



2017 Head Start Annual Report



OUR PRINCIPLES



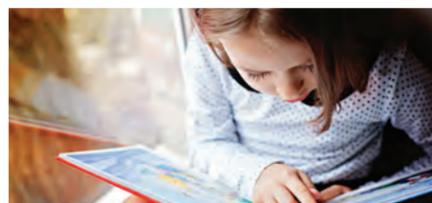
FAMILY-CENTERED:

Discovering child and family needs and working with families to best meet them. Providing opportunities for families to be meaningfully engaged in the design of services. Being committed to serving families of diverse cultures and lifestyles in a non-biased and non-judgmental way.



SEAMLESS:

Coordinating and integrating our services to ensure that families receive the support they need, regardless of point of entry to the agency. When our families face challenges outside our expertise, we partner with other high-quality organizations.



OUTCOME-DRIVEN:

Thoughtfully measuring the impact and effectiveness of our services. Engaging in ongoing learning and innovation to ensure we are offering effective services to children and families. Consistently identifying what we can improve, doing what we can do best, and measuring our self against national benchmarks.



ADVOCATES:

Taking a leadership role in educating policymakers and the public on the needs of the youngest and most vulnerable children, even when it means taking risks for the benefit of children.



STEWARDS:

Taking responsibility for growing and sustaining our human and financial capital. Demonstrating respect and cultural sensitivity for our community, staff, and Board.

ABOUT CHILDREN'S FRIEND

Children's Friend, a non-profit organization founded in 1834, is Rhode Island's oldest child-serving organization, and a leading provider of child welfare, family support, mental health, and child development services.

MISSION

Children's Friend is the innovative leader in improving the well-being and healthy development of Rhode Island's most vulnerable young children.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Too many of the youngest and most vulnerable children in Rhode Island are experiencing devastating outcomes, including death, as a result of abuse and neglect. As stewards of the resources entrusted to us, Children's Friend is realigning itself to proactively respond to this crisis.

Children's Friend is a member of the Child Welfare League of America and is accredited by the Council on Accreditation.



*The names of the children and families we serve have been changed to protect privacy and confidentiality.



DEAR FRIENDS

As I write this, the days are getting colder and shorter. But, I can envision spring just around the corner – flowers and grass bursting through the earth with new life. We will enter another cycle of the seasons.

As the seasons change, so do we. In our Head Start and Early Head Start programs, we see our young children growing by leaps and bounds, our teachers and staff developing professionally, and our administration continuing to look at how we practice the tenets of our mission and strategic priority.

Throughout 2017, our agency Planning Committee came together to assess how we could best ensure that our strategic priority was responsive and aligned to the needs of Rhode Island's most vulnerable young children, who are the core of whom we serve and the reason we do this work. Through this process, we refined five core principles that reflect our mission of innovative leadership in improving the well-being and healthy development of Rhode Island's most vulnerable young children. At Children's Friend, we are family-centered, seamless, outcome-driven, advocates, and stewards of the resources entrusted to us.

In our Head Start and Early Head Start programs, we have embraced these principles through the integration of services, putting families first, problem-solving, and advocating for the needs of our children, families, and staff. These accomplishments include a partnership with Roger Williams University to launch a program to support a teaching credential for edu-

cators who work with infants and toddlers, ensuring that teachers working with the youngest children have access to credit-bearing work and professional development.

We also began an initiative in our Head Start centers to counteract absenteeism, which we know has detrimental effects on children's learning. With the hard work and dedication of many staff and our families, we saw an increase in attendance in the second half of the school year. We continued to support children and families with disabilities and mental health services, and better integrated our dental program into our overall health team.

When we embrace change – as we embrace the seasons – there is no stopping what we can accomplish, together. I am, as always, exceptionally grateful to our Children's Friend and Head Start community – our families, program staff, funders, and our Board of Directors. Because of your hard work and dedication, we are able to learn, grow, and be a better leader on behalf of Rhode Island's most vulnerable children.

Aimee Mitchell
Senior Vice President, Programs and Operations
Director, Head Start



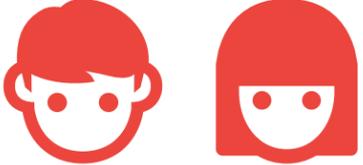
Children's Friend provided essential services to many of Rhode Island's most vulnerable children through the Head Start and Early Head Start Programs. 1,352 children received services from Head Start and Early Head Start.

