



Community Assessment Update 2008

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Introduction to the Agency and Community Assessment

About the Agency

Established in 1995, F.A.C.T., Inc. emerged as the local Head Start grantee serving the five south central Arkansas counties of Calhoun, Columbia, Dallas, Ouachita, and Union. In 1999, we were awarded a grant to operate the Early Head Start option, which opened in March 2001. Under this option, a seamless stream of services from birth to four for eligible families became a reality. For those needing home-based services, F.A.C.T., Inc. offers the home-based program in all five counties.

All centers, with the exception of McNeil Head Start, are located within/on in-kind donated facilities or premises through collaborative partnerships with individual local public school districts, and/or local community organizations. The administrative offices, located in the McMillan Building in El Dorado, require a lease and monthly rental.

A variety of preparation and serving methods meets the nutritional needs of the children enrolled in the center based option. The full commercial kitchens of Fairview, Magnolia East, and Fordyce Head Starts provide on-site meals. Children at centers located in the public school systems eat in the cafeteria.

All centers and the home-based programs undergo a myriad of assessments to ensure compliance with regulations, including an on-site comprehensive assessment by monitors from the Arkansas Division of Early Childhood Education, who utilize the ECERS-R rating scale to determine eligibility for Arkansas State Quality. Since its inception, all F.A.C.T., Inc. centers have maintained this certification. The Early Head Start program undergoes similar assessment for Quality.

F.A.C.T., Inc. is committed to excellence in the providing of early childhood education services to the 670 children in its 15 Head Start and Early Head Start centers as well as the 140 children in its 7 ABC and ABC/SS centers.

Agency Mission

To empower children and families!

Agency Philosophy

We believe that from birth, all children need early childhood development experiences that support their unique characteristics and provide love, warmth, and positive learning experiences. All families need encouragement and support from their community to achieve their own goals and provide a safe and nurturing environment for their young children.

How This Assessment Affects the Agency

We believe that providing the highest quality and most needed services to the people in the five county service area requires an in-depth knowledge of the activities, living situations, and needs of those people in the service area. The information contained in this Community Assessment is used throughout the agency to guide financial decisions and determine the application for grant funding, center locations, placement of slots within the centers, and other services made available to the children and families enrolled in the Head Start and Early Start program.

The Community Assessment Process

An in-depth Community Assessment is completed once every three years. In the intervening years, a brief update is completed.

Research is conducted in several areas to gain statistical information about the children and families in the F.A.C.T., Inc. service area, including racial and ethnic make-up, resources available, and disabilities. Information from families in the program is also gathered in order to find out the strengths and needs of Head Start and Early Head Start children and their families.

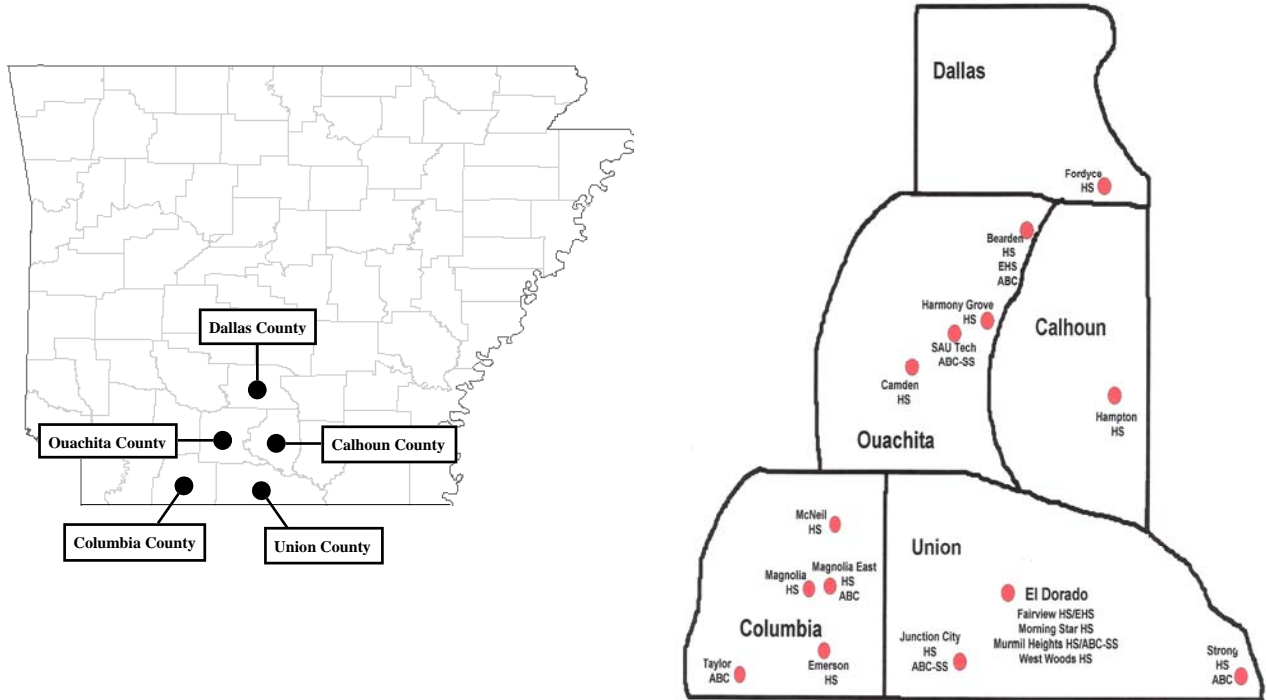
Information is gathered in a variety of ways from a variety of sources. The internet is a valuable tool in gathering the needed statistical information. Publications such as the Kids Count Data Book and the NIEER State of Preschool Report are used. And, lastly, interviews with various sources from members of the community to families in the program are conducted.

All of the information gathered is then organized into the report presented here, which is reviewed by the Community Assessment Committee and presented to the Board of Directors and Policy Council. The findings and areas of concern are identified and presented at the conclusion of the report in order to provide a definitive path for F.A.C.T., Inc. to take over the next three years in providing services to the children and families in the service area.

