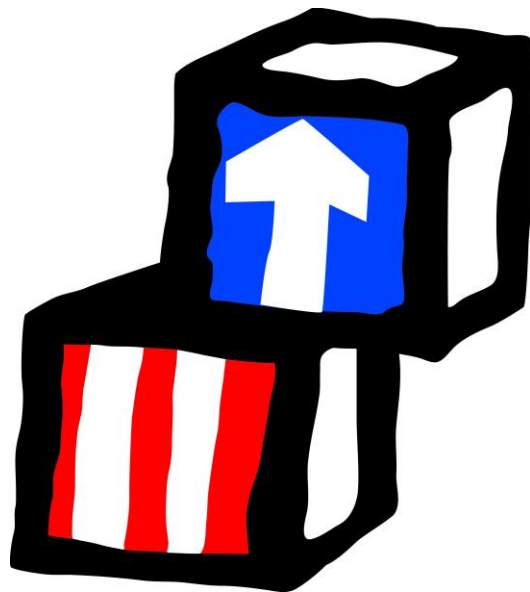


Coastal Plain Area E.O.A. Inc. Head Start



**Community Assessment
2015-2016**

Table of Contents

Development History and Experience.....	3
Introduction	4
Geographic Description of Service Areas	5
Population Characteristics	8
Other Child Development and Child Care Services	11
Children with Disabilities	13
Identified Needs	16
Community Resources/Strengths	19
Program Philosophy, Mission, Vision.....	22
Grantees Short and Long Range Goals	22
Data Sources.....	34

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.

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.

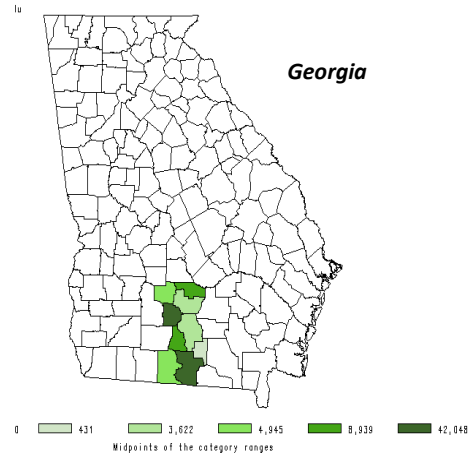
The process helps to determine the Agency's philosophy, mission, vision and long range goals and short term objectives. The location of centers, including the criteria for determining priority in the recruitment and selection process for children and families is addressed through the Community Needs 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 long-range goals and short term objectives. 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



Ben Hill	254 Square Miles	Fitzgerald	5 Classrooms
Turner	290 Square Miles	Ashburn	3 Classrooms
Irwin	363 Square Miles	Ocilla	2 Classrooms
Tift	269 Square Miles	Tifton	9 Classrooms
Berrien	458 Square Miles	Alapaha	1 Classrooms
		Nashville	2 Classrooms
Cook	233 Square Miles	Adel	3 Classrooms
Lanier	199 Square Miles	Lakeland	3 Classrooms
Brooks	498 Square Miles	Quitman	3 Classrooms
Lowndes	510 Square Miles	B.W. Lester	4 Classrooms
		Hahira	2 Classrooms
		Hallmark Heights	5 Classrooms
		Lowndes I	10 Classrooms
9 Counties	3074 Square Miles	13 Centers	52 Classrooms

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 2014 Census. Valdosta is the only city in which we serve that is metropolitan status.

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 225,456. With a population of 113,523, Lowndes County covers 510 square miles. Valdosta is home to 56,595 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 15,418. Quitman has a population of 3,722. 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 18,700 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 10,373. 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 17,214 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 17,464. *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 9,104. 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: Tift County has the next largest population of 40,704 following Lowndes County. The town of Tifton has a population of 16,701. 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 **8,153**. 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 4,003. Echols is one of Georgia’s least populated counties. Over 90% of the county is forest and under contract to private companies. The Alapaha and Suwannee rivers flow through the county and provide opportunities for fishing and boating.