LET'S DO THE NUMBERS...



Funded Enrollment 8.1.17 - 2.28.18
Head Start **980** • EHS **160**

Funded Enrollment 3.1.18 - 7.31.18
Head Start **915** • EHS **176**



The program achieved **99%**
Funded Enrollment for Head Start.



The program achieved **100%**
Funded Enrollment for Early Head Start.



Early Head Start served **13** pregnant women and **272** children and their families through home visiting and center based services that support positive parent-child relationships, and promote positive growth and development in children.



98% of Head Start children and **99%** of Early Head Start children had an ongoing source of accessible health care.



82% of Head Start children and **43%** of Early Head Start children had access to dental care.



Head Start provided **1,080** children and their families with quality child care and education, health, nutrition, and social supports.



Head Start and Early Head Start served **54** homeless families, successfully supporting **24** of them to obtain housing ensuring a more stable environment for children and enhancing their capacity to learn and develop.



153 children with disabilities received services in Head Start (**130**) and Early Head Start (**23**) including counseling for children and families, one-to-one classroom support, and coordination with other service providers.



SEAMLESS

Coordinating and integrating our services to ensure that families receive the support they need, regardless of point of entry to the agency. When our families face challenges outside our expertise, we partner with other high-quality organizations.

“It takes a village to raise a child.” - Proverb

At Children’s Friend, every staff member is a part of each child’s “village.” The Mental Health and Disabilities Team is too - and they also help bring resources to the village.

“Our department is designed to provide support to children and families - whatever that looks like for each child or family,” shares Linda DeVincent, Manager of Family Preservation at Children’s Friend.

Supporting children with disabilities is an important part of the Head Start and Early Head Start Performance Standards. The Mental Health and Disabilities Team offers a variety of supports for children, families, and teachers, which are individually tailored according to needs.

Supports include counseling, play therapy, parenting support, and therapeutic classroom services through Kids Connect, a program that helps children with special needs to learn, play and socialize with their friends in the classroom. Children’s Friend partners with The Providence Center, a local behavioral health organization, for clinical services. The team also helps families by making referrals. “We educate ourselves on many other programs and also think about how we might cross-refer within Children’s Friend. We can get referrals for anything,” says Linda.

Supporting children and families with mental health concerns and disabilities requires careful and thoughtful collaboration.

“We collaborate very closely with our Family Workers and teachers to ensure the success of our work,” explains Lisa Alfonso-Lynes, Mental Health and Disabilities Supervisor for Head Start and Early Head Start.

“We don’t do this work in a vacuum,” adds Linda. “It’s really a team effort. Our Family Development and Child Development Teams, and our partners at The Providence Center really pull together to help families and children be successful. Everybody communicates, works together to help families and teachers break down barriers, and tracks progress. Our work is integrated into day-to-day activities, and this helps us to collaborate. We work well as a team, and we would not be able to do what we do without this team-oriented approach.”

It is this seamless approach that helps ensure that children, families, and teachers in our Head Start and Early Head Start programs are receiving what they need to be successful. In this program year, 141 children in Head Start were referred to the Mental Health and Disabilities Team for consultation, including 130 with disabilities. One hundred and forty one children received services, such as counseling, classroom support, and coordination with other service providers.



ADVOCATES

Taking a leadership role in educating policymakers and the public on the needs of the youngest and most vulnerable children, even when it means taking risks for the benefit of children.

STEWARDS

Taking responsibility for growing and sustaining our human and financial capital. Demonstrating respect and cultural sensitivity for our community, staff and Board.

“If you don’t see the book you want on the shelf, write it.” - Beverly Cleary, children’s author

In 2015, Children’s Friend was selected as a recipient of federal funds to expand access to full-day, full-year child care for Early Head Start children through Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCP). Children’s Friend partnered with 10 licensed child care centers in the cities of Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence and Woonsocket to provide high quality care for infants and toddlers. Each partner site agreed to meet rigorous Early Head Start standards in areas such as teacher credentials, education, health, and family engagement.

Maryann Finamore, now Manager of Early Childhood Mentoring and Coaching at Children’s Friend, was hired as a consultant to help recruit partners and build the EHS-CCP. “As we were recruiting, we realized that many of the educators who would be teaching in the EHS classrooms would need help getting the formal credentials that would meet the Office of Head Start Standards required under the grant,” Maryann explains. “The standards stated that teachers must have an Infant/Toddler Child Development Associate (CDA),¹ or a ‘State Infant/Toddler Credential’.”

