Brooks County** is well known for its rich farmland producing favorites -- strawberries, blueberries, peaches and peanuts.

Berrien County with a total population of 19,286 is comprised of four cities and a lush rural countryside. Berrien County has a much diversified economic base. Agriculture is the largest industry producing a variety of crops such as tobacco, corn, peanuts, and soybeans. The cities are Nashville (the county seat), Alapaha, Ray City and Enigma. The County borders Lowndes County and is near Moody Air Force Base. This County also accesses the resources of the *Metropolitan Area*.

Lanier County The town of **Lakeland** is at the Center of Lanier County, with a population of 10,078. It is a part of the *Valdosta Metropolitan Statistical Area*. Government and community agencies, organizations, and church work together using their resources effectively to make Lakeland-Lanier County a great place to live. Lanier County covers 186 square miles. Lanier County shares Moody Air Force Base with Lowndes County on its western boundary. The county is home to several lakes. The county's economy has remained rural in nature, but the educational, health, and social service sector was the largest employment category in 2006.

Cook County *Cook County* lies just 40 miles north of the Florida line, halfway between Atlanta, Georgia and Orlando, Florida. The population of Cook County is approximately 17,212 with the County Seat located in **Adel**. This County is close to Interstate 75 and is a rural, but very active community. *Cook County* is an entrepreneur-friendly community. Cook County has been certified as a Georgia Work Ready Community in which workforce has been evaluated and tested to be ready to work when business and industry relocate to the area.

Ben Hill **Ben Hill County**, with **Fitzgerald** as the County Seat has a population of 17,634. *Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County* has forty plus diverse industries. The community has a national reputation for attracting and retaining industry.

Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County has a Technical College that was developed under the Georgia Department of Adult Education. Today, East Central Technical College is a flag ship school for job training and development in Georgia, having undergone numerous expansions and satellite additions. The local businesses in *Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County* have joined forces in founding

Communities in Schools organization to keep at-risk youth in school. *Fitzgerald/Ben Hill County* has further provided space and financial support to numerous after school initiatives for the same purpose. With the development of a 75 bed hospital, **Dorminy Medical Center** in the *Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County* offer quality health care. This development is fundamental to job creation and retention.

Irwin County: Ocilla is the County Seat of Irwin. Ocilla is located in the Fitzgerald Metro area, which is in Ben Hill County. The County of Irwin has an estimated population of 9,538. Irwin County consists of 357 square miles. The County is considered as a diverse agricultural community, in which agriculture is their economic engine.

Irwin County is a top ten producer of peanuts, cotton and corn, wheat, soybeans, rye, tobacco, turf grass, and many others. Irwin also is a large fruit and vegetable producer of items such as: blackberry, muscadine grapes, pecans and blueberries, watermelons, cantaloupe, snap beans, cucumbers, peas, sweet potatoes, tomato, and squash, and many others. Irwin County is a large livestock and poultry producer of beef cattle, goats, hogs, and chickens.

Tift County: The town of **Tifton** has the next largest population of 40,118 following Lowndes County. This is a very active community with many available resources. Tift County located just two and a half hours south of Atlanta, it is accessible to Interstate 75 and U.S. Highways 82, US 41, and US 319. Its geographic location allows it to become a center for companies seeking to distribute products to customers throughout the Southeast.

Tifton County is very rich in agriculture and industry and provides over 9,000 jobs. The county is known for producing an abundance of fruits and vegetable. Tifton County is also home of the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and the Agricultural Innovation Center. *Tifton County* is known as the “Reading Capital of the World”. There are four colleges and technical colleges located in Tifton County, ABAC, the University of Georgia, Moultrie Technical College, and Troy University.

Turner County’s: Ashburn is the county seat in Turner County. Turner County is conveniently located on Interstate 75, 80 miles north of the Florida border and 160 miles south of Atlanta. The county has a population of **8,930**. Ashburn is also a twenty to forty minute drive from several area colleges including ABAC, Darton State College, and Albany State University.

Turner County is known for its industry based economy. The industries existing in Turner County consist of Central Park, which repack candy for M&M Mars; Nationwide Fiberglass, the third largest manufacturing company. Georgia Alternative Energy Co-Op, which produce ethanol from corn provided by the regional farmers. *Turner County*, largest employer is the Golden Peanut. The Golden Peanut facility sells processed peanuts to Jif, Peter Pan, and M&M Mars.

Echols County: The County Seat is **Statenville**, which is approximately 10 miles north of the Florida border and 20 miles southeast of Valdosta. This is a rural community with a population of 4,034. Echols is one of Georgia’s least populated counties. Over 90% of the county is forest and under contract to private companies.

Population Characteristics

Population by Race

CENTER	Total #	White	Black	Native Am.	Asian	Other	Hispanic
Ben Hill	17,634	59.2%	34.6%	0.3%	0.7%	1.3%	5.8%
Berrien	19,286	84.7%	10.7%	0.3%	0.4%	1.3%	4.6%
Brooks	16,243	59.9%	35.3%	0.3%	0.3%	1.2%	5.3%
Cook	17,212	67%	27.3%	0.2%	0.7%	1.4%	5.9%
Irwin	9,538	71.4%	25.9%	0.0%	0.6%	0.9%	2.4%
Lanier	10,078	70.6%	23.7%	0.5%	1.0%	2.3%	4.6%
Lowndes	109,233	58.1%	35.8%	0.4%	1.5%	2.1%	4.8%
Tift	40,118	61.4%	29%	0.2%	1.3%	1.6%	10.1%
Turner	8,930	54.7%	41.6%	0.3%	0.4%	0.7%	3.2%
Echols	4,034	74.9%	4.2%	1.8%	0.3%	2.8%	29.3%
Totals	252,306	66.19%	26.81%	0.43%	0.72%	1.56%	7.60%

2010 Census quick facts

The racial composition of the total children in Head Start served this year is Black 79%, White 10%, Hispanic 7%, Multiracial 3%, 2 Native American and 1 Asian. Our current funded enrollment is 912. The program has a total of 88 Hispanic children. The need for bi-lingual teachers has grown. Material is printed by Head Start in Spanish to accommodate the families. The rural farming area in South Georgia has attracted more each year.