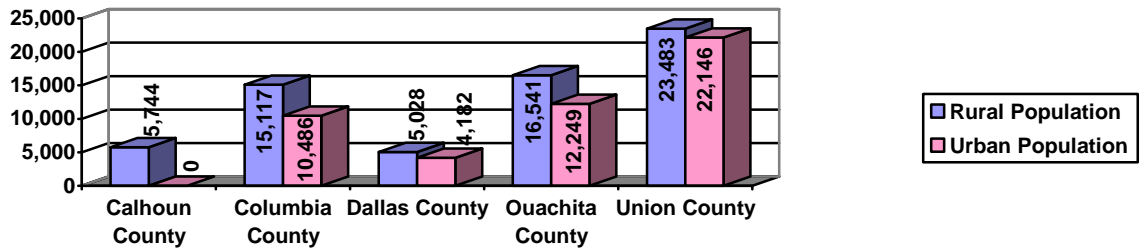
Service Area Data

Geography – NO CHANGE

The F.A.C.T., Inc. service area consists of five counties in south central Arkansas. These counties are Calhoun, Columbia, Dallas, Ouachita, and Union.



Rural/Urban Comparison

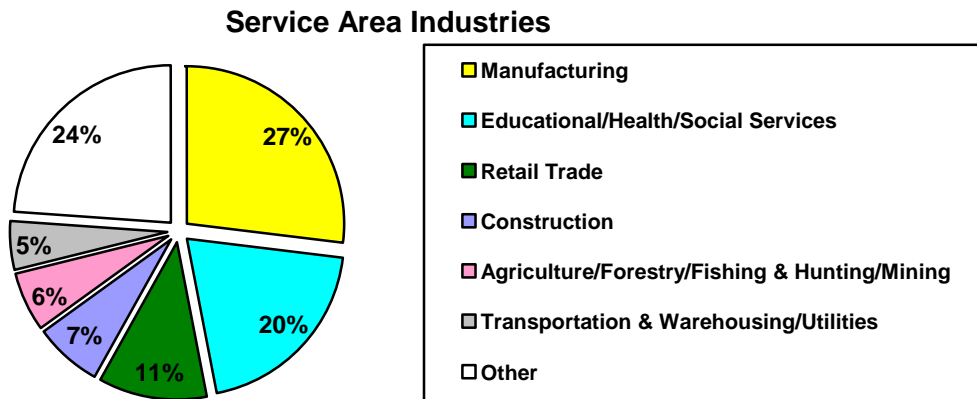


Note: For the F.A.C.T., Inc. service area, the urban areas are considered by the U.S. Census Bureau to be “urban clusters.” The term “urban cluster” is defined as “a densely settled territory that has at least 2,500 people but fewer than 50,000.” All other areas not fitting this description are considered to be rural.

Source: United States Census Bureau

Workforce – NO CHANGE

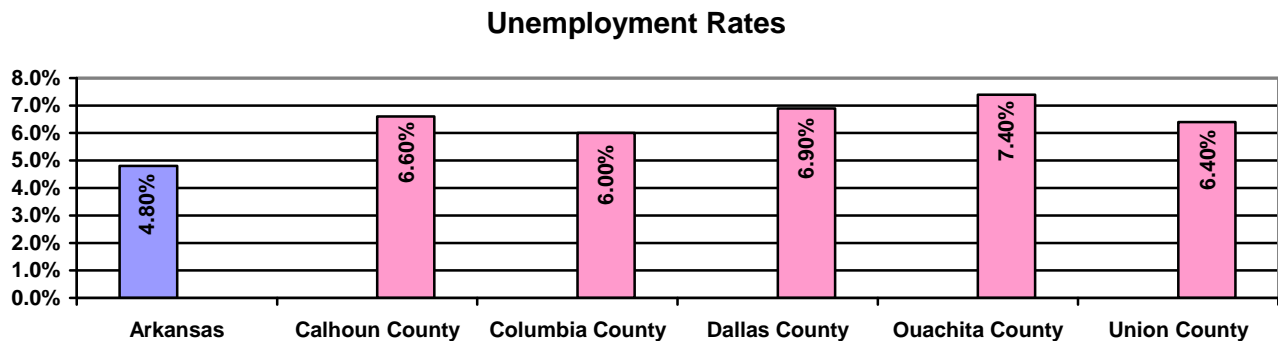
The F.A.C.T., Inc. service area is a largely rural area with almost 60% of the workforce in one of three industries: manufacturing (27%), educational/health/social services (20%), and retail trade (11%). Other industries in the area fall far below this number. The remainder of the workforce is divided among 10 other reported industries, including those listed below as well as wholesale trade, retail trade, information, finance/insurance/real estate, professional/scientific/management/administrative/waste management, arts/entertainment/recreation/accommodation/food services, public administration, and other services.



Source: United States Census Bureau

Unemployment

Unemployment rates for the F.A.C.T., Inc. service area exceed the rate for the state of Arkansas. Closings of major employers and lay-offs at other major employers creates large pockets of unemployed people, such as Prescolite (closed, Union County), International Paper (closed, Ouachita County), Cooper Tire & Rubber (lay-offs, Union County), High Capacity (closed, Union County).