Maryann, who has more than 40 years of experience in early childhood education, began exploring what kinds of options existed in Rhode Island for infant/toddler educators to attain a credential that would be recognized under the requirements. She discovered that the options were extremely limited.

Maryann discussed this with Children’s Friend Head Start leadership, and they agreed they wanted to do something about it.

“Aimee² was all over it,” says Maryann. They looked at other states, and began talking to local colleges and universities. “Roger Williams University came to the table with a concept for a certificate through their School of Continuing Studies,” explains Maryann. “What RWU did that we liked was allow for the credit-bearing coursework in the certificate to count toward an Associate degree. They agreed to look at prior professional development and classroom experience and award credit for that work. They also understood the importance of cultural competence and bilingual supports.”

The Certificate in Infant/Toddler Teaching & Learning program launched in September 2018 and has 10 students enrolled. The Rhode Island State Department of Human Services is now developing a State Infant Toddler Credential, and coursework through the RWU certificate aligns to this.

Our commitment at Children’s Friend is to take a leadership role, advocating for what our children, families, and staff need to be successful. We are proud to be working in partnership with RWU, our child care partners, and Early Head Start staff to build professional skills and knowledge for our youngest learners.

¹ The Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™ is a national professional credential in early childhood education based on a core set of competency standards and administered by the Council for Professional Recognition. (<https://www.cdacouncil.org/about/cda-credential>).

² Aimee Mitchell is the Senior Vice President of Programs and Operations and Director of Head Start at Children’s Friend.



OUTCOME-DRIVEN

Thoughtfully measuring the impact and effectiveness of our services. Engaging in ongoing learning and innovation to ensure we are offering effective services to children and families. Consistently identifying what we can improve, doing what we can do best, and measuring our self against national benchmarks.

“You don’t have to make it big, but you do have to make a big impact.” - *Jamie McCall*

Research shows that regular school attendance, at all ages, is critical to children’s learning and development. When children miss at least 10% of school days, they are considered to be “chronically absent.” When preschool children are chronically absent, this affects their social and emotional health and readiness for kindergarten.^{3,4}

Head Start, and other early learning programs, are crucial in helping young children gain social, academic, and emotional skills that are the foundation for a lifetime of learning. Regular attendance is very important to ensure children fully benefit from their Head Start experience. Head Start requires that each site maintain an attendance rate of 85%.

To better understand trends in attendance and reasons for absence, Children’s Friend Head Start staff formed a special committee to work on attendance, and began to track individual attendance at four sites in the spring of 2018. Tracking the reasons for absence had not been done previously, and helped the Committee to identify ways that each child and family could be supported outside of the classroom.

Tracking information about attendance wasn’t all the Committee did. They also worked on designing incentives to encourage regular attendance. At Children’s Friend’s Dean Head Start site, located in Pawtucket, children with perfect weekly attendance

were awarded a certificate, and their names were entered into a raffle for a family-friendly gift basket. Bethany Gauthier, the Child Development Supervisor at Dean, said she noticed an increase in the month of March, after the site introduced the incentives. A highlight of the program, shared Bethany, was the excitement of the children. “When they are here, they love it. It is important for everyone to be on the same page advocating for the importance of attendance, because the kids need to be here and they love school.”

In the coming year, the Attendance Committee plans to reconvene to continue to track attendance. They will also be looking more closely at other variables that may have an impact, such as variations in staffing.

Thoughtful measurement is key to identifying areas for improvement and ways to be more effective. The work of the Attendance Committee demonstrates our Head Start staff’s commitment to an outcome-driven approach for our children, our families, and ourselves.

³Rodrigue & Reeves (2014) Skipping School is Bad News, Even for Pre-K. Social Mobility Memos, Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/social-mobility-memos/2014/11/20/skipping-school-is-bad-news-even-for-pre-k/>.

⁴Erich, Gwynne & Allsworth (2018). Pre-kindergarten attendance matters. Early Childhood Research Quarterly 44(3). Abstract. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0885200617300583>.



FAMILY-CENTERED

Discovering child and family needs and working with families to best meet them. Providing opportunities for families to be meaningfully engaged in the design of services. Being committed to serving families of diverse cultures and lifestyles in a non-biased and non-judgmental way.