Coastal Plain Head Start November 2013 Status

Centers	Hispanic Children	Parental Status		Children Riding Bus
		One	Two	
<i>Ben Hill</i>	6	87	7	31
<i>Nashville</i>	3	31	8	0
<i>Alapaha</i>	4	13	7	15
<i>Brooks</i>	1	46	12	0
<i>Cook</i>	10	51	22	31
<i>Irwin</i>	2	31	4	7
<i>Lanier</i>	3	28	32	0
<i>Lowndes-1</i>	11	155	21	63
<i>B.W. Lester</i>	5	19	16	21
<i>Hallmark</i>	6	79	15	0
<i>Hahira</i>	5	20	16	23
<i>Tifton</i>	25	140	41	31
<i>Turner</i>	0	33	0	0
Totals	81	733	201	222

ChildPlus.net 2013.

The above chart shows the proportionate number of Hispanics per each county in the Head Start program. Accommodations to meet their needs have increased in the past couple of years. The centers showing the greatest numbers are Tift, Cook and Lowndes 1. 7.6% of the enrollment is Hispanic.

The Coastal Plain program has 733 single parent families and 201 two parent families. The average percentage for the counties we serve including all families in the counties is 72% single parent families. The State of Georgia is 37%.

Head Start Transportation is essential in this rural large County area, particularly with the single parent families and the increase of working parents. There is no public transportation to meet the needs of these families for school transportation. The program has a transportation waiver through the end of the school year. The waiver can be renewed yearly until further notice.

The number of single fathers has increased from 95,874 in 2002 to 184,264 in 2010. There has been a change in policy in terms of men's rights, thus allowing single fathers more opportunities to have custody of their children. There continues to be an increase in the number of single parent households.

48% of the families with poverty children are headed by females in the Coastal Plain Service area, which is lower than the 60.1% for the state of Georgia. "Single-parent female households tend to have lower educational attainment levels and lower incomes." The average unemployment rate in our area is 10% versus 10.3% for the state.

AGE AND INCOME DATA

County	Estimated 0-5 year olds	Age & Income Eligible	Head Start Enrollment	% of children Living in Poverty	Total Pop. Below FPL	Per Capita Income
<i>Ben Hill</i>	1,398	235	94	42%	4,838	15,284
<i>Berrien</i>	1,325	183	54	34%	4,138	16,672
<i>Brooks</i>	1,095	151	54	38%	3,962	20,886
<i>Cook</i>	1,305	232	68	37%	4,204	15,856
<i>Irwin</i>	602	109	34	35%	2,128	15,348
<i>Lanier</i>	896	131	54	34%	2,220	16,961
<i>Lowndes</i>	8,264	791	325	30%	24,077	20,876
<i>Tift</i>	2,960	494	165	33%	8,765	18,124
<i>Turner</i>	597	137	32	41%	2,410	15,452
<i>Echols</i>	358	32	0	41%	1,086	13,663
Service Area Totals	18,800	2495	880	36.50%	57,828	16,912.2
GA TOTALS	687,823	NA	880	25%	1,698,004	25,098

The Georgia County Guide; Kidscount.org; U.S. Census Bureau

0-5 year olds in our service area totaled 18,846. The table shows the per capita income for the ten counties. The average per capita income for the nine counties is \$16,912 while the per capita income for the state of Georgia is \$25,098.

Even though the Per Capita Income average for the ten counties is disproportionately below the state, our service area has seen a 38.2% loss in Per Capita Income over the past nine years. This trend should improve as the area continues to grow, particularly since Valdosta and Lowndes County have reached metropolitan status.

There are 159 counties in Georgia and all the 9 counties in the Coastal Plain service area, a minimum of 22% of their population is below the poverty level. Echols, Tift and Turner are the highest at 27% or higher. The total population below the federal poverty level for the service area is 61,101. These figures indicate a strong need for the services of Head Start.

Statistics from the 2010 National Center for Children in Poverty show the following for Georgia:

- 45% of young children live in low-income families which is higher than the National level of 46%
- 50% of children under age of 6 live in low-income families
- The racial demographics show that 30% White, 60% Black, 70% Hispanic, and 31% Asian young children live in low-income households
- 56% of children living in rural areas are low-income
- 11% of low-income children in Georgia live in a family with no parent present
- 86% of children living in low-income parents do not have a high school degree

- 51% of children living in low-income families have one parent employed full time year round

Children and Families Statistics

Centers	Low Income 3-4 yr olds enrolled in a Pre-K program	Substantiated child abuse & neglect	Female headed families with poverty children
<i>Ben Hill</i>	138	36	43.8%
<i>Berrien</i>	110	147	40.1%
<i>Brooks</i>	79	56	48.1%
<i>Cook</i>	154	88	45.3%
<i>Irwin</i>	76	17	38.3%
<i>Lanier</i>	59	67	41.5%
<i>Lowndes</i>	445	308	39.6%
<i>Tift</i>	321	170	41.6%
<i>Turner</i>	86	22	42.3%
<i>Echols</i>	32	8	35.8%
Georgia	44,507	20,675	30.9%

