



Mid-Columbia Children's Council



Annual Report 2024-2025

350 children • 4 counties • 2 states • many moments of impact

MISSION

Educating children and families with innovative, high-quality early childhood learning opportunities and family partnerships to build better communities, one person at a time.

VISION

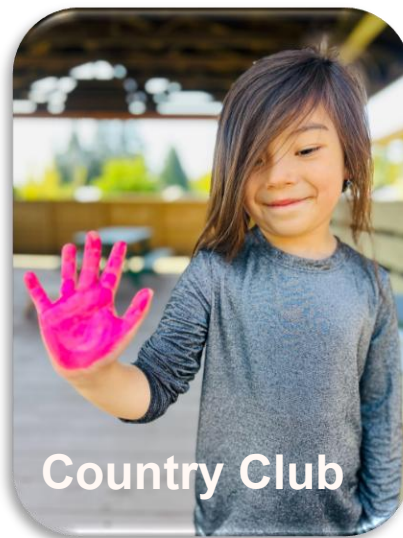
Nurturing Children And Families Today,
Strengthening Communities for Tomorrow.

Bridging Communities Across the Gorge

Children and families in the Columbia River Gorge face unique challenges because of rural distances and bi-state systems. Our programs reach across counties and rivers to provide consistent meals, early learning, and support—helping every child flourish where they live and learn.



Funders	Slots
Head Start (Federal)	106
Early Head Start (Federal)	50
OPK (Oregon)	76
OPKPT (Oregon)	26
ECEAP (Washington)	30
Early ECEAP (Washington)	8