“We spend a lot of time designing the bridge, but not enough time thinking about the people who are crossing it.” - Dr. Prabhjot Singh

The first time Children’s Friend met Jonah (4) and Julie (3), their family was in the midst of involvement with the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), and they were moving in with their father for the first time.

Julie (2 at the time) had been referred to Children’s Friend First Connections to be screened for developmental delays – these “CAPTA” referrals are a routine practice for young children involved with child welfare. Earlier in 2017, Children’s Friend, recognizing that such vulnerable referrals would benefit from cross-disciplinary support, had implemented a new process – the CAPTA Team. When the CAPTA Engagement Team, comprised of a nurse and social worker met the family, they immediately jumped into action.

After bringing the case to review at the multi-disciplinary team meeting, the Engagement Team worked with Jonah’s and Julie’s father to identify what he most wanted: help being a first time dad, and support to manage Jonah’s behaviors. As a team they determined that connecting him with both Head Start and Early Head Start would be the best fit.

This approach meant the family could immediately receive EHS weekly home visits to provide coaching on parenting and attachment for dad, while Jonah could be quickly placed in a structured preschool setting capable of managing his challenging behaviors. And once Julie did turn three, the two children could be supported at the same school, while dad continued to receive home visits to

improve his skills and engagement in his children’s education and to connect him with natural supports or other targeted programs as needed.

Now, about a year later, both children are entering their second years in Head Start. Jonah’s challenging behaviors have continued, but he, his father, and their family worker, Donna Tomaselli, have worked hard to engage in class, home, and specialized services. Julie, after an adjustment period, has thrived in the structure of her classroom. The children’s classrooms are, thanks to the connections Children’s Friend has built with local school districts, located inside the elementary school they will attend upon turning five, better facilitating and easing yet another transition for a vulnerable family.