The Georgia County Guide, 2009-2010; Datacenter.kidscount.org 2010

- From 2003 through 2010, at least 962 Georgia citizens lost their lives due to domestic violence
 - Georgia ranks 10th in the nation for its rate of men killing women
 - In 43% of the cases studied through Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project, children were present during the domestic violence killing.
 - Firearms were the cause of death in 76% of the domestic violence fatalities in both 2009 and 2010
 - Law enforcement officers responded to 62,156 domestic violence incidents in Georgia in 2009
 - In 2010, 23,013 protective and stalking orders were issued in Georgia
 - In 2010, 7,544 children were provided refuge in a Georgia domestic violence shelter
 - 2,636 victims were turned away from a Georgia domestic violence shelter due to lack of space
- (Georgia Commission on Family Violence – Retrieved from <http://www.gcfv.org/files/DV%20in%20Georgia%20Factsheet%20March%202011.pdf>)

Other Child Development Programs and Child Care Services

LICENSED CHILD CARE DATA

Center	Day Care Centers	Group Day Care Homes	Family Day Care Homes	Minimal Day Care Capacity	Head Start Pre-K Blended Program	Private Pre-K Programs	Public School Pre-K Programs
<i>Ben Hill</i>	9	2	15	480	0	1	1
<i>Berrien</i>	8	0	5	325	0	2	2
<i>Brooks</i>	5	1	2	179	1	1	2
<i>Cook</i>	5	4	19	297	0	0	1
<i>Irwin</i>	4	0	4	206	0	0	1
<i>Lanier</i>	5	0	4	248	0	0	1
<i>Lowndes</i>	62	5	64	4,624	0	10	8
<i>Tift</i>	21	3	13	2,096	0	6	2
<i>Turner</i>	5	0	3	253	0	0	1
<i>Echols</i>	1	0	2	n/a	0		1
TOTALS	125	19	131	8,708	1	20	20
GA TOTALS	2,296	211	2417	366,184	230 classes	1,119	822

The Georgia County Guide, 2010; Bright from the Start; Quality Care for Children

For a third year in a row, Georgia has seen substantial declines in the number of child care programs serving children birth to five. Since March of 2010, Georgia has lost 1,395 child care programs with the capacity to serve approximately 43,400 children.

The above chart shows the available Child Development programs other than Head Start that are available in each county for pre-school children. The state and private pre-school programs strive to recruit the children that are age eligible as opposed to age and income eligible children that Head Start recruits. This fact provides a basis for expansion in the current Head Start Program. The above data also provides the opportunity for discussion in developing a Partnership with a childcare facility in terms of expansion.

Georgia School District Rankings

County	Ranking out of 164
<i>Ben Hill</i>	90
<i>Berrien</i>	88
<i>Brooks</i>	104
<i>Cook</i>	107
<i>Irwin</i>	53
<i>Lanier</i>	45
<i>Lowndes</i>	17
<i>Valdosta City</i>	120
<i>Tift</i>	n/a
<i>Turner</i>	135
<i>Echols</i>	160

According to the above chart, several of our school systems are ranked low in the state of Georgia. Lowndes County was ranked 17th, however, Turner was ranked 135th and Cook was ranked 107th. These rankings were based on the Math and English test scores from each school system.

Head Start staff collaborates with the families to prepare the students for School Readiness. It begins upon entering the program. The staff builds a positive rapport with the families through conducting required home visits and conferences. The purpose of the two-way communication systems is sharing educational information with the families and getting input about what educational or additional services are available for their children. The staff help parents develop individual goal setting and planning for assisting the families to become self-sufficient and prepare them to become financially stable.

Monthly meetings are scheduled to reflect on improving services to the Head Start students and families. The meetings are documented and the information reviewed is from classroom observations, goal setting forms and Focus on the Child concern form.

Head Start and the local school system collaborate through observation within the Head Start classroom settings. The public school systems prepare school readiness packets to identify skills necessary to prepare them for Kindergarten. The Head Start teaching staff implements these readiness skills in the lesson plans and curriculums. Results are measured using outcomes and child progress reports.

A traveling portfolio, which includes student work samples, is shared with the kindergarten teacher for the upcoming year. The students and families are invited to tour their local school systems on an end of year field trip. This field trip helps the children and families to transition to kindergarten for the upcoming school year.

Additional Georgia Early Childhood Development Facts:

(Children’s Defense Fund – November 2008)

- Quality Child Care unaffordable for many working families.
- A two-parent family in Georgia with both parents working full time for minimum wage (\$ 31,408 before taxes) could spend 16.5% of their income on child care for one child. At the market rate in an urban area. This equates to \$ 5,200.00 a year.
- Georgia Pre-Kindergarten Program is the first in the nation to offer enrollment to all four years old. The program served over half of the states’ four year olds in 2002 with an additional 9% enrolled in Head Start.
- With the advent of the state Pre-K program, the Head Start program began to serve more three years olds. This affected the slots available per each County, which in turn directly reflects on plans for additional slots and/or expansion.
- Pre-K funding is available for the school system, private child care programs and Head Start.

Children with Disabilities

The Charts below provides information concerning 3 and 4 year old children that are served by our collaborative partners. The source of information was obtained by the Department of Education and Babies Can’t Wait. Due to the onset of Response to Intervention, the number of referrals has decreased. Approximately 95 – 99% of referred children qualify each year for some type of special services. Children that are evaluated are eligible for Speech-Language Impairment, and/or Significant Developmental Delay services.