Population Characteristics

Population by Race

County	Total #	White	Black	Nat. Am.	Asian	Other	Hispanic
Ben Hill	17,464	61.8%	35.5%	0.6%	0.8%	1.3%	6.3%
Berrien	18,700	86.6%	11.1%	0.4%	0.6%	1.2%	5%
Brooks	15,418	62.2%	35.4%	0.4%	0.6%	1.2%	5.6%
Cook	17,214	69.8%	27.8%	0.4%	0.8%	1.2%	6.1%
Irwin	9,104	71.3%	26.7%	0.1%	0.8%	1.1%	3.6%
Lanier	10,373	72.1%	22.7%	1.1%	1.4%	2.1%	5.5%
Lowndes	113,523	59%	36.6%	0.5%	1.1%	2.1%	5.5%
Tift	40,704	66.6%	30.1%	0.4%	1.5%	1.3%	11.3%
Turner	8,153	58.3%	39.4%	0.2%	0.8%	0.8%	4.5%
Echols	4,003	88.7%	5.6%	3.1%	.5%	1.8%	28.1%
Totals	254,656	69.64%	26.79%	0.72%	0.89%	1.41%	8.15%

Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget

The racial composition of the total children in Head Start served this year is Black 75%, White 17%, Hispanic 6%, Multiracial 6%, and 4 Asian. Our current funded enrollment is 912. The program has a total of 64 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 2015 Status

Centers	Hispanic Children	Parental Status		Children Riding Bus
		Two	One	
Alapaha	1	9	9	0
B.W. Lester	16	28	51	37
Ben Hill	7	15	78	43
Brooks	2	6	48	17
Cook	6	14	41	28
Hahira	0	12	25	25
Hallmark	0	14	91	0
Irwin	0	4	35	33
Lanier	4	29	29	0
Lowndes-I	9	25	145	51
Nashville	0	15	24	0
Tifton	18	37	144	84
Turner	3	14	41	0
Totals	66	222	761	318

ChildPlus.net

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 B.W. Lester, and Tifton.

The Coastal Plain program has 761 single parent families and 222 two parent families. The average percentage for the counties we serve including all families in the counties is 41.6% (Kids Count data center, 2014) single parent families. The State of Georgia is 33.9% (Kids Count data center, 2014).

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 in Georgia has increased from 166,000 in 2012 to 195,000 in 2013. 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.

46.8% of the families with poverty children are headed by females in the Coastal Plain Service area, which is higher than the 33.6% for the state of Georgia. "Single-parent female households tend to have lower educational attainment levels and lower incomes." According to the Georgia Department of Labor, the average unemployment rate for the month of November 2015 in our service area is 6.4% versus 5.7% for the state. Our service area has realized an increase in the unemployment rate over the past year.

Age and Income Data

County	Estimated 0-4 year olds	Age & Income Eligible	Head Start Enrollment	% of children Living in Poverty	% of Population Below FPL	Per Capita Income
Ben Hill	1,391	235	94	44%	38.1%	14,209
Berrien	1,156	183	54	35.4%	22.5%	16,784
Brooks	1,019	151	54	37.9%	24%	19,409
Cook	1,159	232	51	35.7%	23.1%	18,592
Irwin	519	109	34	35%	21.2%	18,207
Lanier	797	131	51	37.5%	26.7%	17,264
Lowndes	8,455	791	359	30.5%	18.2%	25,182
Tift	2,764	494	168	40.7%	27.9%	18,933
Turner	476	137	47	45%	22%	17,609
Echols	349	NA	NA	45.0%	31.3%	15,861
Service Area Totals	17,736	2463	912	37.9%	24.9%	18,465
GA TOTALS	662,675	NA	24,083	26.7%	18.2%	25,182

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

0-4 year olds in our service area totaled 17,736. The table shows the per capita income for the ten counties. The average per capita income for the nine counties is \$18,465 while the per capita income for the state of Georgia is \$25,182.

The Per Capita Income average for the nine counties is disproportionately below the state. This trend should improve as the area continues to grow, particularly since Valdosta and Lowndes County have reached metropolitan status. While the state of Georgia has seen an increase in per capita income, the growth has been slower than the national level. Up until 2001, Georgia had been experiencing above average growth due to businesses flocking to the state, but with the hard hit of the recession and housing bubble, growth has slowed.

There are 159 counties in Georgia with the population living below the poverty level at 18.2%. In our 9 county service delivery area there is an average of 24.9% of population living below the poverty level. Ben Hill is the highest at 38.1% and 31.3% for Echols County. These figures indicate a strong need for the services of Head Start.