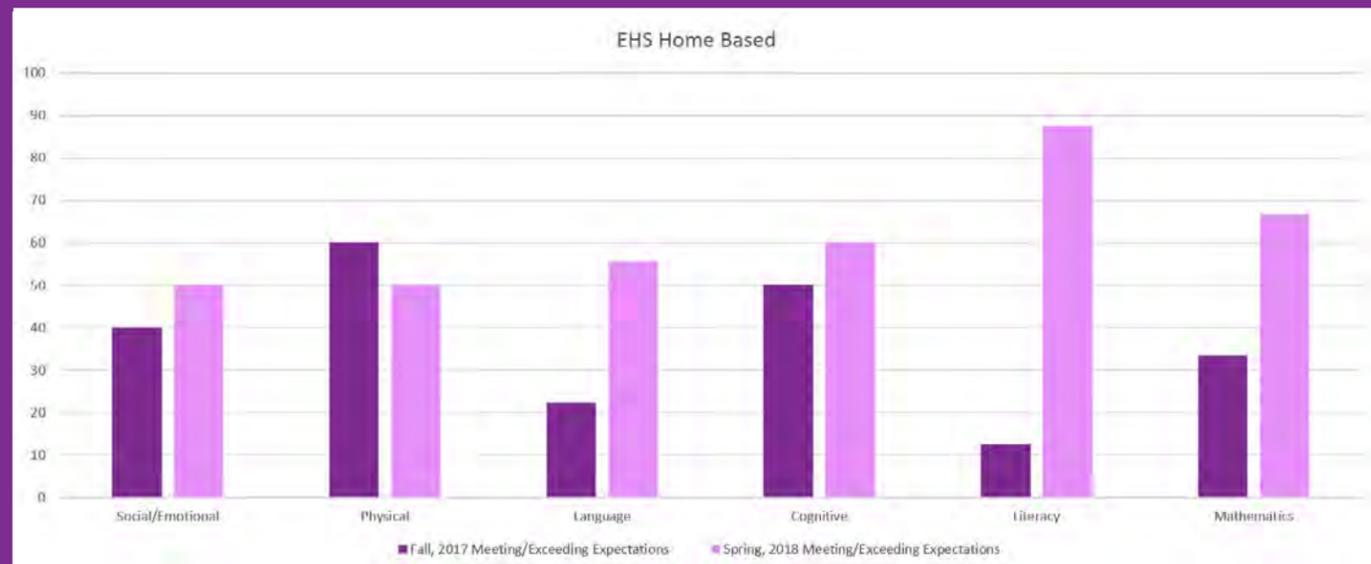
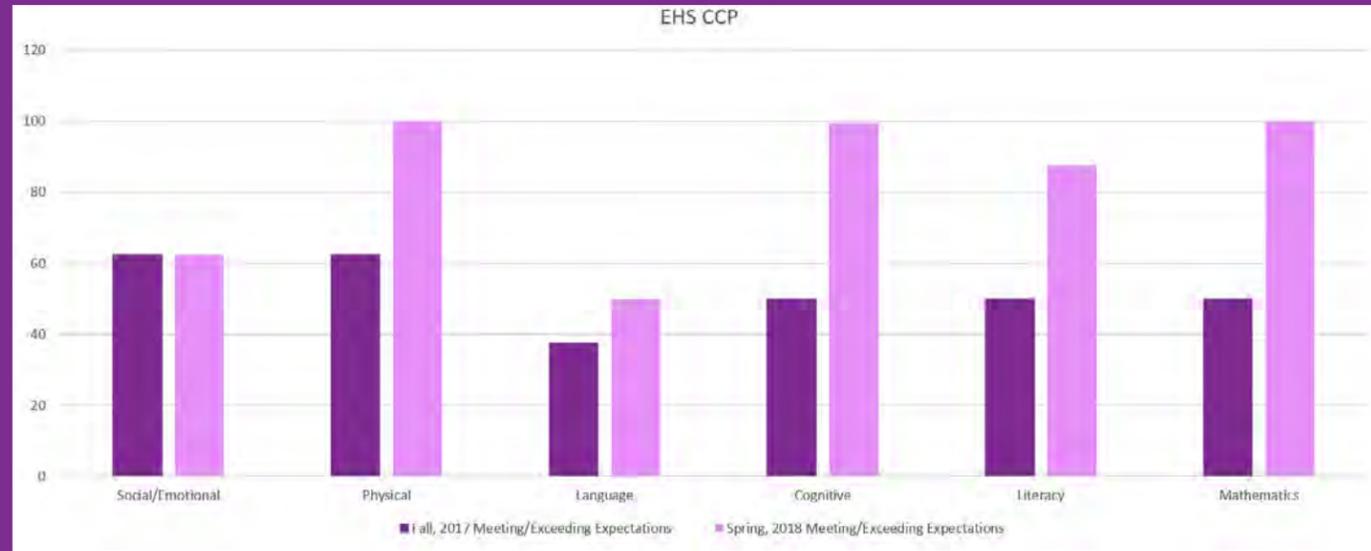
Donna says of the family. “Dad was out of their lives. He had to start from scratch, with the children and his own parenting skills, a year ago. We always keep in mind that all parents are different, and so, to meet him where he needs to be met, we started with the basics.”

Being Family Centered means learning the family’s needs and desires, and operating with them at the center. It means ensuring our programs help families become and remain meaningfully engaged in services that support them. The CAPTA Team is an embodiment of that goal, striving to work directly with families to identify their needs and engage services to meet them. And the seamless connection between our programs, particularly Early Head Start and Head Start, further serves to meet that goal.

SCHOOL READINESS

Each year we seek to improve School Readiness outcomes for children in Head Start and Early Head Start. This year was no different. We use the Teaching Strategies Gold® (TSG) to develop curricula and track child outcomes.