CUMULATIVE ENROLLMENT TOTAL = 350

Head Start
34%

OPK
28%

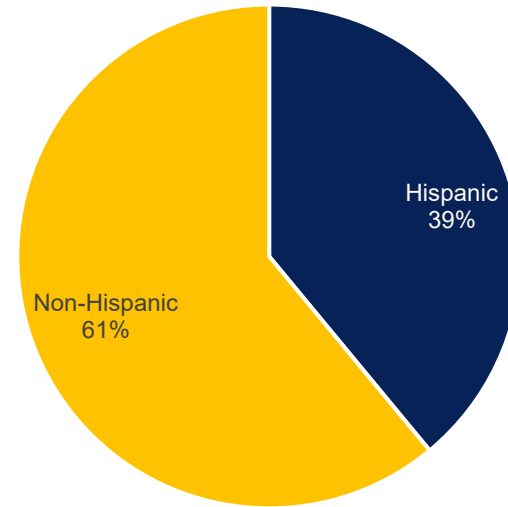
OPKPT
10%

ECEAP
10%

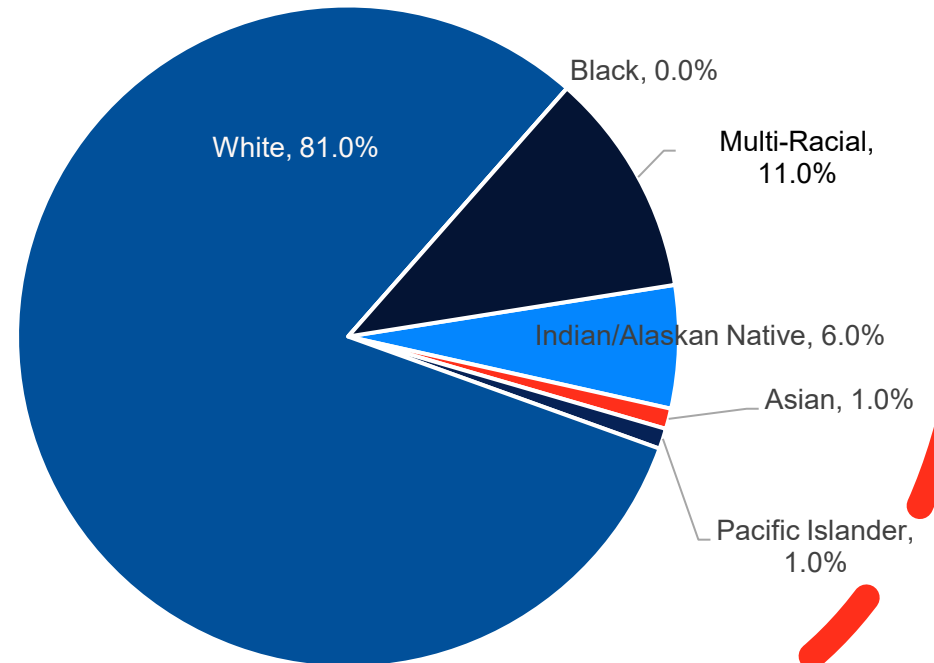
Early Head Start
18%



Ethnicity of Program Participants



Race Demographics of Participants



Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Community Friends,

As Interim Executive Director of Mid-Columbia Children's Council, I am honored to reflect on a truly impactful year. Since our founding in 1987 to provide Head Start services in the Mid-Columbia region, our organization has remained dedicated to supporting children from prenatal through age five and their families.

Thank you for making 2024–2025 such a memorable and meaningful year. Time moves quickly, but when we pause to reflect, it is remarkable to see how much we have accomplished together in service to others. This year was especially significant for MCCC as we both celebrated the completion of our previous five-year goal cycle and launched the first year of a new five-year grant cycle. Closing out this chapter gave us the opportunity to reflect on our progress, lessons learned, and the impact we have made, while also stepping forward with renewed energy, excitement, and purpose. Through dedication and support, we experienced a year of growth, collaboration, and strengthened commitment to our shared goals.

MCCC staff also took time this year to invest in the well-being of our employees through a Wellness and Spirit Week, where each of our sites participated in activities designed to promote connection, appreciation, and self-care. This was a meaningful opportunity to recognize the incredible work happening across all locations and to foster a sense of unity and positivity among our teams. Supporting staff wellness remains a priority as we know that strong, supported teams are essential to serving children and families effectively.

As we continue to recover from the impacts of the pandemic, our workforce, particularly our teaching staff, has experienced significant strain. The ongoing staffing crisis in early childhood education has created a substantial deficit for MCCC, limiting our capacity and placing increased demands on our existing team. This staffing shortage has made it more challenging to maintain the level of care, consistency, and educational excellence that our children and families rely on. In response, MCCC has taken intentional and strategic action by dedicating a full-time position focused exclusively on recruitment and hiring. This investment is critical to rebuilding a fully staffed team, strengthening workforce stability, and ensuring we can effectively support both our staff and the families we serve. If there is one thing I have learned this year, it is that no two days are ever the same, and every single one reminds me why this work matters so much.

In addition, we continue to observe through our community needs assessment that declining birth rates, along with increased competition for preschool slots, are still having a significant impact on our program. By aligning our strategic priorities across all program areas, we are creating a more cohesive and responsive approach to serving our community. Finishing the fifth year of our grant cycle, we are strategically focusing on comprehensive data gathering to better understand emerging needs, measure our impact, and identify opportunities for growth. This approach will help us successfully close out the remaining components of our five-year goals. At the same time, we are prioritizing clear communication and staff engagement, ensuring our team has the knowledge and tools needed to bring these goals to life. This thoughtful and informed approach positions us for meaningful progress and lasting impact in the years ahead.

Today, we continue to strengthen our early childhood education programs and learning centers to meet evolving community needs, always guided by our mission to help every child and family reach their full and unique potential. Despite the challenges we have faced, our commitment to growth, quality, and community impact remains stronger than ever. MCCC plays a vital role in preparing children and families for school readiness by fostering essential developmental skills, building confidence, and creating a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

Mid-Columbia Children's Council remains deeply committed to continuous improvement. We will actively seek new ways to enhance services, expand resources, and strengthen programming to meet the growing and changing needs of our region. Financially, we have remained stable and good stewards of the money, ensuring that resources are allocated thoughtfully and transparently. Upholding the highest standards of accountability is central to maintaining the trust you have in our organization.