Babies Can’t Wait

County	Children show delays in one or both categories of Health Impairment or Significant Developmental Delayed
Berrien	20
Ben Hill	5
Brooks	17
Cook	13
Echols	5
Irwin	5
Lanier	10
Lowndes	192
Tift	46
Turner	6
TOTAL	323

The Board of Education

County	3 – Year Old Speech	4 – Year Old Speech	3 – Year Old Developmentally Delayed	4 – Year Old Developmentally Delayed
Berrien	1	0	0	0
Brooks	0	3	0	0
Ben Hill	0	0	0	4
Cook	1	0	0	0
Lanier	2	0	1	0
Lowndes	8	7	15	12
Irwin	0	0	2	0
Turner	0	1	0	0
Tift	1	1	0	1
Total	13	12	18	17

Coastal Plain Area EOA, Inc. Head Start’s goal is to provide a comprehensive system of services and resources which promotes optimal child development and family functioning. To achieve this goal, the following community agencies are utilized to help provide the relevant services and resources to children with disabilities.

Babies Can’t Wait

Babies Can’t Wait - includes children from birth until the age of three. Services are based upon the child’s individual needs and are provided by public and private providers. These services include, but are not limited to, the following: hearing services, home visits, eye care, nutrition, occupational therapy, physical therapy, psychological, social work, special instruction, speech-language, special equipment needs, nursing, medical/diagnostic, family training, and counseling.

Bright from the Start

Bright from the Start administers the nationally known Georgia Pre-K Program. It license’s child care centers and home-based child care, administers federal nutrition programs, manages the voluntary quality enhancement programs, houses the Head Start Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education.

Children’s Medical Services (CMS)

Children’s Medical Services provides services for individuals from birth to twenty-one years of age. Services include the following: physical assessment, diagnostic testing, development of

medical plan, corrective surgery, health education, social work assistance, nutrition services, financial assistance, and ongoing health care supervision.

Easter Seals

Easter Seals provides family support for children ages three and up. The family support includes both staff provided and purchased services and goods including; Respite Care, Personal Support, Day Habilitation, Personal Living Benefits, Dental Services, Medical Care, Specialized Clothing, Specialized Diagnostic Services, Recreational/Alternative Activities, Environmental Modifications, Specialized Equipment, Therapeutic Services, Counseling Services, and Specialized Nutrition Supplies.

Child Care and Referral Agency

Child Care and Referral Agency of South Central Georgia maintain the most current information about child care options. It provides parents with a list of child care providers which meet their criteria. The program also assists those who are interested in becoming registered child care providers, as well as conducts training sessions and workshops to enhance provider services. For those who are already a provider, the Child care and Referral Agency provides resource materials and serves as a toy “lending library” for them.

Local Education Agencies (LEA’s)

Local Education Agencies give specialized instruction and/or speech and language services in facility, home, or community, or combination of both.

Georgia Learning Resource Systems (GLRS)

Georgia Learning Resource Systems is a network of 17 centers throughout Georgia that provide training and resources to educators and parents of students with disabilities. This resource system provides ongoing, effective, and professional learning, increases student achievement, and it supports the parents of the students with disabilities.

Interagency Collaborative Council (ICC)

Interagency Collaborative Council serves as a steering committee for agencies responsible for serving young children in the local community. They do this by exchanging information among agencies, broadening public awareness of community programs, and assisting with the collection of data. The ICC also makes sure that services are not duplicated in any way so that proper services can be effectively provided.

Parent to Parent of Georgia, Inc.

Parent to Parent is a statewide network that provides support and information for parents of children with all types of disability or chronic illnesses. The agency has printed disability information on over 1,000 disabilities or conditions. Volunteer opportunities and training on how to become a Supporting Parent is available within this agency.

Children First

Children First is an agency that links children from birth to four years of age to primary care providers and/or agencies that meet their health and developmental needs.

Local Public Health Department Offices

Local Public Health Department Offices serve all ages with services including physical evaluations and Denver II screening for children from birth to 4 years old. Health check assessments are provided for Medicaid clients from age birth to 21 years old. WIC, immunizations, and vision and hearing screenings are also provided.

Private Pediatric Physicians

Private Pediatric Physician Practices are dedicated to providing the highest possible quality of care, while maintaining a fun and relaxed environment for the children. The staffs are experienced in the treatment of children so that their visits are comfortable.

Records from current and past years indicate that the Coastal Plain Area EOA, Inc. Head Start Program has always served children with disabilities at or over the mandated 10%. To maintain this consistent enrollment the program does specific recruitment and outreach in the Community. Staff members have received training on recruitment and enrollment strategies with emphasis on ADA, 45 CFR Part 84 and IDEA. The table shown below breaks down the disabilities enrollment for the school years 2009-2013.

Head Start Disabilities Enrollment

Primary/Significant Disability	# of Children 2009-2010	# of Children 2010-2011	# of Children 2011-2012	# of Children 2012-2013
<i>Health Impairment</i>	1	0	0	1
<i>Emotional/Behavioral Disorder</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Speech or Language Impairment</i>	67	59	48	49
<i>Mental Retardation/ Intellectually Impaired</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Hearing Impairment</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Orthopedic Impairment</i>	0	0	2	0
<i>Visual Impairment</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Learning Disabilities</i>	2	0	0	0
<i>Autism</i>	1	1	1	2
<i>Traumatic Brain Injury</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Non-Categorical Developmental Delay</i>	54	49	58	47
<i>Multiple Including Deaf Blind</i>	1	0	0	0
Totals	126	109	109	99

Source: Coastal Plain Area Head Start PIR Reports

Identified Needs concerning our neighborhood & communities

Top three greatest challenges in the Community

- 1. Not enough jobs**
- 2. Cost of utilities**
- 3. Need affordable housing**

In addition, the following were also of great concern:

- 1. Safety in schools**
- 2. Crime, violence and drug abuse**
- 3. Need more job training**
- 4. Money management**

1. Not enough jobs

Based on the chart below, 6 of the 10 counties in our service area are above the state unemployment rate. **Georgia Work Ready Program** is a Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) initiative designed to stimulate job growth in Georgia. Commissioner Michael Thurmond developed this innovative project in response to Georgia's growing job loss.

