



# Early Head Start 2023 Annual Report

**Thank you, Lisa!**



Lisa Bontje and her husband Norm have been longtime supporters of BrightSpark Early Learning Services. Lisa formerly served as a Board member, and she has since generously donated her incredible photography skills to help us bring the stories of the children, caregivers, providers, and communities we serve to life.

**Lisa has graciously captured and shared every image featured in this report, and we couldn't be more thankful for her time and talent!**

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## INTRODUCTION

# Phoebe & Rebecca's Message

Poet, memoirist, and activist Maya Angelou once wrote, “We need Joy as we need air. We need Love as we need water. We need each other as we need the Earth we share.”

As we reflect on the achievements and lessons over the past year, Angelou’s words resonate deeply. For us, the transition from Child Care Resources to BrightSpark Early Learning Services has been about rediscovering and recentering the Joy that we find in the work we do, and the Love that we have for the community we serve.

We officially became BrightSpark Early Learning Services in March of 2023. This new name came with a bold new look to match, with bright colors and playful shapes representing the happiness and creativity of the children we serve. The name BrightSpark itself represents how we see the spark of joy and promise that lives in every child, and how we are committed to providing the services and resources parents, caregivers, educators, and communities need to foster this flame and ignite positive change for generations to come.

Along with revisioning/revising our brand and image, we needed to align our mission as well. Our new mission is to nurture and sustain child-centered, antiracist early learning communities.

This mission serves as our North Star guiding the work that we do and the decisions that we make as we set out to create a world where every child has a loving and supportive start to life.

For over 30 years, our organization has worked to improve all children’s access to high-quality early learning experiences by engaging with families, caregivers, educators, and community members. The foundation of our work remains

our commitment to supporting families and providers in “traditional” child care settings, however, our programs have evolved and expanded to take a more holistic approach to setting children up for healthy, happy lives.

In recent years, we offered programs and services that include expanded subsidies for families struggling to afford care; programs designed specifically for Family, Friend, & Neighbor caregivers; advocacy and community mobilization efforts to advance much needed change in our early learning system; and consultations to support mental and social well-being for children, caregivers, and providers. Thus, we have moved from being an organization focused strictly on child care to one that provides a wide range of early learning services.

In addition to expanding the range of services and programs, in 2016 we expanded our geographic area of service to serve both King and Pierce Counties. Thanks to amazing partnerships with public entities like King County and City of Seattle and support from foundations, businesses, and individual donors, we have a secure foundation for our King County programs. With this knowledge and experience, we have created a strategic priority to replicate these same programs and funding sources in Pierce County so that our families and children all have the same opportunities for high-quality early learning experiences, support, and resources.

As we have enhanced the programs and services we are offering the community over the last several years, we have also invested time, energy, and resources into growing our organization’s internal understanding of and commitment to antiracism. We recognize that, generally and historically speaking, the early learning field is not an equitable one. In the United States particularly, child care is deeply rooted in the tradition of enslaved women of color caring for their oppressors’ children. This racism continues to echo throughout early learning today in the form of low wages, undervalued labor, and racially inequitable experiences for children, families, and providers of color. While we continue to work towards and advocate for change externally, we have a renewed energy around the work

and made our intentions explicit and direct; we are making change in systems and practices internally and externally.

Our evolution into BrightSpark didn’t happen overnight, but instead, was the cumulative result of many years of work. This process was intentional, reflective, and ultimately responsive to the changing needs of the early learning communities we serve. We cannot thank ALL those who participated in or supported us throughout this process enough; without you, this would not be our new reality.

As we continue writing this next chapter of our story, we are committed to living into the values that have guided us to where we are now: finding strength within one another; seeking continuous growth and improvement; and always honoring community strengths. For both those of you who have been with us for a while and those of you who have just joined us recently on our journey, we are truly honored to have your support and invite you to continue working alongside us in this next joyful, loving era as BrightSpark Early Learning Services.



**Phoebe Sade**  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER



**Rebecca Benavides**

2022-2023  
BOARD CHAIR



# Early Head Start Program Summary

Early Head Start (EHS) provides family-centered early learning services for low-income families with very young children - ages 0 to 4 - as well as support for the entire family. EHS partners with family child care centers to create curriculums, design activities, and offer community resources that promote the development of the children. This program also enables parents to fulfill their roles as parents and to move toward self-sufficiency.