Source: Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, United States Department of Labor

Unemployment

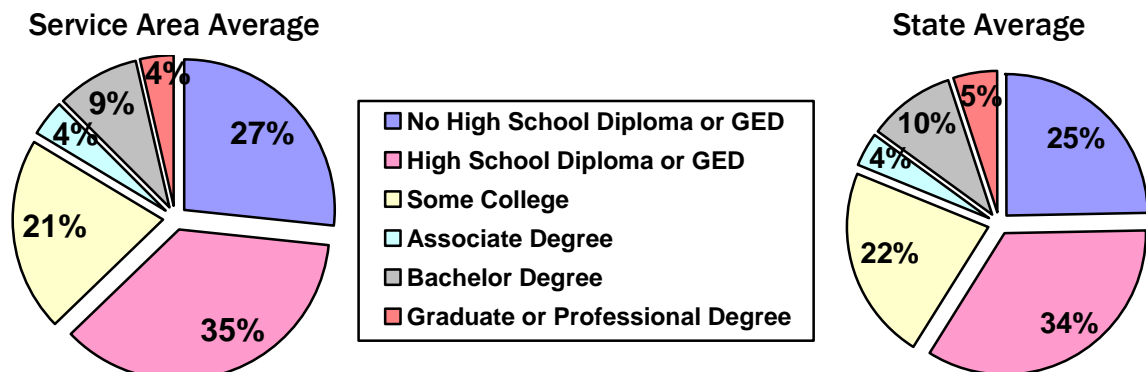
Updated unemployment rates show one-half of a percent or less of a change for the counties of Calhoun, Columbia, and Union. Dallas County rose eight-tenths of a percent and Ouachita County dropped 1.8%. With one of Union County's largest employers, Pilgrim's Pride, on the verge of closing, a large increase in the unemployment rate for that area is very likely in the upcoming year.

County	2006	2008 (Average Jan-Apr)	Change
Arkansas	5.3%	5.4%	0.1%
Calhoun	7.1%	7.0%	-0.1%
Columbia	6.2%	6.7%	0.5%
Dallas	6.7%	7.5%	0.8%
Ouachita	8.2%	6.4%	-1.8%
Union	6.8%	6.3%	-0.5%

Source: Discover Arkansas

Educational Attainment – NO CHANGE

Although very similar, the average educational attainment for the service is below the state average in all areas.

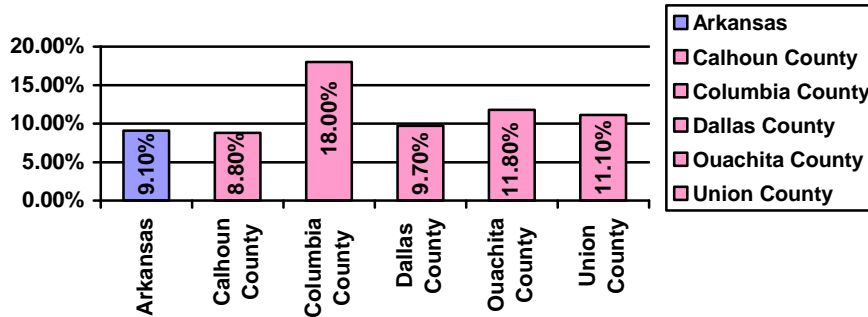


Source: United States Census Bureau

Poverty & Hunger – NO CHANGE

The percent of families with children that are living below 100% of poverty in the F.A.C.T., Inc. service area varies from just below the state average to almost double the state average.

Families with Children Living Below 100% of Poverty



Source: United States Census Bureau

In the state of Arkansas, 15.5% of all families with children under age 6 are food insecure (compared to 17.5% nationally); 4.7% of those are food insecure with hunger (compared to 3.6% nationally). Also, in the state of Arkansas, 39.6% of low income families with children under age 6 in the nation are food insecure; 10% of those are food insecure with hunger.

Note: "Food insecure" is defined as not having access, at all times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members.

Source: United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service

Population

There are 7,148 children under the age of 5 in the F.A.C.T., Inc. service area. Of those, 2,021 (or 28.27%) are HS eligible.

Population by County

	Total Population	Population Under Age 5	HS Eligible Population
Calhoun County	5,744	305	54
Columbia County	25,603	1,568	464
Dallas County	9,210	565	126
Ouachita County	28,790	1,768	588
Union County	45,629	2,942	789
TOTAL	114,976	7,148	2,021

Source: United States Census Bureau

Population Comparison

	Total Population 1990	Total Population 2000	Difference	Percent Lost
Calhoun County	5,826	5,744	-82	1.41%
Columbia County	25,691	25,603	-88	0.34%
Dallas County	9,614	9,210	-404	4.2%
Ouachita County	30,574	28,790	-1784	5.84%
Union County	46,719	45,629	-1090	2.33%
TOTAL	118,424	114,976	-3448	2.91%

Source: United States Census Bureau

Population

There is little updated information available for this section of the Community Assessment. Most figures are based on the United States Decennial Census, the last of which was completed in 2000. The U.S. Census Bureau is implementing a program called the American Community Survey, the purpose of which is to provide data on communities each year. However, this survey is in its infancy and is currently only being used for heavily populated areas. Until the survey is used nation-wide for all communities, rural areas such as the one served by Families and Children Together, Inc. must depend on information provided by the U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census and population change estimates.

The United States Census Bureau released 2007 estimates and from that it is noted that while the state of Arkansas has seen an almost 1% increase in population, all five counties in the F.A.C.T. service area continue to decrease in population. It is hoped that the El Dorado Promise scholarship program will create an influx of people to the El Dorado school district, which will then be reflected in an increased population for Union County.

County	2006 Estimate	2007 Estimate	Change
Arkansas	2,809,111	2,834,797	0.9%
Calhoun	5,565	5,535	-0.5%
Columbia	24,635	24,351	-1.2%
Dallas	8,372	8,249	-1.5%
Ouachita	26,344	26,068	-1.0%
Union	43,580	43,230	-0.8%

Source: United States Census Bureau

Household Composition

	Total # of Households	# of Married Couple Households with Children	# of Single Parent Households with Children
Calhoun County	2317	538	185
Columbia County	9981	2003	1006
Dallas County	3519	716	326
Ouachita County	11613	2336	1242
Union County	17989	3859	1930

Source: United States Census Bureau

Racial Composition and Languages of the Service Area

Racial Composition of Total Population – NO CHANGE

	Calhoun County	Columbia County	Dallas County	Ouachita County	Union County
White	73.96%	61.62%	56.38%	59.44%	65.64%
African American	23.36%	35.95%	40.64%	38.5%	31.87%
Hispanic	1.5%	1.05%	1.92%	0.73%	1.14%
Other	1.18%	1.38%	1.06%	1.33%	1.35%