GWRP allows unemployed job seekers who have registered for employment services with the GDOL to receive workplace training from a potential employer for a maximum of 24 hours per week for up to six weeks. Trainees could qualify for up to \$600 in training stipends (an average of \$100 weekly) to help defray training related costs such as child care and transportation. Upon completion of training, participants receive a training certificate for job skills and may be considered for employment. About 63 percent of **GWRP** participants found jobs.

Through **GWRP**, more than 3,500 trainees have been hired upon completion of training and nearly 6,000 different Georgia employers have participated. **GWRP** information is available in each of the department's 53 career centers throughout the state.

Unemployment Rate and initial claims

Counties	Unemployment rate - 2013	Unemployment claims 2013
<i>Ben Hill</i>	11.1%	87
<i>Berrien</i>	10.7%	49
<i>Brooks</i>	7.7%	60
<i>Cook</i>	10.3%	50
<i>Irwin</i>	11.8%	36
<i>Lanier</i>	7.0%	23
<i>Lowndes</i>	8.1%	316
<i>Tift</i>	10.1%	83
<i>Turner</i>	9.5%	36
<i>Echols</i>	6.2%	7
Georgia	8.7%	33,104
National	7.3%	n/a

Unemploymentrates-county.findthedata.org; Bureau of Labor statistics - 2013

2. Cost of Utilities

Our agency has a program which assists with the rising cost of utilities called LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE (LIHEAP). Through this program, the Agency is able to provide a one-time yearly payment for the primary heating source of low-income households and counsel clients on energy efficient living. Identify high-energy consumption habits in order to lower energy related bills.

WEATHERIZATION is another program in our agency which works in collaboration with Georgia Power Company in reducing the costs of utility bills. This program provides materials, labor and knowledge necessary to increase the energy efficiency in the homes of low-income, Georgia Power customers with electricity as a primary heating source.

3. More job training

In addition to the Georgia Works program most of our counties have access to a local vocational college. One program offered through the Wiregrass-GA Technical College is the Work Ready program. Work Ready is a workforce and economic development program consisting of the following:

- Work Ready certificates and skills training for individuals
- Job profiles for businesses and industries, and
- Certifications for communities and regions.

Assessments and job profiles are offered through Wiregrass Georgia Technical College using the nationally recognized ACT WorkKeys System. Georgia Work Ready Certificates are aligned with ACT's National Career Readiness Certificate, making the credential valid in all states.

Another job training resource is Goodwill. They have specialists who work with you to understand your prior experience as well as your job and career goals. Together they design a plan to bring those dreams to life while connecting you with other community resources, like childcare or reliable transportation. *Every 45 seconds of each workday, someone earns a job with Goodwill's help.*

Our agency has an EMPLOYMENT/ JOB READINESS program. Services are provided to enable unemployed adults to gain employment. The objectives of the program are to provide Case Management, Job Readiness, Life Skills, Preparation of Household Budget and Income Management, Job Development, Job Search and Follow-up.

Goodwill offers training for jobs in healthcare, IT, retail sales and management, food services, banking, manufacturing and more. Many will offer office and computer skills training. They work closely with local business to know where jobs are growing and what skills are needed to fill them. Then, they tailor their training to make sure that their clients develop the skills that employers want. These services are at no cost to the clients.

Identified Needs concerning our Head Start families

Top three greatest challenges for our Head Start families:

- 1. Employment**
- 2. Paying necessary bills**
- 3. Transportation and fuel cost**

In addition, the following were also of great concern:

- 1. Affordable health insurance**
- 2. Managing finances**
- 3. Housing maintenance and repair**
- 4. Affordable housing**

1. Employment

According to the chart below 50.5% of our parents were employed during 2012-2013. Parents requesting information on employment or job training were referred to local community colleges and agencies.

In addition, parents requested information to obtain their GED's. Parents were provided assistance for enrolling in the classes as well as financial aid for the test. 9 parents completed their classes and obtained their GED's. Staff continues to encourage parents in achieving their educational goals.

2012-2013 Coastal Plain Parents employment/job readiness

Counties	# of Parents	# of Parents employed	# of Parents with H.S. diploma/GED or higher education
Ben Hill	93	31	46
Berrien	81	40	62
Brooks	53	26	40
Cook	69	38	31
Irwin	31	15	15
Lanier	56	35	42
Lowndes	332	163	193
Tift	174	102	80
Turner	49	25	23
Program	938	475	532

Childplus PIR data 2012-2013

2. Paying necessary bills

The Community Assessment survey reflected that our families struggle to pay necessary bills. This is due to the job loss and economic situation. Some agencies that were providing these services have suffered budget cuts, therefore, some services are no longer offered.

One local agency providing these services is Lowndes Associated Ministries to People, Inc. (LAMP) through Helpers Unlimited. This program provides food, clothes, utilities assistance, rent assistance, bus tickets, referrals, and any other verifiable, legitimate need. As of June 2010, 629 were assisted with rent and/or utility assistance. As mentioned previously, there are local agencies able to provide limited assistance with utility cost.

3. Transportation and fuel cost

The Community Assessment survey showed concerns that there is a shortage of reliable transportation. This is due to the current economic situation. Many parents can't afford to purchase a new or used car. The counties in which we serve have limited resources, if any public transportation. Those parents that do have transportation are concerned with the price of gas. The majority of the families served by our program earn minimum wage.