Early Head Start

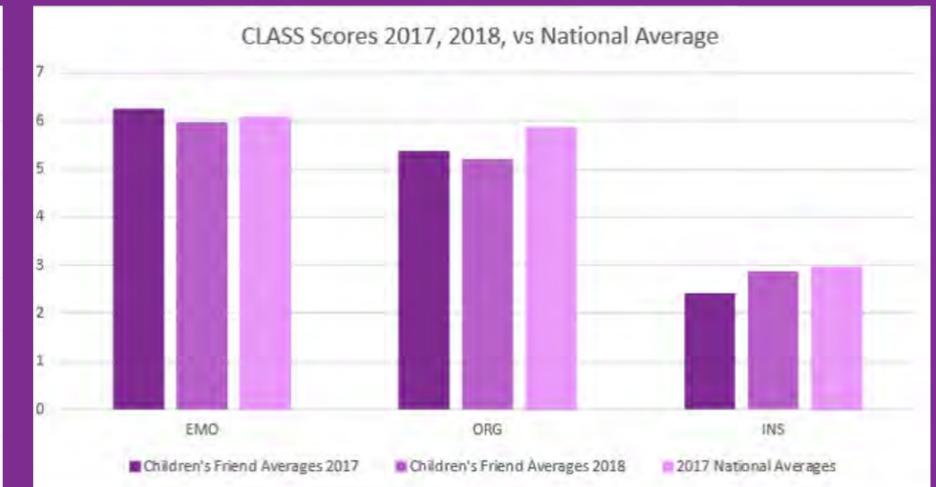
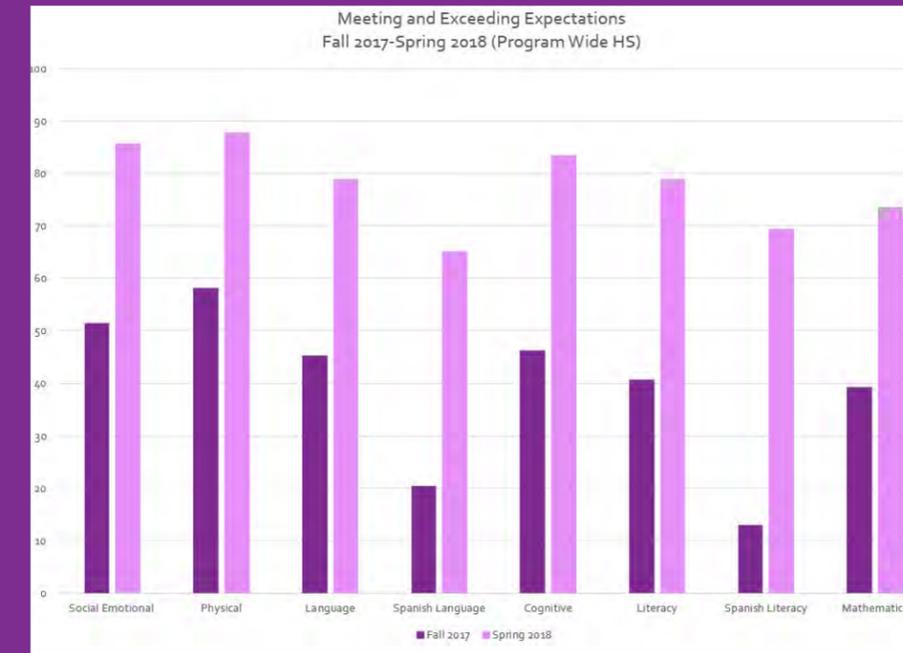


Teaching Strategies Gold® (TSG) assesses school readiness on a per-student level. TSG is a birth to kindergarten assessment system. Completed three times throughout the school year, it provides individualized assessment and feedback to teachers and parents to help identify children's strengths and challenges, and to track student progress. It is also used to assess program efficacy and improvement on a classroom, center, and agency level.⁵

The TSG comparison of students meeting/exceeding expectations compares the number of students that started out the year meeting or exceeding expectations, and compares that to the number of students meeting or exceeding expectations at the end of the school year.

For Head Start, we also look at how Children's Friend Head Start compares to the Head Start national average on the CLASS®. The CLASS® is an observation instrument that assesses the quality of teacher-child interactions.

Head Start



⁵ Teaching Strategies Gold® - <https://teachingstrategies.com/solutions/assess/gold/>, <http://www2.teachingstrategies.com/content/pageDocs/GOLD-assessment-system-reports-brochure.pdf>.



FINANCIALS

AUGUST 1, 2017 - JULY 31, 2018

RI Dept. of Human Services	879,743.87
RI Dept. of Education	629,386.76
U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services	12,712,880.54
In-Kind	2,542,576.11
Total	16,764,587.28

EXPENSES AUGUST 1, 2017 - JULY 31, 2018

Salaries & Fringes	9,911,658.15
Purchased Services	1,938,800.91
Occupancy	1,750,255.14
Client Benefits	707,593.41
Other	2,456,279.67
Total	16,764,587.28

ACF BUDGET MAY 1, 2018 - APRIL 30, 2019

Personnel	7,091,929.00
Fringe Benefits	2,966,778.00
Equipment	100,00.00
Supplies	467,123.00
Contractual	1,743,992.00
Construction	4,495,876.00
Other	1,923,885.00
Total Approved Budget	18,789,584.00



Children's FRIEND

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