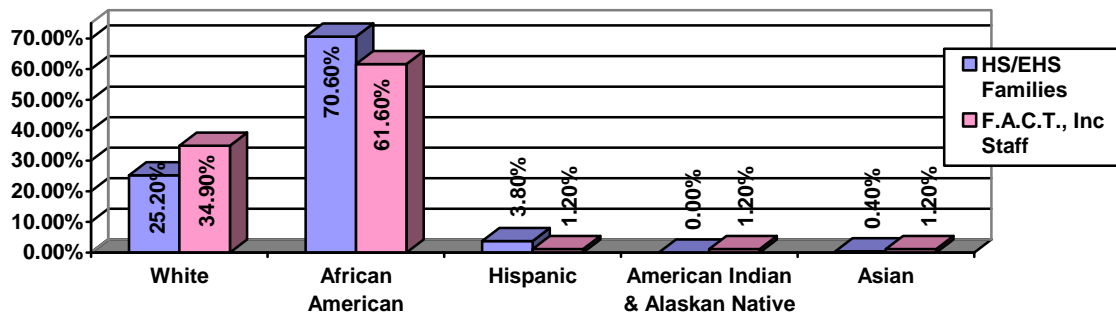
Source: United States Census Bureau

Racial Composition of Head Start Eligible Population – NO CHANGE

	Calhoun County	Columbia County	Dallas County	Ouachita County	Union County
White	18.52%	23.71%	8.73%	31.29%	26.74%
African American	81.48%	71.55%	81.75%	65.65%	71.48%
Hispanic				.17%	
Other		4.74%	9.52%	2.89%	1.78%

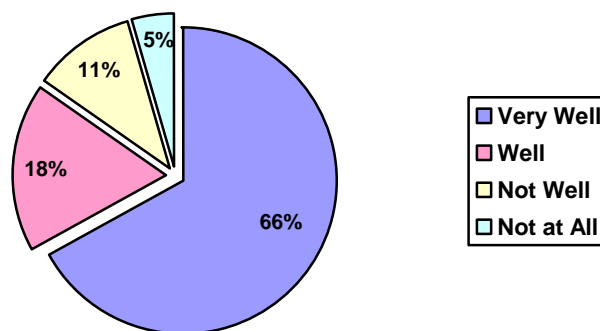
Source: United States Census Bureau

Racial Composition of HS/EHS Families & F.A.C.T. Child Development Staff – NO CHANGE



Source: United States Census Bureau, Program Information Reports for 2005-2006 Program Year (Head Start & Early Head Start)

Ability to Speak English (of those whose first language is not English) – NO CHANGE



Source: United States Census Bureau

Language Spoken at Home by County & by HS/EHS Families - NO CHANGE

	Calhoun County	Columbia County	Dallas County	Ouachita County	Union County	HS/EHS Families
English	97.75%	97.14%	96.51%	97.73%	97.49%	97.61%
Spanish	1.25%	1.95%	2.87%	1.64%	1.64%	2.26%
French	0.52%	0.34%	0.15%	0.18%	0.18%	
French Creole			0.13%		0.03%	
Italian				0.03%	0.01%	
Portuguese					0.01%	
German	0.13%	0.12%	0.18%	0.1%	0.13%	
Other West Germanic Languages	0.13%	0.01%		0.01%	0.02%	
Scandinavian Languages		0.02%		0.01%	0.02%	
Russian		0.01%		0.04%	0.01%	
Polish				0.01%		
Serbo-Croatian		0.04%			0.03%	
Other Slavic Languages					0.02%	
Persian		0.02%		0.04%		
Hindi				0.02%	0.07%	
Other Indic Languages		0.02%			0.02%	
Other Indo-European Languages		0.02%			0.01%	
Chinese			0.16%		0.01%	
Japanese		0.02%		0.01%		
Korean		0.01%			0.06%	
Laotian					0.13%	
Vietnamese					0.01%	
Other East Asian Languages						0.13%
Tagalog		0.02%		0.1%	0.02%	
Other Pacific Island Languages		0.01%			0.03%	
Other Native North American Languages	.06%	0.03%		0.01%	0.02%	
Arabic	.16%			0.04%	0.04%	
African Languages		0.21%		0.03%		

Source: United States Census Bureau

Community Resources, Disability, Medical, and Other Family Information

F.A.C.T., Inc. Community Partners by Category – NO CHANGE

Category	# of Partners	Category	# of Partners
Adult Education	12	Child Care	11
Dental	13	Emergency Assistance	16
Employment	19	Health/Medical	23
Mental Health	2	Other (such as housing, legal, and parenting assistance)	13

All community resources are readily available and easily accessible to families. Through the referrals by staff and partnership agreements, the Community Partners and F.A.C.T., Inc. provide a seamless network of services. A complete list of the agency’s Community Partners can be found in the F.A.C.T., Inc. Resource Guide that is given to each family at the beginning of the school year.

Source: Resource Guide

Other Child Development & Childcare Programs

There are 98 other licensed childcare programs in the service area (see attached list) that are available to Head Start eligible children. Of those, only 18 are Quality approved by the state of Arkansas. All of the centers operated by Families and Children Together, Inc. are Quality approved.

County	# of other licensed childcare facilities	# Quality approved
Calhoun	3	1
Columbia	21	4
Dallas	7	0
Ouachita	35	6
Union	32	7

Source: Arkansas Department of Health & Human Services

Head Start Eligible Children

Using a formula created by Janet Buckley and J. Christopher Watkins from the training and technical assistance service division of Western Kentucky University to perform the calculations, below are the number of eligible Head Start children for the service area.