HEALTH INSURANCE STATUS – CHILDREN 18 AND UNDER

Center	Private Coverage	Medicaid	Peachcare	Uninsured	% Uninsured	# 3 yr olds uninsured	# 4 yr olds uninsured
<i>Ben Hill</i>	2,919	3,009	305	856	15%	40	42
<i>Berrien</i>	2,708	2,874	121	730	15%	37	36
<i>Brooks</i>	2,588	2,804	113	803	16%	44	44
<i>Cook</i>	2,420	2,679	209	712	16%	32	38
<i>Irwin</i>	1,458	1,700	100	422	15%	22	21
<i>Lanier</i>	1,140	1,202	85	345	16%	16	19
<i>Lowndes</i>	13,301	12,302	1,114	3,778	15%	202	201
<i>Tift</i>	6,047	6,029	527	1,674	15%	85	83
<i>Turner</i>	1,540	1,612	110	492	16%	24	22
<i>Echols</i>		400					
TOTALS	34,121	34,611	2,684	9,812	15.5%	502	506
GA TOTALS	1,202,393	1,104,846	64,561	278,676	13%	14,699	14,845

Ga. County Guide 2012

Community Resources/Strengths

Valdosta State University, Georgia Military College, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Wiregrass-GA. Technical College, Moultrie Technical College-Tift & Turner branch, DFCS, Health Department, South Health District, nine (9) hospitals, Behavioral Health Services in each county, food banks, WIC, Community Action Agency that provides many needed services to low income families. Mental Health provider (Peaceway Counseling and Meditation Services). Babies Can't Wait, Bright from the Start, Children's Medical Services (CMS), Easter Seals, Child Care and Referral Agency, Local Education Agency (LEA), Georgia Learning Resource Systems, Interagency Collaborative Council, Parent to Parent of Georgia, Inc., Children First, Private Pediatric Physicians. All Pro Dads, Literacy Volunteer Program.

1. Education

The state of Georgia is in the lower 25% of the nation in national test score results. However, many believe that current efforts by the State Department of Education and local LEA's are working toward bringing the education of our children up to par with the rest of the nation. Nevertheless, we must come to grips with the fact that the damage caused by poor educational systems in the past will require much time and continued effort to repair. The 2000 Georgia County Guide shows that 29% of those people age 25 or older had not completed high school. In our service area, those figures averaged to 42.01% for the nine county area.

The major educational resources in our service area include: Valdosta State University (VSU) which is located in Lowndes County and is the main four-year institution of higher learning for the region (some Head Start staff members are currently attending VSU); Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC) which is a two-year school located in Tift County, and Georgia Military College. Many of our northern most staff members are also able to attend Albany State College, which is of close proximity to them. In addition to these institutions, Wiregrass-GA Technical College and Moultrie Technical College service our area. The three technical schools have recently changed to colleges and two of them are offering two-year degrees in Early Childhood Education. We serve on the Advisory Council of two of these schools.

Institutions of higher learning are sufficient to meet the needs of the population after their completion of High School. To make attending these institutions financially possible, the State of Georgia provides HOPE Scholarships. Funds for this endeavor come from the sale of lottery tickets. Staff may also be eligible for Pell Grants and Perkins Loan in addition to funds from the Career Development Plan with Head Start, if funds are available in the program year.

2. Church Involvement

Churches are very active in education, social, cultural and youth activities within our communities. We intend to continue to work with them to assist in the recruitment and enrollment of our children. Over 64% of the population belongs to a Church. The survey emphasized "small friendly communities" and churches as strength. They go hand in hand in meeting the needs of our families and children.

3. Law Enforcement Services

According to the 2000 Georgia County guide, the crime rate in Coastal Plain’s nine county service areas shows a decrease in all serious crimes. Improved training for law enforcement officers, increased church involvement, and school/police/parent interventions are some of the principle reasons cited for the decrease.

4. Medical Services/Health Services/Specialty Services

The following table demonstrates the area’s strong commitment to providing medical facilities sufficient to meet the area’s growing needs. There are a total of nine general hospitals in the ten county areas that provide medical, surgical and diagnostic services. The largest of these is South Georgia Medical Center, a short term, acute care hospital, serving the needs of our entire service area and parts of north Florida. The occupancy rate of these facilities suggests that no one will go without proper medical care. Accessing Health Care and finding a medical home for the Head Start Families and children is a priority.

Medical Facilities

COUNTY	NUMBER	Names of Facilities	BED CAPACITY	OCCUPANCY RATE
Ben Hill	1	Dorminey Medical Center	75	22.8
Berrien	1	Berrien County Hospital	63	14.3
Brooks	1	Brooks County Hospital	45	36.1
Cook	1	Cook Medical Center	60	16.0
Echols	0	-	---	---
Irwin	1	Irwin County Hospital	34	29.5
Lanier	1	Louis Smith Hospital	40	28.8
Lowndes	2	South Georgia Medical Center Smith Northview Hospital	430	62.4
Tift	1	Tift Regional Medical Center	191	70.1
Turner	0	-	---	---
Totals	9		938	35%

GA County Guide 2012; hospital websites 2013

The table below provides statistics on Coastal Plain Head Start children on TANF/AFDC and Medicaid. The Program goal is to see that all children are provided for and find a medical home.