2014 National Center for Children in Poverty - Statistics for Georgia:

- 50% of young children live in low-income families which is higher than the National level of 44%
- 54% of children ages 3-5 live in low-income families
- The racial demographics show that 34% White, 64% Black, 72% Hispanic, and 37% Asian young children live in low-income households
- 10% of low-income children in Georgia live in a family with no parent present
- 55% of young children in low-income families live with a single parent
- 89% of parents of young children living in low income do not have a high school degree
- 49% 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
Ben Hill	135	91	46.6%
Berrien	91	54	48.9%
Brooks	108	75	45.2%
Cook	121	66	42.1%
Irwin	74	54	57.5%
Lanier	43	52	65.2%
Lowndes	443	441	36.3%
Tift	258	136	40.5%
Turner	76	29	38.9%
Echols	31	15	44.8%
Georgia	44,906	25,350	33.6%

The Georgia County Guide Datacenter, kidscount.org

Crime and domestic violence in Georgia from the Georgia Commission on Family Violence

- From 2003 through 2013, at least 1,300 Georgia citizens lost their lives due to domestic violence.
- An average of four children died each day from child abuse and neglect in the state of Georgia, and 80% of these victims are children younger than four years of age.
- Georgia ranks 9th in the nation for its rate of men killing women
- According to the Project Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review, 18% of reviewed cases, children witnessed the homicide of their parent or caregiver
- In Georgia, firearms are the leading cause of domestic violence fatalities which were the means of 76% of all recorded domestic violence fatalities from 2004 to 2012.
- An estimated 55% to 85% of 911 calls relayed to Georgia law enforcement are DV related
- In 2012, 22,206 Georgians were issued protective and stalking orders
- In 2013, 7,087 victims and children who were provided refuge in a Georgia domestic violence shelter
- In 2013, 4,612 victims were turned away from a Georgia domestic violence shelter due to lack of space

Other Child Development Programs and Child Care Services

LICENSED CHILD CARE DATA

County	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	Current Pre-K Slots available
Ben Hill	7	2	6	480	0	0	1	1
Berrien	5	0	2	225	0	1	2	1
Brooks	3	0	0	203	1	0	2	4
Cook	3	4	11	279	0	0	1	4
Irwin	3	0	2	206	0	0	1	0
Lanier	4	0	2	248	0	0	1	6
Lowndes	49	6	37	4,684	0	15	12	1
Tift	19	1	10	2,096	0	5	2	0
Turner	3	0	1	217	0	0	1	2
Echols	0	0	1	6	0	0	1	0
TOTALS	96	13	71	8,644	1	21	23	19

The Georgia County Guide, 2012; 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. In the last two year, our service area has lost a total of 16 day care centers. For the pre-k programs in our area, many have experienced a shortage of enrollment as noted with the 19 available slots. This has affected meeting our funded enrollment in some counties we serve. Coastal Plain Area Head Start is presently adding 3 additional Head Start Pre-K blended classrooms. One classroom will be placed in Ben Hill and Hallmark Heights (Lowndes) and two will be placed in Tift County.

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. The above data also provides the opportunity for discussion in developing a Partnership with a childcare facility in terms of expansion for Early Head Start.

Georgia School District Rankings

County	Ranking out of 177
Ben Hill	96
Berrien	76
Brooks	136
Cook	95
Irwin	97
Lanier	84
Lowndes	12
Valdosta City	132
Tift	91
Turner	156
Echols	56

According to the above chart, several of our school systems are ranked low in the state of Georgia. Lowndes County was ranked 12th, however, Brooks was ranked 136th and Valdosta City was ranked 132. These rankings were based on the 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.

The students and families are invited to tour their local school systems on a transition visit at the end of the year. This field trip helps the children and families to transition to kindergarten for the upcoming school year.

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 with Impairment and/or Development Delays
Berrien	24
Ben Hill	13
Brooks	14
Cook	25
Irwin	5
Lanier	16
Lowndes	173
Tift	50
Turner	7
Echols	6
TOTAL	333

Coastal Plain Area Head Start Disability Children served by The Board of Education

County	3 Year Old Speech	4 Year Old Speech	3 Year Old Develop. Delayed	4 Year Old Develop. Delayed
Berrien	4	0	0	0
Brooks	0	2	0	0
Ben Hill	0	2	4	0
Cook	1	1	2	0
Lanier	2	0	2	0
Lowndes	4	6	5	10
Irwin	0	1	2	1
Turner	2	0	0	0
Tift	0	0	2	0
Total	13	14	17	11

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.