EHS prioritizes affordability and flexibility, offering subsidized - and often free! - care for qualifying families. Many partner providers start earlier than 6:00 am and may even offer 24-hour care, which allows families to both benefit from EHS services while also continuing to work non-traditional hours or shift work.

Families work with EHS Specialists in addition to their providers to help them determine their long-term goals and direct them to community resources to help with

their overall physical, mental, and financial well-being.

### THESE RESOURCES INCLUDE:

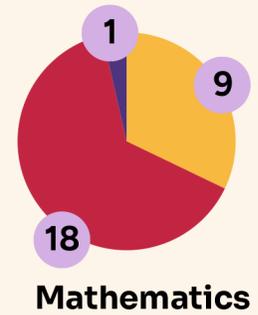
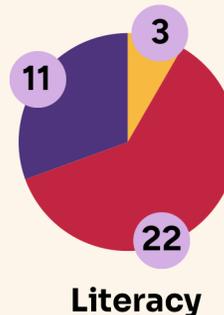
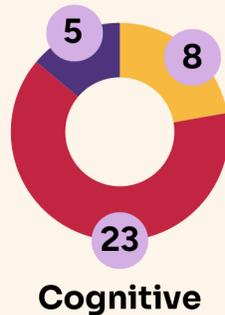
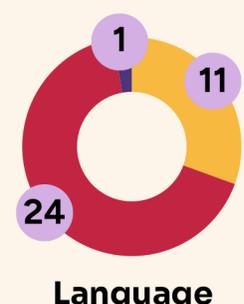
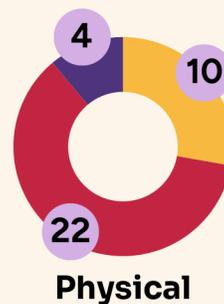
- Access to physical and mental health coverage and screenings
- Support with special needs and early intervention
- Support with long-term/sustainable housing
- Domestic violence prevention and intervention support
- Substance abuse intervention supports
- Job training, higher education, and work placement
- Financial education and stability support

In the 2022-23 fiscal year, BrightSpark's EHS team served the communities of Federal Way, Tacoma, Lakewood, Spanaway, and Graham, and offered care options in Spanish, Somali, and English.

## School Readiness

To the right are the number of children enrolled in EHS programs that fell below, met, and exceeded age-based expectations in the developmental areas:

- Fell below
- Met
- Exceeded





## Why Do Family Child Care Partners Value EHS?

"I wanted to be involved in EHS because over the years, I have heard great things about EHS from family and friends. I love how EHS supports the child and the family which is very important to me."



"EHS is needed in my community so that every child has a chance to thrive and have an opportunity for success. I love that EHS has allowed me to give back to my community by supplying essential needs to my families."



"This Federal Program is essential in the community because EHS not only supports low-income families, but is also a program that provides a wide range of resources to meet each family's unique needs, such as child care facilities equipped with quality providers and with strong foundation curriculum and assessment tools, housing, education, basic daily needs, and more."



"EHS will benefit the community by making sure no child is left behind, low-income families and children from diverse backgrounds offered support/resources needed."



"EHS is needed because many low-income families are suffering in silence and need someone to help advocate for their children."

## Impact Data

**In 2023, BrightSpark's EHS program served 76 total children & families.**

- ▶ 27% are below the Federal Poverty Level
- ▶ 43% qualify for Public Assistance
- ▶ 3% are in the Foster Care system
- ▶ 16% are experiencing houselessness
- ▶ 38% of children received medical/dental screenings.