Coastal Plain Head Start November 2013 Status

Counties	Income Eligible		Medicaid		TANF/AFDC		Disability	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Actual	Concerns
<i>Ben Hill</i>	97	0	94	3	3	94	4	0
<i>Nashville</i>	43	0	41	2	5	38	0	0
<i>Alapaha</i>	20	0	20	0	1	19	0	0
<i>Brooks</i>	59	1	43	17	7	53	3	0
<i>Cook</i>	74	0	73	1	3	71	1	0
<i>Irwin</i>	34	4	35	3	1	37	2	0
<i>Lanier</i>	62	0	52	10	6	56	4	0
<i>Lowndes</i>	181	3	175	9	12	172	24	0
<i>B.W. Lester</i>	39	0	39	0	6	33	3	0
<i>Hallmark</i>	101	0	92	9	8	93	10	0
<i>Hahira</i>	40	0	36	4	2	38	1	0
<i>Tifton</i>	191	3	186	8	8	186	3	0
<i>Turner</i>	33	0	32	1	0	33	1	0
Totals	974	11	918	67	62	923	56	0

Program Figures from Child Plus 2013-2014

District Oral Health Status

District Code	District Name	County Name	# Funded Children	# Dentist Licensed	# Dentist Participating	% Population Having Fluoridated Water
8.1	Valdosta	Ben Hill	94	5	5	78.3%
8.1	Valdosta	Berrien	71	3	3	40.3%
8.1	Valdosta	Brooks	54	1	1	38.4%
8.1	Valdosta	Cook	68	5	2	9.6%
8.1	Valdosta	Irwin	34	1	1	31.9%
8.1	Valdosta	Lanier	54	1	1	37.1%
8.1	Valdosta	Lowndes	325	50	22	56.6%
8.1	Valdosta	Tift	165	16	6	62.2%
8.1	Valdosta	Turner	47	3	3	52.0%
8.1	Valdosta	Echols	0	0	0	

District Health, Process Evaluation FY2000-FY2001, 2009

During the year 2005, 1,168,777 children were enrolled in Medicaid and only 33% of these children received any dental service. Children enrolled in Medicaid who received Preventive Dental Service were 33.4% and Restorative Service was 8.9%. 314,000 children were enrolled in Peachcare and of these 50% received any dental service. Children enrolled in Peachcare who received Preventive Dental Service were 50.5% and Restorative Service was 11.2%.

The “Valdosta” district has 85 licensed dentists. There is also a local dentist in Valdosta who provides free services for our children without any health coverage.

The over-all fluoridation in Georgia public water systems is 96%. However our district is again below the state averages. Many of our children live in rural areas with either community wells or individual well for water. These sources do not have therapeutic levels of fluoride. Our district rate is 51.5%, with a high in Ben Hill Co. of 78.3% to Cook Co. with only 9.6% of the population covered by fluoridated water systems. Fluoride has been proven to decrease the incidence of dental disease in both children and adults.

Head Start Performance Standards requires dental exams and follow-up preventative treatment. This result in prevention of dental disease, improved oral health, less pain, fewer emergency visits, fewer missed school days, and increased learning.

5. Community Services

There are many community-based programs providing services to Head Start parents. Some of the services include: teen pregnancy, literacy programs, male initiative programs, parenting, soup kitchens, food and clothing distribution. We continue to work with these agencies to ensure that our children and families get all required and needed services.

6. Mental Health Services

The Mental Health provider, PalmTree Psychological Services, works positively in all areas with the children, strengthening supportive relationships in the environment and home. They work with the staff and parents in keeping a regular schedule of intervention services to address concerns of behavioral, social and emotional nature. Services are available for children, parents and staff.

7. Services received per PIR report

A) The 2012-2013 PIR report indicates we served 1006 families.

- 222 were 2-parent families
- 789 were single-parent families
- 47 received emergency/crisis intervention
- 15 housing assistance
- 143 Mental Health services
- 124 participated in parent education
- 116 Adult education
- 24 Job Training

B) Number of children treated for special conditions reported in past four years of PIR data. These conditions are reflective of the growing concern both in Head Start and the nation. The program is addressing particularly the concerns with the overweight and asthma to ensure a Healthy Start.

<u>Health Concern:</u>	<u>PIR 2013</u>	<u>PIR 2012</u>	<u>PIR 2011</u>	<u>PIR 2010</u>
Asthma	131	104	128	147
Overweight	130	122	35	48
Obese	204	180	N/A	N/A
Hearing	25	16	21	30
Vision	26	15	28	38

Program Philosophy, Mission, and Vision

Philosophy:

“Coastal Plain Area E.O.A. Inc. Head Start believes “Invest Now, Benefit Later”. This is achieved through a high quality educational program provided to families and children to meet educational goals, academic readiness, and emotional, social and cognitive development. Using community partners and resources we improve the quality of life throughout the communities.”

Mission:

“To provide a quality program that will educate children, ensure school readiness, empower families, and engage communities”

Vision:

“Educating Children, Empowering Families, Engaging Communities”

Grantees Short and Long Range Goals 2012-2013

In July 2013 Strategic Planning was held for 3 days identifying issues and concerns from the Self Assessment, Center Concerns, Community Assessment, Child Outcomes Report, PIR, and Child Plus Reports. The following goals were established:

Short Term Goals:

1. Reduce staff turnover
2. Increase In-kind
3. Increase family communication, participation and parent ownership in Head Start
4. Provide quality training for Self-Assessment participants

Long Term Goals:

1. Increase physical activities for staff and parents
2. Increase collaboration with community partners
3. Ensure staff is following Policies and Procedures through proper monitoring
4. Implement system to educate staff on budgeting of grant administrations and allocations

Approach:

The approach to accomplish the goals as specified is two-fold. Collaborative efforts with Community Partners, DECAL/Bright from the Start, Local Education Agencies' and local resources will be developed to help support the goals as needed. In the event an emergency situation is identified, it may take priority over one or more existing goals. When the emergency has been resolved, the original plan will again be placed back into action.

While the plan includes short and long-range goals, all objectives should be satisfied unless a self-assessment review determines a change should be initiated. The Training Plan, Part I addresses identified Training and Technical Assistance goals to meet expected outcomes.

Types of Services and Program Options

The program option is center based. Home base is always a consideration when a child is unable to come into the center because of physical limitations, or there is a temporary closure of a center. Center based operation is consistent with the rural/semi-urban area in which the grantee operates and is considered the most economically feasible way to operate.