Head Start Disabilities Enrollment

Primary/Significant Disability	# of Children 2015-2016
Health Impairment	0
Emotional/Behavioral Disorder	0
Speech or Language Impairment	27
Mental Retardation/ Intellectually Impaired	0
Hearing Impairment	0
Orthopedic Impairment	0
Visual Impairment	0
Learning Disabilities	0
Autism	1
Traumatic Brain Injury	0
Non-Categorical Developmental Delay	28
Multiple Including Deaf Blind	0
Totals	55

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. Food for homeless families

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, 9 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	Unem. Rate 2015	Unem. Claims 2015
Ben Hill	8.4%	130
Berrien	6.6%	21
Brooks	6.0%	29
Cook	6.4%	32
Irwin	8.0%	28
Lanier	6.2%	23
Lowndes	5.9%	266
Tift	6.0%	83
Turner	6.4%	26
Echols	4.7%	6
Georgia	5.7%	29,629
National	5.0%	269,000

Bureau of Labor statistics

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. Food for Homeless Families

The Community Assessment survey reflected that our families are not qualifying for the Federal Food Stamp program because they are right above the poverty line cut off where they are not able to receive assistance because they are one penny over the income requirements. Many of our families are struggling to buy necessary groceries to feed their families on a daily basis. Our families have to choose whether to pay their rent for the month or feed their families and risk eviction from their family dwellings.

Many food pantries in our area that provided food for these families have closed recently due to shortages in donations. Homeless families have taken a significant increase within our community because of job shortages and low education levels by many of the parents that we service in our area. The majority of the families served by our program earn minimum wage because of their low education levels. Our centers continue to encourage our families to go back to school to further their education so that they can get a better paying job to help support their families.

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 93% of our parents were employed during 2015-2016. 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. Staff continues to encourage parents in achieving their educational goals.

2015-2016 Coastal Plain Parents Employment / Job Readiness

Counties	# of Parents	# of Parents employed	# of Parents with H.S.D/GED or higher
Ben Hill	93	46	59
Berrien	57	40	26
Brooks	54	22	32
Cook	56	39	33
Irwin	39	18	17
Lanier	58	35	26
Lowndes	392	228	163
Tift	183	102	63
Turner	55	40	26
Program	987	570	445

Childplus.net PIR Data

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 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.

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 Georgia County Guide shows that 15.8% of those people age 25 or older had not completed high school. In our service area, those figures averaged to 61.06% 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 52% of the population in Georgia 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 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
Ben Hill	1	Dorminey Medical Center
Berrien	1	Berrien County Hospital
Brooks	1	Brooks County Hospital
Cook	1	Cook Medical Center
Irwin	1	Irwin County Hospital
Lanier	1	Louis Smith Hospital
Lowndes	2	South Georgia Medical Center Smith Northview Hospital
Tift	1	Tift Regional Medical Center
Turner	0	None
Totals	9	

GA County Guide; hospital websites

Coastal Plain Head Start November 2015 Status

Counties	Income Eligible		Medicaid	TANF	Disability
	Yes	No			
Alapaha	18	4	19	0	3
B.W. Lester	75	9	78	1	5
Ben Hill	99	1	90	1	6
Brooks	59	1	57	1	0
Cook	55	2	54	0	4
Hahira	34	6	36	1	0
Hallmark	112	0	107	2	6
Irwin	37	7	41	0	4
Lanier	55	6	53	0	4
Lowndes	185	2	182	0	14
Nashville	41	0	38	0	5
Tifton	198	0	191	1	2
Turner	49	6	49	3	2
Totals	1017	44	995	10	55

Childplus.net

District Oral Health Status

County	# Dentist
Ben Hill	5
Berrien	3
Brooks	1
Cook	5
Irwin	1
Lanier	1
Lowndes	50
Tift	16
Turner	3
Echols	0

District Health

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.

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, Peaceway Counseling Mediation 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. Crisis intervention is also a service provided for children and staff by Peaceway.

7. Services received per PIR report

The 2015-2016 PIR report indicates we served 1061 families.

- 222 were 2-parent families
- 761 were single-parent families
- 5 received emergency/crisis intervention
- 10 housing assistance
- 12 Mental Health services
- 1 participated in parent education
- 112 Adult education
- 11 Job Training

Services provided

- 6 Homeless
- 12 Foster care
- 64 Dual Language learners
- 54 Children with Disabilities

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 2015</u>
Asthma	24
Overweight	134
Obese	164
Hearing	19
Vision	17

More than 1 in 4 children live in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2013. Georgia ranked 46th out of the 50 states in child food security and 42nd in child overweight and obesity.