Formula: $\frac{\text{\# of children living below poverty level}}{\text{total \# of age groups available}} \times \text{\# of age groups served} \times 85\% \text{ market saturation}$

County	Total # of HS eligible children	# of children served by F.A.C.T., Inc.	# of children served by other facilities
Calhoun	40	35	5
Columbia	265	109	156
Dallas	81	46	35
Ouachita	274	147	127
Union	430	307	123

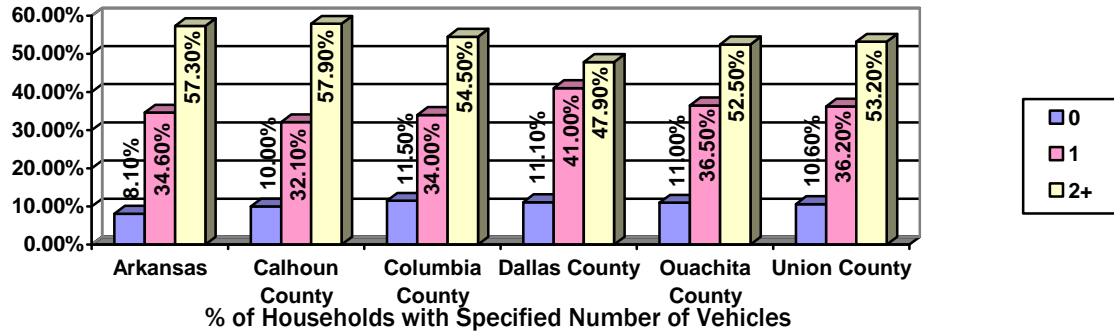
Source: United States Census Bureau; Northwest Arkansas Head Start; F.A.C.T., Inc. April 2008 Enrollment Report

Community Services Received by HS/EHS Families – NO CHANGE

Service Received	% of Families Receiving Service
Emergency/crisis intervention (addressing immediate need for food, clothing, or shelter)	15.5%
Housing assistance (subsidies, utilities, repairs, etc.)	4.8%
Transportation assistance	2.8%
Mental health	28.7%
English as a second language training	0.1%
Adult education	5.1%
Job training	10.1%
Substance abuse prevention or treatment	0.1%
Child abuse and neglect	0.9%
Domestic violence	0.3%
Health education (including prenatal education)	5.5%
Assistance to families of incarcerated individuals	0.1%
Parenting education	3.7%
Marriage education	0.4%
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	7.5%

Source: Program Information Reports for 2005-2006 Program Year (Head Start & Early Head Start)

Vehicles Available Per Household – NO CHANGE



Source: United States Census Bureau

Means of Transportation to Work – NO CHANGE

Means of Transportation	% of Workers Using Specified Mean of Transportation					
	Arkansas	Calhoun County	Columbia County	Dallas County	Ouachita County	Union County
Drove Alone	80.0	80.2	80.5	75.2	81.0	83.3
Carpooled	14.1	14.6	11.4	16.8	13.7	12.1
Public Transportation	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.1
Walked	1.9	1.4	4.2	4.5	1.7	1.9
Other	1.0	2.5	1.7	1.7	1.2	1.0
Worked at Home	2.6	1.0	1.6	1.4	1.8	1.6

Source: United States Census Bureau

Incarcerated Parents

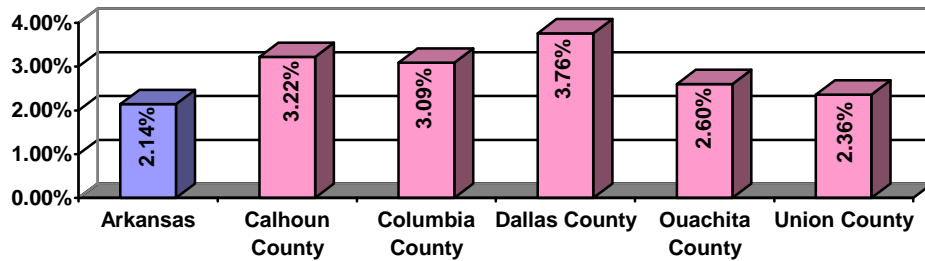
Nationally, there are an estimated 721,500 State and federal prisoners who are parents to 1,498,800 children. 22% of those children are under the age of 5. 62% of State prisoners and 84% of Federal prisoners are incarcerated more than 100 miles from their children. 20% of State prisoners and 8% of Federal prisoners report never having any contact with their children while incarcerated. The most common form of contact is by mail or telephone (both at 58%). **Of the children in the F.A.C.T., Inc. program, 14 of the incarcerated parents requested that the agency help maintain contact. Records were not kept on how many incarcerated parents were offered the option of maintaining contact with their children; however it is estimated by the Family & Community Partnerships Coordinator that approximately 25 incarcerated parents were contacted.**

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren – NO CHANGE

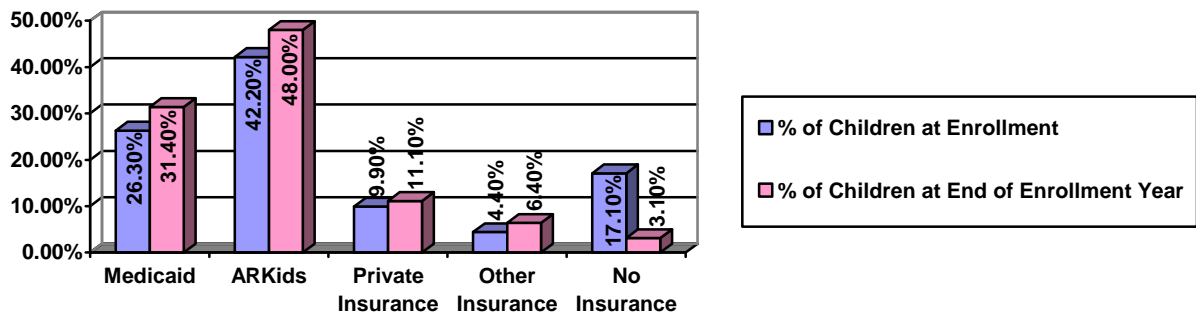
In all counties, the percent of households in which grandparents are responsible for their own grandchildren is higher than the state average.