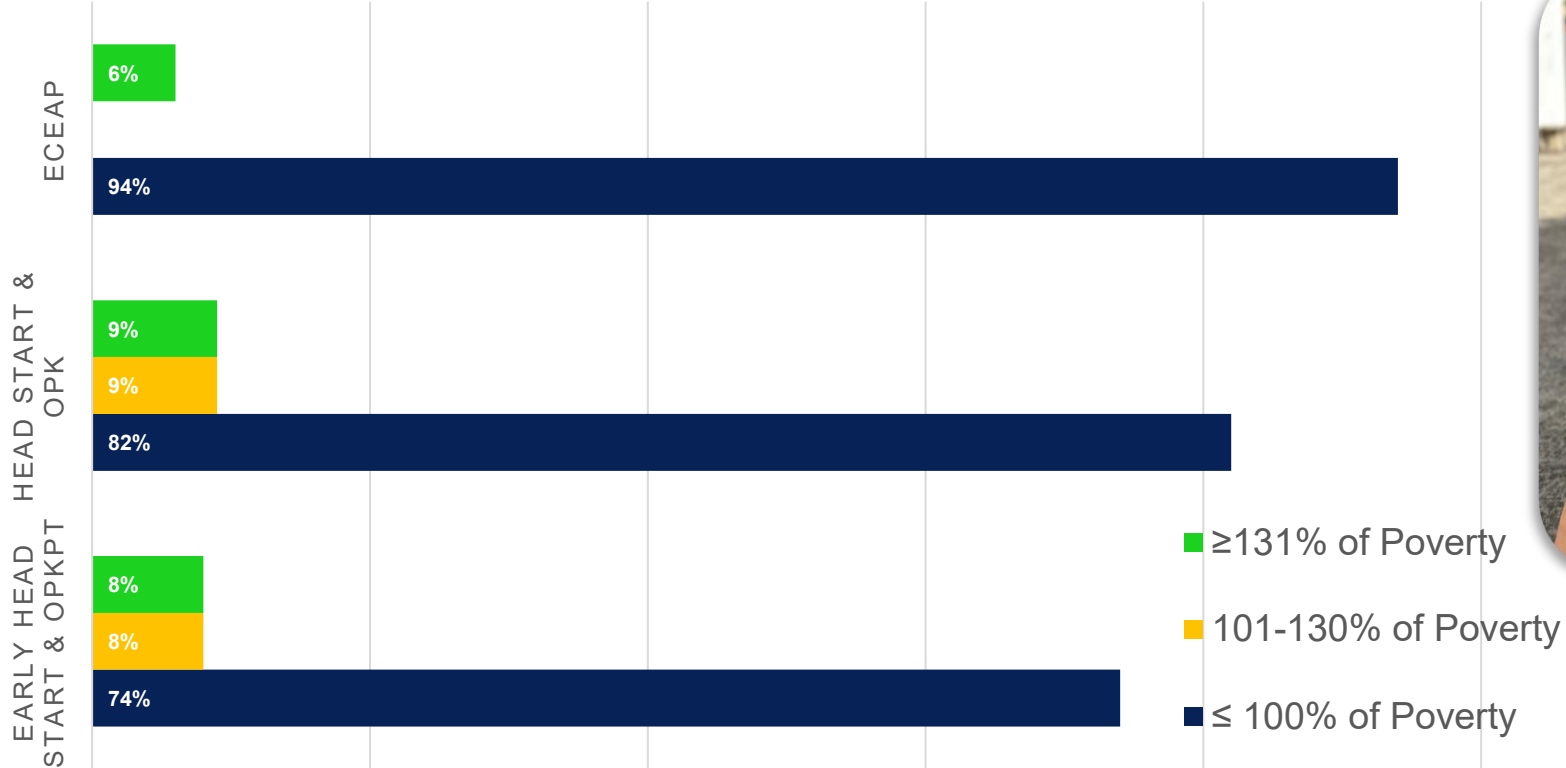
Looking ahead, MCCC is excited to build on this strong foundation and pursue new opportunities for growth and impact. We will continue listening, adapting, and working in partnership with our community to ensure we are meeting the needs of children and families effectively. Thank you for being an essential part of this journey. Together, we look forward to another year of progress, partnership, and meaningful change.