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 Long Range Goals and Short Term Objectives

Long Range Goals

ERSEA – Marketing

- Conduct public relations activities designed to increase community awareness.
- Review and/or redesign program brochure
- Develop a series of public service announcements for broadcast on radio and television
- Develop advertisements for publication in local newspapers

Human Resources – Staff Credentials

Ensure that all of the Coastal Plain Area EOA, Inc. Head Start classroom teacher assistants have an associate’s degree or advanced degree in early childhood education by September 30, 2016.

- Ensure that all teacher assistants have an associate’s degree or advanced degree in early childhood education or are enrolled in a degree program.
- Review and revised the wage and salary scale, making adjustments for levels of compensation based on staff credentials.

ERSEA – Program Expansion

Expand Head Start services to include Early Head Start and Early Head Start Childcare Partnerships. (October 2016 – ongoing)

- Develop a plan to expand services to include Head Start children ages 0-3.
- Seek additional funding to support the expansion effort.

ERSEA – Extended Services

Increase the program income and satisfying the growing needs for families by providing extended services in Coastal Plain Area EOA Inc. by 2019.

- Extend Head Start services to provide after care services to meet the needs of families affected by the welfare to work initiatives and those who are involved in activities for self-improvement.
- Explore the option of an agency funded after school program through fund raising or grants.
- Determine opportunities to collaborate with other community agencies such as the YMCA or Boys and Girls Clubs in providing after care for our children.

Short Term Objectives

Human Resources – Staff Turnover

Determine the reasons of staff turnover and implement a plan for improvement.

- Complete an assessment of staff turnover and analyze results
- Complete a plan to address turnover issues to retain staff
- Re-assessment after first year to determine effectiveness

Human Resources – Mentor Teachers and Coaching

Establish a mentor teacher program at each Coastal Plain Area EOA Head Start center.

- Ensure that each center has a mentor teacher that will make sure that the classroom activities of a Head Start program, on the job guidance and training to the Head Start program staff and volunteers

Program Governance – Male Involvement and Parent Family Child Engagement

Increase male involvement by implementing a Male Involvement program as an integral part of the Coastal Plain Area EOA, Inc. Head Start program by 2015-2016.)

- Increase the participation of fathers and significant males in the program through continued recruitment efforts
- Recruit and retain the participation of the fathers and other significant males in the Male Involvement Program

Develop and implement a system for tracking family engagement outcomes related to goal achievement and other accomplishments by 2015.

- Demonstrate measurable family outcomes
- Demonstrate improved and effective goal setting strategies and techniques

School Readiness and CLASS

Incorporate child outcomes data in program self-assessment and continuous program improvement.

- Ensure that the system for ongoing child assessment provides objective, accurate, consistent and credible information on child's progress

Provide support for each child's development and learning through quality teacher-child interactions.

- Improve the implementation plan of the CLASS program to ensure compliance with Head Start regulations

Planning – Disaster Preparedness

Develop a Coastal Plain Area EOA Inc. Head Start Emergency Preparedness Plan by January 2016.

- Ensure that staff, parents and children are knowledgeable and prepared in the event of a natural disaster, threat of violence, or catastrophic occurrences

Fund raising Incentive Program

Acquire additional funding to supplement Head Start program services as it relates to staff incentives to promote staff retention/other program's needs, by December 2015, to be conducted by the Board of Directors.

- Identify and access alternative funding sources for Head Start/Agency.

Facilities

Provide clean and safe environment for children

- Outsource custodial services

Relocate Irwin County Head Start for licensing or license the existing facility.

- Identify potential sites in Irwin County to relocate

Build a new facility for Irwin Head Start and Early Head Start

- Secure funding and land for new center

Transportation

Provide quality transportation services to all children in need.

- Upgrade the school bus fleet
- Qualified Bus Drivers

Community Assessment

Complete a Community Assessment that incorporates data on pregnant women to 5 years of age and Echols County.

- Assess the community needs for Early Head Start and/or expansion of services

ERSEA – OHS New Rules

Increase knowledge of Eligibility Final Rule and awareness of the Coastal Plain Area EOA Head Start program in the community

- Ensure that all staff and program governance are trained on eligibility
- Conduct public relations activities designed to increase community awareness

Sources of Data for the Community Assessment:

1. Census Bureau
2. ChildPlus.net
3. PIR
4. University of Georgia Guide
5. Internet Resources
6. Georgia Department of Human Resources
7. Community Action Survey
8. Kids Count
9. Demographics Now
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 Defense Fund
18. Wiregrass Georgia Technical College
19. Area hospital websites
20. Governor's Office of Planning and Budget
21. Georgia Commission on Family Violence
22. Georgia Center for Child Advocacy
23. Violence Policy Center