Percent of Households with Grandparents Responsible for Own Grandchildren



Source: United States Census Bureau, Children’s Defense Fund

HS/EHS Children with Insurance – NO CHANGE



Source: Program Information Reports for 2005-2006 Program Year (Head Start & Early Head Start)

Medical/Dental Information – NO CHANGE

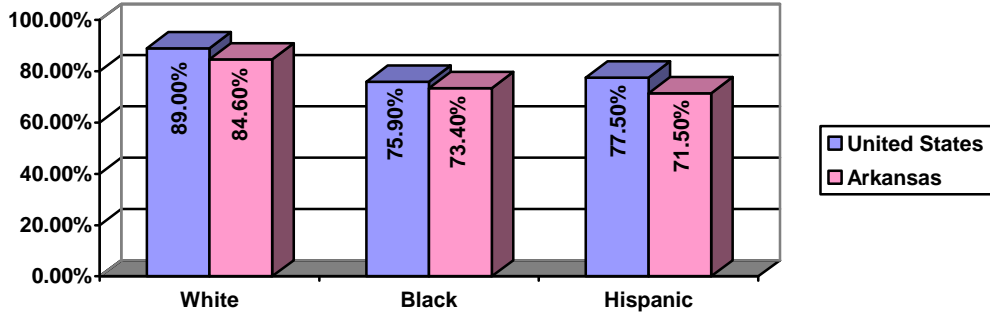
The entire counties of Calhoun, Columbia, Dallas, and Ouachita are designated as medically underserved by the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services; Union County is only partially designated as medically underserved.

Medical/Dental Care Before and After Enrollment

	% of children at enrollment	% of children at end of enrollment year
HS/EHS children with an ongoing source of continuous and accessible, routine, preventive, and acute medical care	81.1%	100%
HS/EHS children determined by a health care professional to be up-to-date on all immunizations appropriate for their age	74.1%	84.3%
HS/EHS children with an ongoing source of continuous and accessible, routine, preventive, and acute dental care	79.0%	100%

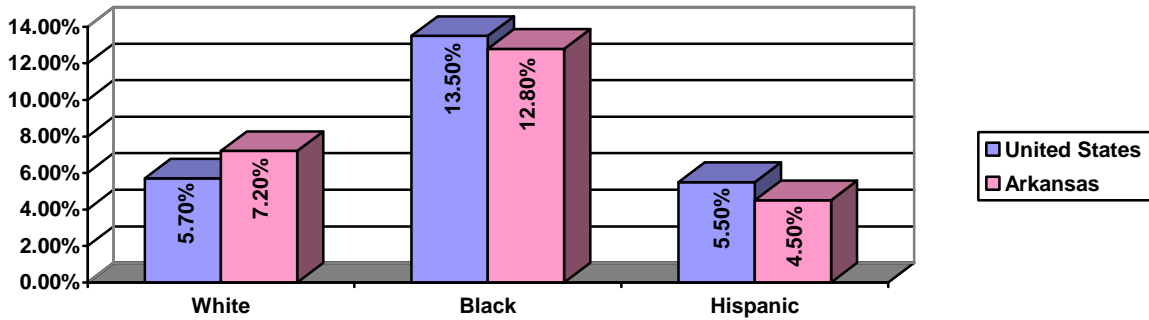
Source: Program Information Reports for 2005-2006 Program Year (Head Start & Early Head Start), Administration for Children & Families Performance Indicators 2005-2006

Percent of Arkansans Receiving Prenatal Care - NO CHANGE



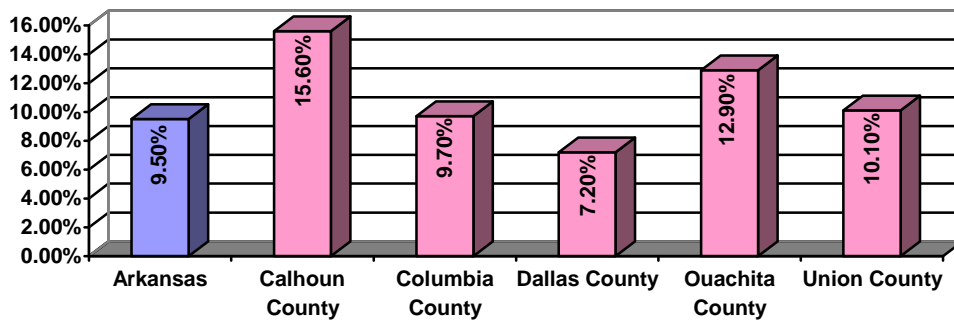
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation State Health Facts

Infant Death Rate for Arkansas - NO CHANGE



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation State Health Facts

Low Birth Weight Rate - NO CHANGE



Source: Community-Level Information on Kids

Mental Health Information – NO CHANGE

Number of enrolled children who were served by the mental health professionals in the following ways during the enrollment year:

- Mental health professionals consulted with program staff 20
- Mental health professionals consulted with parent/guardian 7
- Mental health professionals provided individual assessment 3
- Mental health professional made a referral for services 3

Source: Program Information Reports for 2005-2006 Program Year (Head Start & Early Head Start)

Number of HS/EHS Children with Disabilities – NO CHANGE

Number of children determined to have a disability prior to enrollment: 79

Number of children determined to have a disability during the program year: 113

Total number of children determined to have a disability at the end of the program year: 192

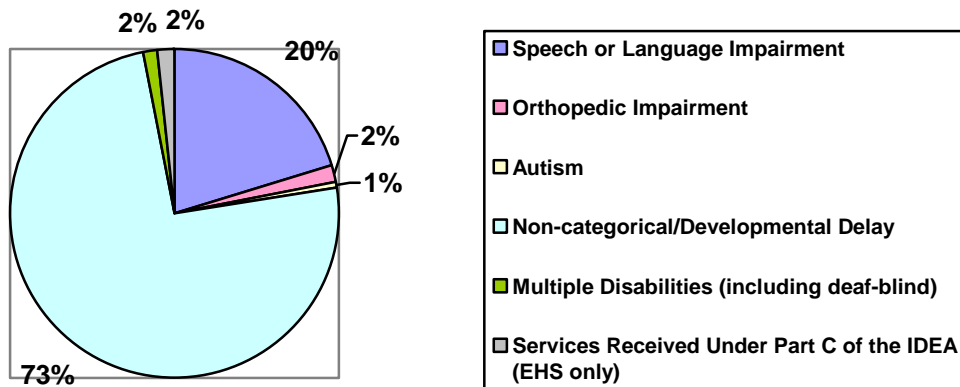
Source: Program Information Reports for 2005-2006 Program Year (Head Start & Early Head Start)