### Eligibility & Capacity

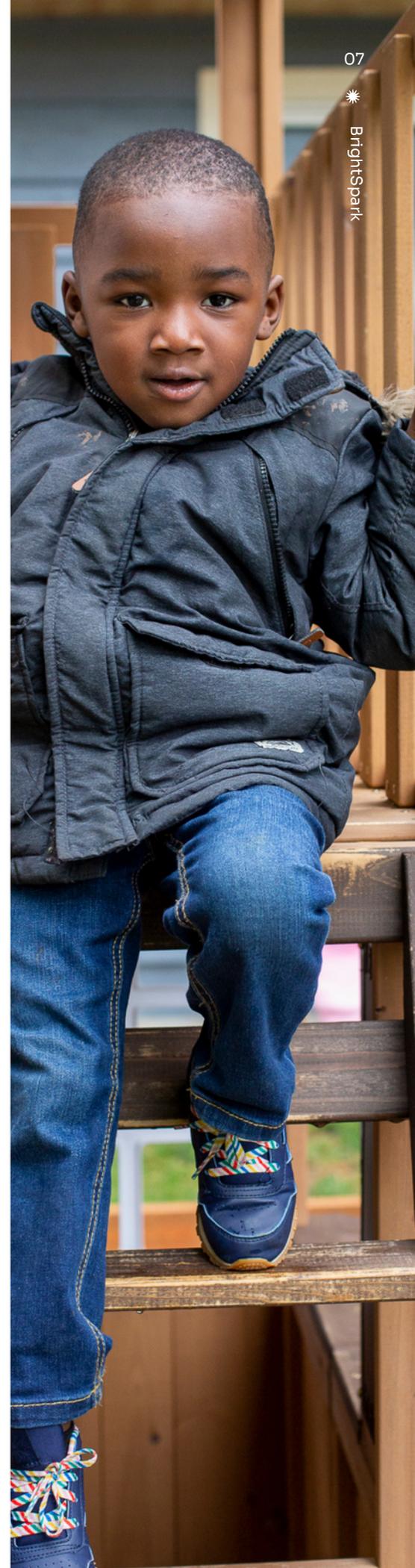
15% of children under 5 in King and Pierce Counties are living in poverty. Our service area is deemed Priority 2 by DCYF, meaning that we have a larger outstanding need for EHS slots. With 72 slots, we have the capacity to serve 1% of eligible children.

All verified eligible children who enrolled in EHS in 2022-23 were able to be placed with a partner Family Child Care Center without being on a waitlist.

*A federal program audit 2023-24 program returned no findings.*

### Family Engagement Activities

- ◆ 2 caregivers and 1 child enrolled in EHS attended the National Head Start Association Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C.
- ◆ BrightSpark's EHS team hosted 2 Nutrition Fairs for enrolled children.
- ◆ BrightSpark's EHS Policy Council hosted a Family Leadership Recruitment Event this summer.