Sincerely,

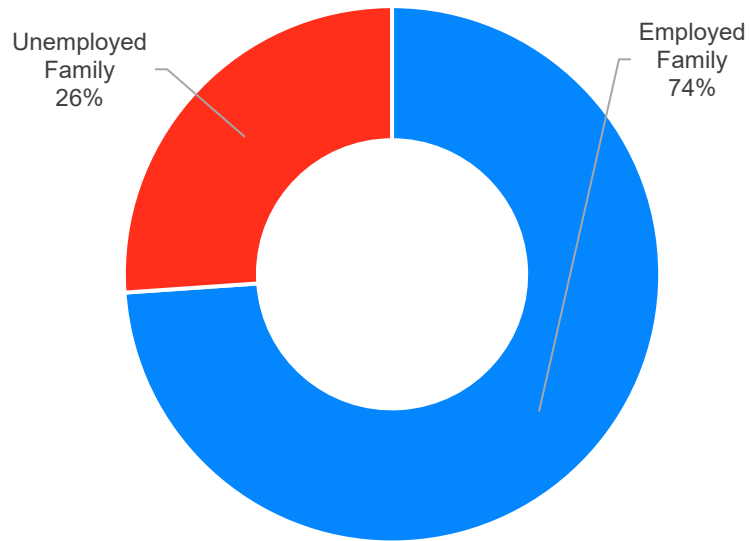
Ronda Hull, Interim Executive Director



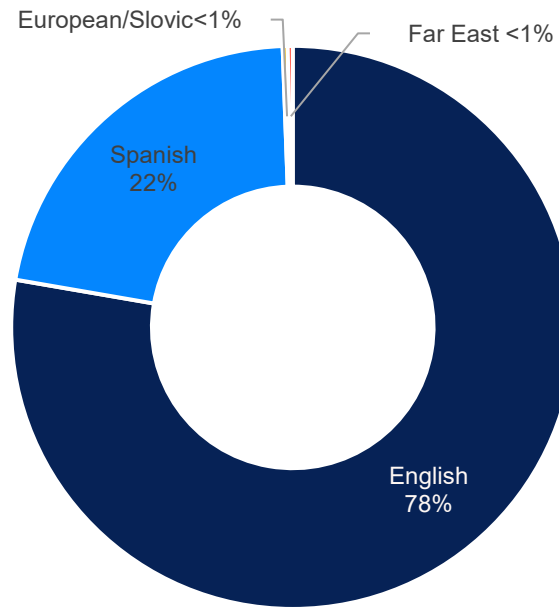
PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN BY INCOME LEVEL