Number of Children with Disabilities

Disability	Calhoun County	Columbia County	Dallas County	Ouachita County	Union County
Sensory	5	13	6	10	37
Physical	9	9	5	14	14
Mental	25	62	57	88	137
Self-Care	4	1	2	3	2
Two or more of the above disabilities	6	23	15	49	49
TOTAL	49	108	85	164	239

Source: United States Census Bureau

Diagnosed Disabilities in HS/EHS Children – NO CHANGE



Source: Program Information Reports for 2005-2006 Program Year (Head Start & Early Head Start)

Disability Service Providers

Below are the number of disability service providers for each county served by F.A.C.T., Inc.

Calhoun County	Columbia County	Dallas County	Ouachita County	Union County
7	9	9	12	8

Source: Clark County Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services

Parent Survey

F.A.C.T., Inc. conducted a survey this year to gauge the parent's feelings about the agency and the services provided. Below are the results.

	Father	Mother	Both Parents	Guardian	Other
Survey completed by	5%	73%	13%	3%	5%

	White	Hispanic	Black/African American	Native American	Asian/Pacific Islander	Other
Race	30%	3%	65%	0%	0%	2%

	Yes	No
1. The location of my Head Start center was convenient for my family's participation.	98%	2%
2. The Head Start program provided transportation for my child.	30%	70%
3. Information provided by Head Start included materials specifically for fathers.	78%	17%
4. The current 6-hour/day, 5-day/week, 9-month/year program met the needs of my family.	93%	7%
5. Our family's needs would be better served with a 12-month Head Start program.	40%	60%
6. Our family's needs would be better served with an 8 hour per day Head Start program.	70%	30%

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Don't know
7. I am satisfied with the Head Start services my family receives from:				
a. Classroom staff	100%	0	0	0
b. Transportation (for those receiving transportation)	43%	22%	12%	13%
c. Family service providers	92%	5%	0	2%
d. Overall Head Start program	97%	0	0	2%
8. Head Start has helped my child get ready for school by:				
a. Becoming more independent	98%	2%	0	0
b. Learning basic concepts in language	97%	2%	0	0
c. Learning basic concepts in math	83%	12%	2%	2%
d. Learning to share and cooperate	97%	2%	0	0
9. Head Start gives my child:				
a. A safe place to learn	100%	0	0	0
b. A clean environment	100%	0	0	0
10. Head Start provides me with quality information through:				
a. Newsletters	97%	3%	0	0
b. Parent handbook	97%	2%	0	0
c. Parent/Teacher conferences and home visits	100%	0	0	0

d. Monthly calendars	97%	2%	0	0
e. Home Visits with family service providers	92%	5%	0	2%
f. Flyers and other information announcing upcoming events	98%	2%	0	0
11. Head Start has given me information about how to be involved with:				
a. Policy Council	85%	10%	2%	2%
b. Classroom volunteering	98%	2%	0	0
c. Family gatherings	93%	5%	0	0
d. Fatherhood events	87%	5%	7%	0
12. Head Start has provided me with informational support regarding:				
a. Child development	98%	0	2%	0
b. Community resources	88%	10%	2%	0
c. Personal relationships	93%	3%	0	0
d. Disabilities	80%	18%	0	0
e. Mental health	82%	15%	0	0
f. Health/dental	97%	3%	0	0
13. Head Start has helped me to:				
a. Define my own life goals	78%	22%	0	0
b. Accomplish and pursue my goals	78%	18%	2%	2%
c. Understand my role as the primary educator for my child(ren)	95%	3%	0	0
14. My child's teacher:				
a. Worked with me to plan my child's learning and development	98%	2%	0	0
b. Planned activities around my child's individual needs	92%	8%	0	0
c. Helped me have a better understanding of my child's social/emotional development	98%	2%	0	0
15. When I requested help for my child's social/emotional development, it was:				
a. Delivered in a timely manner	88%	8%	0	2%
b. Useful and successful	90%	7%	0	2%
c. Supportive of my family's values	90%	7%	0	2%
16. Head Start centers are friendly and inviting for fathers	98%	0	0	2%
17. Head Start services have helped me:				
a. Feel more comfortable talking to my child's health care provider	87%	8%	3%	2%
b. Better understand the importance of early dental care	93%	7%	0	0
c. Use more effective techniques for guiding my child's behavior	95%	5%	0	0
d. Be more aware of the relationships I have with my child	98%	2%	0	0
e. Understand the importance of reading to my child as much as possible	100%	0	0	0
18. Head Start has provided me with information on disabilities. (If NO, go to question 20).	Yes 42%	No 58%		
19. When I requested help for my child's disabilities, the services were:				
a. Delivered in a timely manner	92%	8%	0	0
b. Useful and successful	92%	8%	0	0
c. Supportive of my family's values	92%	8%	0	0
20. My child attends child care before or after Head Start	Yes 30%	No 70%		
21. There was a change in the people working with my child and family this year (teachers, assistant teachers, bus driver, family service providers) (If NO, go to question 23).	Yes 32%	No 68%		

	Negative	Somewhat Negative	None	Somewhat Positive	Positive
22. This change had what type of effect on my family's experience	0%	5%	37%	21%	37%

	My Child's Disabilities	Education/ Job Training	Employment	Financial	Housing	Transportation	Marital/ Personal	Medical/ Dental	Mental Health	Other
23. Family's biggest stressors	3%	10%	20%	45%	8%	15%	12%	17%	2%	10%

Findings

The service area of Families and Children Together, Inc. is a primarily rural area with above average unemployment and poverty rates and below average educational attainment. A large segment (over 25%) of the population is employed in the manufacturing industry. With employment of such a large percentage of the population dependent on one industry, fluctuations in this area can cause dramatic changes in the unemployment rates of a particular county.