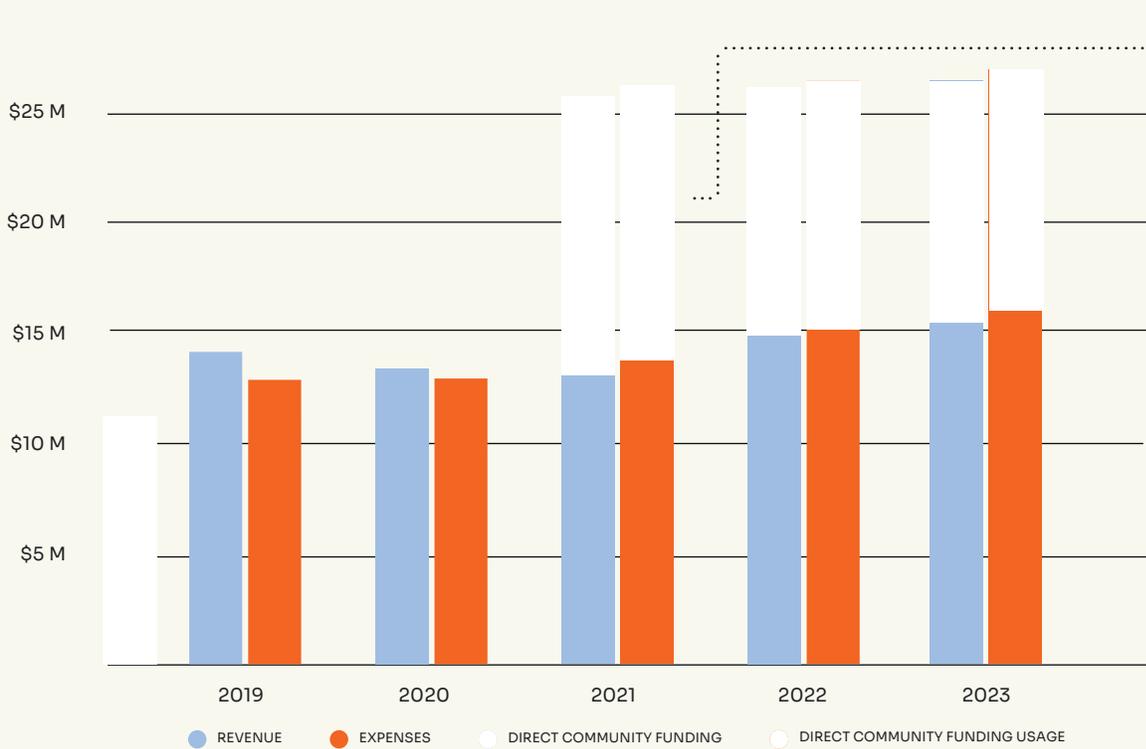


# Fast Facts & Figures

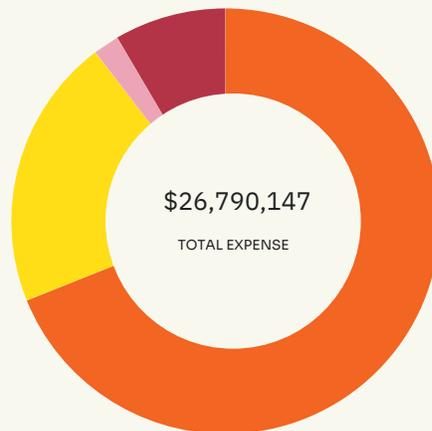
# 2022-2023 Financials

## DIRECT COMMUNITY FUNDING

BrightSpark Early Learning Services plays a critical role partnering with public entities to pass federal and local relief funds directly to child care providers and families.



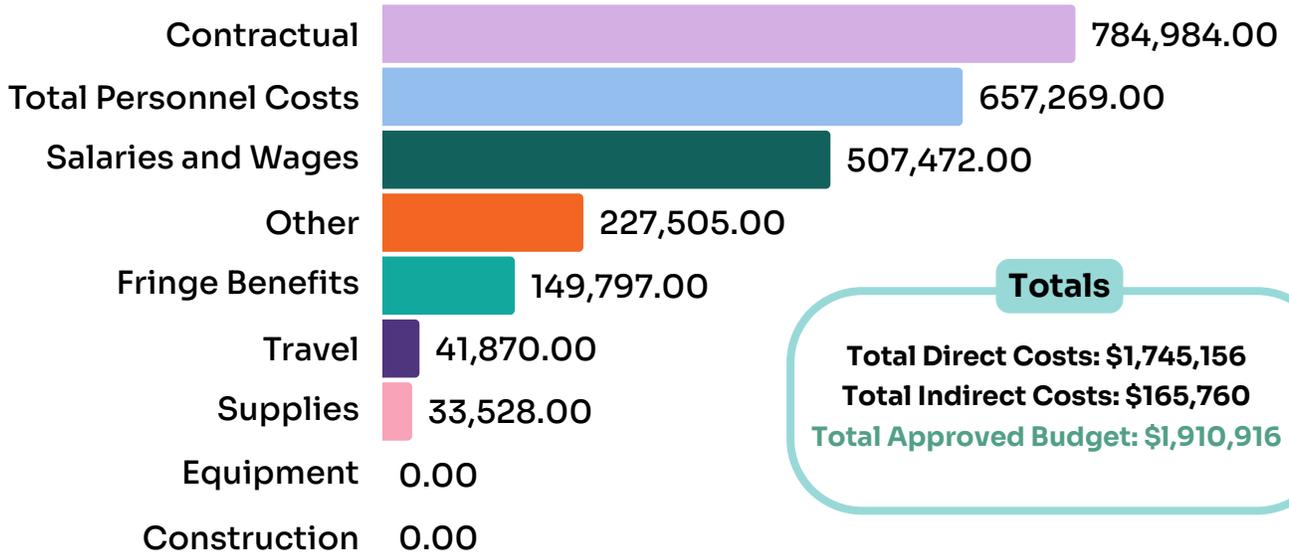
- \$25,274,710 GOVERNMENT GRANTS AND CONTRACTS
- \$365,459 FOUNDATION & CORPORATE GRANTS AND FUNDS
- \$359,320 INDIVIDUAL GIVING & SPECIAL EVENTS
- \$416,674 EARNED INCOME