Household Employment Status



Language of Participants



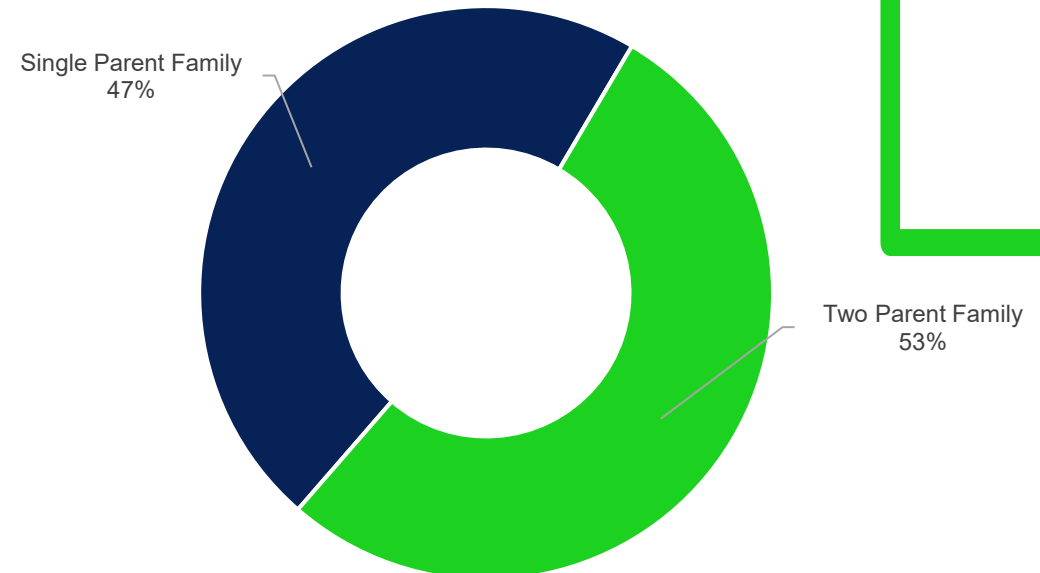
Tygh Valley



Westside



Family Structures



What the Data Shows:

Over 90,000 reimbursable meals served!

 **Breakfast:** 30,312 meals
 **Lunch:** 33,006 meals
 **Snack:** 24,987 meals

Reliable, nutritious meals help children grow, learn, and succeed every day.

Individualized Supports

 **22%** of children received services through an IEP/IFSP.

Most common identified needs:

 **Speech/Language (31)** |  **Developmental Delay (17)**
 **Autism (4)*** |  **Intellectual (1)** |  **Orthopedic (1)**

*Autism diagnoses often require specialized medical evaluations and can be delayed due to access, cost, and wait times.



Healthy Starts, Bright Futures

 **83%** of children ended the year with a current well-child exam.

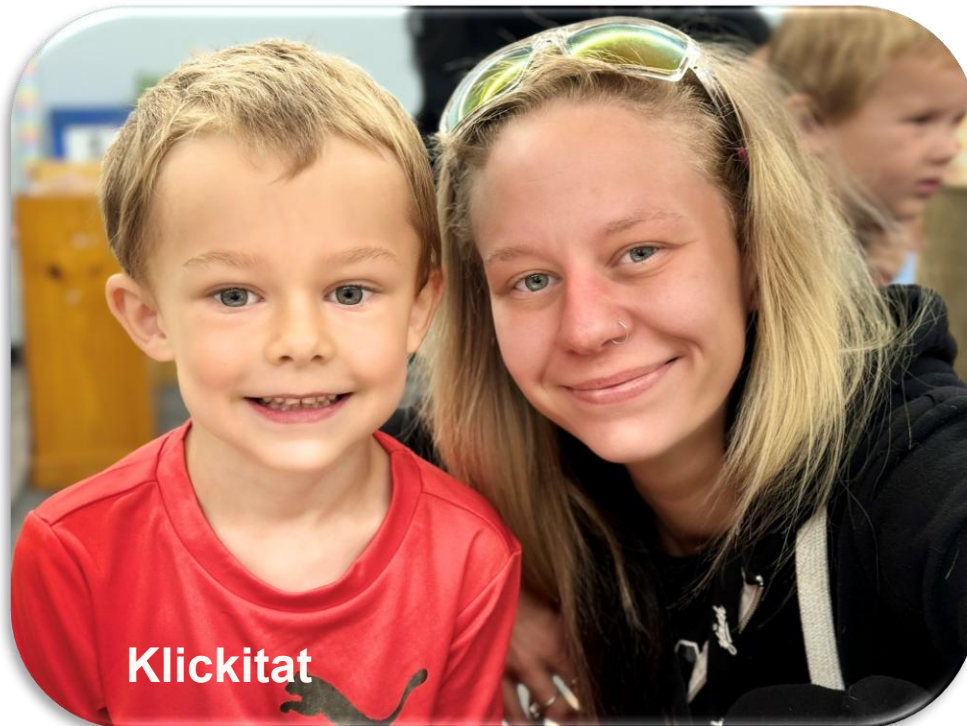
 **79%** of children received a dental exam during the program year.

 **82%** of children received all vaccines possible.

Together, these milestones support early prevention and lifelong health.