Service and Recruitment Areas

The service and recruitment area is shown on the geographic area map and is determined by the Grantee Board of Coastal Plan. The Recruitment Policy defines the methodology and procedure for enrolling children.

Center Locations

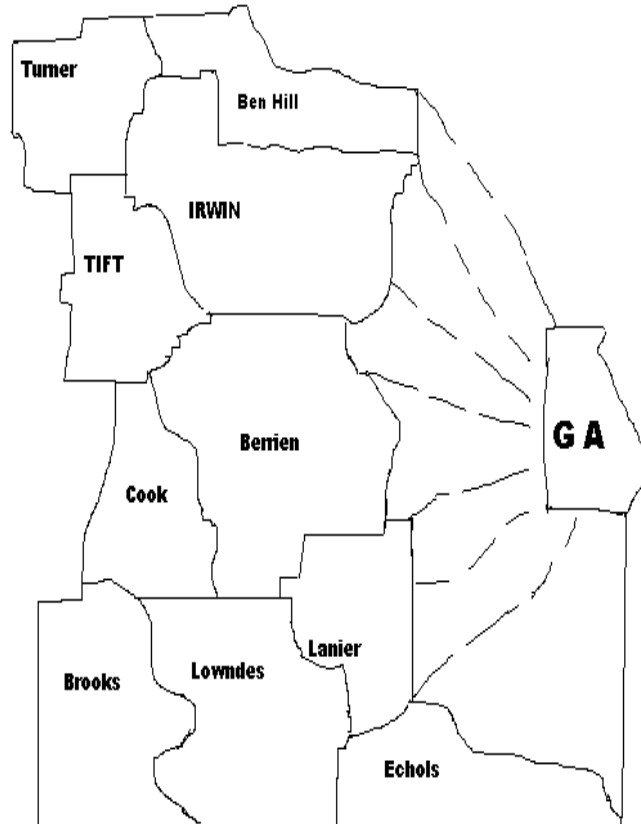
All centers are located in the cities and towns where the highest concentration of Head Start age and income eligible children resides. All centers are located in the heart of the communities where Head Start services are most needed. The map in the Geographic Area shows all center locations. Echols County is not being served by Head Start at this time. They were previously served, but there were not enough income eligible families. Pre-K presently serves the county. The program has been meeting with the Community Agencies and Board of Education to determine the need for Head Start in Echols County. Pre-K presently serves the county. The program has been awarded a Pre-K class for the Brooks County Head Start Center. It is our goal to expand our Pre-K blended classes in the near future.

Recruitment and Selection Priorities

The overall goal of the Coastal Plain Head Start Program is to serve children and families at high risk per the funded enrollment. This includes serving children with disabilities who are most in need of the services. At all times the program implements recruitment and selection in keeping with 45 CFR Part 1305. This ensures that the program serves low-income families below the compulsory school age. At least 10% of the funded enrollment is reserved for children with disabilities. All Head Start staff, community agencies and parents are Head Start recruiters. The ERSEA policy is reviewed and approved each year by the Policy Council.

Applications considered for enrollment are for those children who are three years old or older by September 1 of the school year for which the year enrolling with the exception of the agreement with “Babies Can’t Wait”. Four-year olds have priority on an equal basis. Selection Criteria is approved by the Policy Council to ensure that the children with the greatest need receive priority in entering the program. The recruitment areas are determined by the program as a result of the Community Assessment. Policy Council is included in the application screening and selection committee.

Noted below are the Centers, Classrooms per each County:



1.	Ben Hill	Fitzgerald	1 Center	5 Classrooms
2.	Turner	Ashburn	1 Center	2 Classrooms
3.	Irwin	Ocilla	1 Center	2 Classrooms
4.	Tift	Tifton	1 Center	9 Classrooms
5.	Berrien	Alapaha	1 Center	1 Classrooms
		Nashville	1 Center	2 Classrooms
6.	Cook	Adel	1 Center	4 Classrooms
7.	Lanier	Lakeland	1 Center	3 Classrooms
8.	Brooks	Quitman	1 Center	3 Classrooms
9.	Lowndes	B.W. Lester	1 Center	2 Classrooms
		Hahira	1 Center	2 Classrooms
		Hallmark Heights	1 Center	5 Classrooms
		Lowndes I	1 Center	10 Classrooms
	Total		13 Centers	50 Classrooms

Results and Benefits

Included is the summary of results and benefits, which meets the goals and objectives of the program, established for the next three years.

- All counties are represented on the Policy Council committee
- All Centers will be licensed with Bright from the Start
- The on-going monitoring system has been improved to ensure integration of service areas, accountability and accuracy in recordkeeping and reporting
- In-Service/Staff Development was enhanced to provide a variety of workshops for all staff
- Expand collaboration with Head Start and state funded Pre-K Programs
- Providing transportation in absence of in-kind services from school system
- Fatherhood participation has increased in the program
- Improve Employee Wellness
- Increase Health Screenings and follow-up on all children
- School Readiness/Class Goals
- Family Engagement

Sources of Data for the Community Assessment:

1. Census Bureau
2. Current/Past Head Start Program Status Reports – ChildPlus/Data Engine.net
3. PIR-Previous and current year
4. University of Georgia County Guide
5. Internet Resources
6. Georgia Department Of Human Resources
7. Community Action Survey
8. Kids Count
9. Demographics Now.com
10. District Health Office
11. DECAL – Bright from the Start
12. Georgia State Board of Education
13. National Center for Children in Poverty
14. Georgia Department of Labor
15. Bureau of Labor statistics
16. Fluoride Action Network
17. Children’s Defense fund
18. Wiregrass-Georgia Technical College
19. Area hospital websites