- \$18,463,735 SERVICES FOR PROVIDERS
- \$5,542,563 SERVICES FOR FAMILIES
- \$524,918 FUNDRAISING
- \$2,258,931 MANAGEMENT & GENERAL

# 2022-2023 Proposed Budget

Budget Period 3/01/2022 - 2/28/2023

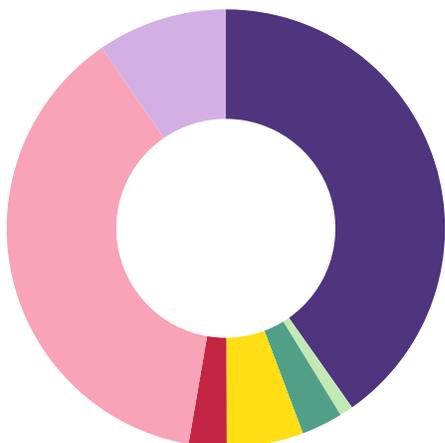


**Federal Share: \$1,910,916**

**Non-Federal Share: \$0**



## 2022-2023 Expenditures



- Personnel and Fringe \$632,924.79
- Supplies \$15,682.43
- Travel \$47,958.62
- Other CCR \$89,002.27
- T/TA 4-480-48022 \$43,869.91
- Contractual \$592,958.50
- Indirect Cost \$150,729.24

# By the Numbers

## HOMELESS NAVIGATION



**573 families /  
873 children**  
connected to care

## PLAY & LEARN



**1,249 caregivers**  
utilized BrightSpark's Kaleidoscope  
Play & Learn Program

## COACHING



**1,954 providers**  
supported by BrightSpark's Early  
Learning coaches

## COACHING



**34,045 children**  
served in total across King and  
Pierce counties

## 2022-2023 Fiscal Year

### PLAY & LEARN

Xin chào

habari

17 languages

available in KPL groups

### FAMILY, FRIEND & NEIGHBOR



400 caregivers

received supplies and grants from BrightSpark

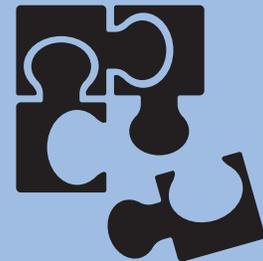
### SUBSIDIES



2,402 vouchers

for childcare were given to low income or homeless families

### SUBSIDIES



\$2,464,220.74

total subsidy support from vouchers for low income or homeless families

# Board of Directors

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Executive Committee - Chair  
Finance Committee - Member

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Executive Committee - Member  
Finance Committee - Member  
CEO Review Committee - Member

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Executive Committee - Member  
Advocacy Committee - Co-Chair  
Strategic Plan Committee - Chair

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Finance Committee - Chair  
Fund Development/Marketing  
Committee - Member

### Richard De Sam Lazaro

Executive Committee - Member  
Advocacy Committee - Member

### Vincent Duffy

Finance Committee – Member  
Advocacy Committee – Member  
CEO Review Committee – Member  
Early Head Start Governance Committee – Member

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### Carter Osborne

Executive Committee – Member  
Fund Development/Marketing Committee – Member  
Board Development Committee - Member

### Jill Pavlus

Executive Committee – Member  
Fund Development/Marketing Committee – Chair  
Early Head Start Governance Committee – Chair

### Christina Chan

Finance Committee - Member

### Soleil Boyd

### Page Perey

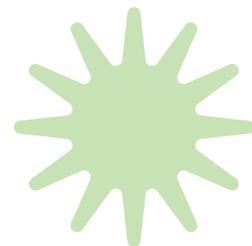
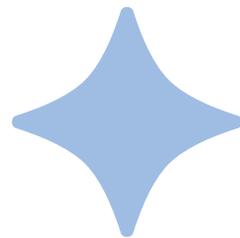
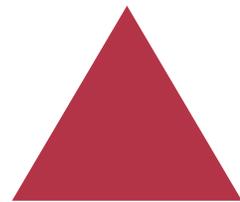
### Alicia Teel

### Tatiana Wetzler

Finance Committee - Member

### Laura Needler

Early Head Start Governance Committee - Member





BrightSpark could not do the work that we do without the contributions of our valued community of supporters.



If you are interested in supporting Brightspark, please scan the QR code to give today.