Family Engagement

Strong partnerships with families are central to children's success. Throughout the year, centers hosted monthly parent engagement activities that invited families into the classroom to learn, play, and participate alongside their children. These experiences strengthened family-school connections, supported child development, and created meaningful opportunities for parents to engage directly in their child's learning environment.





Shawna sharing the parent voice at the Oregon Legislature to advocate for early childhood funding

Finding My Voice Through MCCC

Shawna Pruitt
Policy Council Chair and Mom of 3



Audrey Pruitt, Noelle Hanson, and Ronda Hull sharing a fun moment at Policy Council with matching hairstyles



When my children were first enrolled at Mid-Columbia Children's Council (MCCC), I became involved in Parent Committee at my site. In my second year with the program, I was elected to serve as the Policy Council representative for my site.

Through Parent Committee and Policy Council, I developed confidence, leadership skills, and the ability to speak in front of groups. Before joining the program, I was very reserved, but these experiences helped me grow personally and professionally.

Over time, I served as Chair of the Policy Council, held leadership roles within Parent Committee, facilitated meetings, and helped plan site events. These experiences strengthened my ability to advocate for families and represent the parent voice. As Policy Council Chair, I represented parents during Board meetings and collaborated with program leadership. My involvement with MCCC helped me grow as both a parent and a community leader.

I was also elected as one of Policy Council's representatives to the Oregon Head Start Association. In that role, I developed advocacy skills and visited the Oregon State Legislature to advocate for early childhood education funding.

Shortly after joining Policy Council, I became pregnant with my third child. I was excited and hopeful to welcome a girl after having two boys. MCCC staff supported me throughout my pregnancy and celebrated with me when my daughter Audrey was born. Audrey even attended Policy Council meetings with me as an infant alongside another baby born to a fellow parent leader that year. I always felt welcomed, supported, and valued by the staff during my time on Policy Council.

When Audrey later enrolled in classes at MCCC, I became a regular classroom volunteer. That experience inspired me to continue my education, and this spring I will complete a year of coursework toward my associate's degree in Early Childhood Education.

Whenever I had a question or concern, MCCC staff worked through it with me.



One of the most valuable parts of my involvement with MCCC has been the opportunity to connect with other parents. When my children were first enrolled, I felt isolated and depressed. Through the program, I built meaningful relationships and found a sense of community and belonging. I grew, my family grew, and in many ways, my family got their mom back.



Emergency Preparedness Week

Preparing children for emergencies is an essential part of creating safe, supportive learning environments. During the 2024–2025 program year, classrooms implemented a dedicated emergency preparedness unit designed to help children understand safety, identify trusted helpers, and learn how to respond in emergency situations in age-appropriate ways.

This learning experience was shaped by staff collaboration and classroom input and included engaging activities, hands-on lessons, and community connections that brought safety concepts to life. Through this work, children built confidence, awareness, and a sense of security—strengthening both personal safety skills and trust in their communities.



Introducing On-Site Teledentistry Services!

Expanding Access to Preventive Dental Care



← Ashley Danielson, EPDH, delivers dental cleanings, X-rays, and treatment services inside the Gentle Dental mobile van located in our parking lot. →

The Gentle Dental van on site, offering a mobile dental home for accessible care. →



The Columbia Gorge continues to face significant barriers to pediatric dental care, including long waitlists, limited pediatric providers, transportation challenges, and increased childhood tooth decay following the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to these community needs, MCCC launched on-site teledentistry services in Oregon centers during the 2024–2025 program year through a partnership with Capitol Dental.