Only 17% of the population graduated from a higher learning institution. Twenty-seven percent of the population did not graduate from high school or earn a GED.

The population in general is decreasing. The general population is, on average, 63% white, 34% African American, 1% Hispanic, and of other descent. The population of Head Start eligible children, on average, is 22% white, 74% African American, and of other descent (the current average population of Head Start eligible Hispanic children is less than 1%). The racial composition of the families enrolled in the F.A.C.T., Inc. program as compared to the racial composition of the staff is evenly balanced. Among those households with children, over one-third are single parent households. The number of households in which grandparents are raising their own grandchildren is higher than the state average in all counties. Nationally, there is a significant number of children with incarcerated parents.

Current numbers reported on the ability of families in the area to speak English detail that 84% of the population whose first language is not English can speak English well or very well and that 97% of the population speaks English at home.

The entire service area, with the exception of a portion of Union County, is designated as medically underserved. This is reflected in the fewer than average number of women receiving prenatal care and the higher than average incidence of low birth weight.

With approximately 100 Community Partners, the agency refers families to help in various areas such as education, employment, and job training, and help with medical and dental concerns. Community resources are readily available and easily accessible to families. Partnership agreements ensure a seamless network of services.

Due to the rural nature of the service area, there is little transportation available to the general public. What is available is mainly for special needs persons. Taxicabs are available on a very limited basis, but are an expense that most families cannot afford. Compared to state figures, fewer households in the service area have vehicles available to them.

F.A.C.T., Inc. also assists families in the program in finding affordable health insurance for their children. Of the 17.1% of enrolled children without health insurance at the beginning of the program year, only 3.1% were without health insurance at the end of the program year. Of the enrolled children diagnosed with disabilities, 73% were found to have developmental delays, 20% had a speech or language impairment, and the remaining 7% had orthopedic impairments, autism, multiple disabilities, or were EHS children receiving services under Part C of IDEA. (Figures are per the F.A.C.T., Inc. Program Information Report)

Findings

- The unemployment rate for all counties still averages 1.38% higher than the state rate.
- The possibility of the closing of one of Union County's largest employers (over 1600 employees), Pilgrim's Pride, is of major concern in the area.
- As has been seen in the last several years, the population in the service area continues to slowly decline at an average rate of 1% per year. While this is not causing a major problem at this time, there is the potential for recruitment problems in the future.
- The city of El Dorado is hopeful that it will see an increase in population due to families moving to the area because of the El Dorado Promise scholarship program.
- Information on other childcare programs was not included in the 2006 Community Assessment, but is included in this update. The competition faced by F.A.C.T., Inc. is great. In total, there are 98 other licensed childcare programs in the service area that are available to serve the 446 Head Start eligible children not served by F.A.C.T., Inc. Of those 98 programs, only 18 are Quality approved by the state, while all of F.A.C.T., Inc.'s centers are Quality approved.
- The agency conducted a parent survey this year and found that in all areas, except transportation, parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the services provided.
- The two largest family stressors are financial (45%) and employment (20%).

Areas of Concern

- Higher than average unemployment and poverty rates
- High rate of single parent households
- High rate of households in which grandparents are raising their own grandchildren
- Significant number of children with incarcerated parents
- Low education attainment of population
- Increasing Hispanic population
- Medically underserved area resulting in problems such as fewer than average number of women receiving prenatal care & higher than average number of low birth weight newborns and high incidence of non-categorical/developmental delay disabilities among children in the program

There are problems in the community that are of concern to F.A.C.T., but over which the agency has no control. These include:

- Population decrease
- Lack of availability of public transportation due to rural service area

Sources

Publications & Reports

- **2008 Community Assessment; Northwest Arkansas Head Start**
- Administration for Children & Families Performance Indicators 2005-2006
- **April 2008 Enrollment Report; Families & Children Together, Inc.**
- *Five Steps to Community Assessment Workbook*; Academy for Educational Development
- *Getting Ready for School: Children, Families, Schools, Communities*; Arkansas School Readiness Initiative Team
- *Kids Count Data Book*; The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- **Parent Survey, Families & Children Together, Inc.**
- Program Information Reports for 2005-2006 Program Year (Head Start & Early Head Start); Families & Children Together, Inc.
- *Resource Guide*; Families & Children Together, Inc.
- *The State of Preschool*; National Institute for Early Education Research

Websites

- Arkansas Department of Economic Development; <http://www.1800arkansas.com>
- Arkansas Department of Health & Human Services; <http://www.healthyarkansas.com>
- Arkansas Department of Workforce Services; <http://www.state.ar.us/esd>
- Bureau of Justice Statistics; <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs>
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities; <http://www.cbpp.org>
- CFED; <http://www.cfed.org>
- Children's Defense Fund; <http://www.childrensdefense.org>
- Community-Level Information on Kids; <http://www.aecf.org/cgi-bin/cliiks.cgi>
- **Discover Arkansas, <http://www.discoverarkansas.net>**
- Fedstats; <http://www.fedstats.gov>
- Health Professional Shortage Areas; <http://hpsafind.hrsa.gov/HPSASearch.aspx>
- Kids Count Census Data Online; <http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/census>
- KidsHealth; <http://www.kidshealth.org>
- National Child Care Information Center; <http://www.nccic.org>
- National Institute for Early Education Research; <http://nieer.org>
- Kaiser Family Foundation State Health Facts; <http://www.statehealthfacts.org>
- United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service; <http://www.ers.usda.gov>
- United States Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics; <http://www.bls.gov>
- United States Census Bureau; <http://www.census.gov>

Other

- **Clark County Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services**