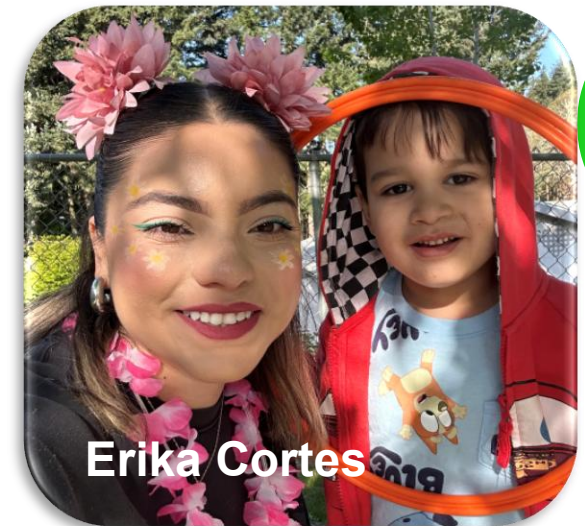
Ashley providing flexible dental services inside a classroom to support children and families on site. →



By bringing dental exams directly into our schools, children can now receive preventive dental care in a familiar environment while families avoid many of the barriers that have historically limited access to treatment. This work builds on years of community collaboration focused on prevention, education, and increasing access to oral health services for children in the Gorge.

Gratitude and recognition

Our staff are the heart of our program, and their dedication is reflected in the years they choose to grow with us. Staff longevity speaks to the strong relationships, supportive culture, and shared commitment to children and families that define our work. We are proud to recognize and celebrate the experience, consistency, and care our long-term team members bring each day.



Erika Cortes

5 Years	10 Years	20 Years	25 Years	30+ years
Erika Cortes	Vanessa Cervantes	Nona Abbott	Soila Loeza	Ronda Hull
Patricia Fletcher	Karen Lavine	Wendy Garcia	Allie Spino	Rebecca Moss
Sharon Gutierrez		Randy Goulart	Wendy Yanez	
Chelsey Hauser				
Amanda Heyler				
Valerie Nelson				
Angelica Sandoval				



Karen Lavine



Allie Spino



A Career of Care and Commitment

Mid-Columbia Children's Council is proud to recognize Rebecca Moss for her exceptional dedication, leadership, and service to the children and families of the Columbia Gorge.

For more than 34 years, Rebecca has been a valued part of the MCCC Head Start community. Her work has touched nearly every part of our program, including her service as a Teacher Assistant, Teacher, Center Coordinator, Education Coordinator, mentor, colleague, and friend.

Rebecca is the kind of person who steps in wherever she is needed and does so with care, skill, and heart. She is a fierce advocate for children, families, and staff, and she consistently brings a steady, supportive presence to those around her. Her commitment to relationships, quality early learning, and the well-being of others reflects the very best of Head Start.

Rebecca's impact can be seen in the children she has supported, the families she has encouraged, the staff she has guided, and the strong program practices she has helped build. She is deeply respected across our agency and continues to be a source of inspiration, encouragement, and wisdom.

We are grateful to recognize Rebecca Moss as an exceptional member of the Mid-Columbia Children's Council community and a powerful example of dedication, compassion, and service in action.



Rebecca Moss
34 Years of Service

Financial Report

SUPPORT & REVENUE	FOR YEAR ENDED 11/30/2023 Audited	FOR YEAR ENDED 11/30/2024 Audited	2024-2025 Budgeted
US Department of Health & Human Services	5,765,656	6,255,487	6,306,648
Oregon & Washington State Grants	3,908,166	3,759,513	3,816,589
US Department of Agriculture-Child Care Food Program	209,618	265,450	472,439
Program Income	(72,509)	58,621	19,200
Other Grants	0	4,582	0
Cash and In-Kind Contributions	10,601	0	0
TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE	9,821,532	10,343,653	10,614,876

Functional Expenses			
Personnel	6,335,656	6,869,961	7,421,414
Program Services	2,661,639	2,604,709	2,131,957
Management and General	1,140,136	1,287,070	1,199,323
TOTAL EXPENSES	10,137,431	10,761,740	10,752,695



Mid Valley



The Dalles



Stevenson



Stevenson



Country Club



Petersburg



Whitie Salmon



Tygh Valley



Goldendale



Klickitat

That's a wrap!

USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

All publications that mention USDA Child Nutrition Programs must include the following revised nondiscrimination statement:

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, pro-program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information re-quested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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Thank you

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Child and Adult Care Food Program



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES