

# 2024 Community Needs Assessment

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Geminus Corporation  
Head Start, Early Head Start, and  
Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership

September 2024



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# 1. Introduction

Every five years Geminus completes a comprehensive community needs assessment to understand the needs of the community and align their Head Start programs and services. Annually for the remaining four years, Geminus reviews and updates the community needs assessment to identify any changes in community data that may inform its Early Head Start (EHS), Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP), and Head Start (HS) federally funded grant programs and services in Lake and Porter counties.

Geminus contracted with Transform Consulting Group (TCG) for assistance in completing the five-year community needs assessment and annual community assessment updates. These reports will help Geminus in strengthening its partnerships within the community, managing its programs and services, and providing high-quality comprehensive early childhood education services for children and families. The community needs assessment was also used to help inform a strategic plan including five-year goals.

The 2024 update report includes introductory information in the first three sections, and community needs assessment data in the following main sections:

1. **Geminus Head Start Overview** - highlights key geographic areas served, program locations, enrollment, and family services provided.
2. **Community Needs** - provides the most recent data available regarding targeted geographic service delivery areas for access, quality, and workforce, including details on population, demographics, disabilities, health, and social services for children and families.
3. **Early Care and Education Access** - provides the most recent data available regarding early childhood education services in Lake and Porter counties.
4. **Stakeholder Feedback** - includes feedback from parents/guardians.

## 2. Executive Summary

In reviewing the public data to inform the 2023-24 Geminus Head Start Community Needs Assessment, TCG identified a number of key findings likely to inform organizational strategy and decision making in the coming years. These are outlined below, followed by a table featuring key data points from the assessment with historical context.

Key findings from public data include:

### The Need for Services

- The percentage of children under 6 who need care has remained consistent over the last five years in Lake County but has increased in the last five years in Porter County.
- While the total number of families receiving TANF grants decreased between 2018 and 2024, the total number of households receiving SNAP benefits increased in Lake and Porter counties. This is especially relevant given in April 2022, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) released a joint announcement about a change in Head Start policy which makes it easier for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households to become eligible for Head Start programs.
- Individuals in Lake County are more likely to speak a language other than English at home than those in Porter County or in Indiana in general. In Lake County, Spanish is the most common language other than English spoken at home (11% of the population). In 2023-24, Geminus served 7% of enrollment where the primary language spoken at home was Spanish or another language other than English.
- Median household income for families with children under 18 years of age was significantly lower for single-parent families than for two-parent families. This suggests these families may be especially in need of community services due to lower average household income. The majority (75%) of children and pregnant women served by Geminus in the 2023-24 program year were from single-parent households.

### Early Care and Education Program Capacity

- The capacity of licensed early care and education programs in Lake County can serve just over half of children under 6 who need care in Lake County (59%), and just over one third of the need in Porter County (37%).
- More licensed centers are available to older children than to younger children. In fact, nearly twice as many centers are available to preschoolers than to infants in Lake and Porter counties.

### Geminus Meeting the Needs

- Geminus Head Start saw high rates of chronic absenteeism in the 2023-24 program year (66% for HS, 43% for EHS, 53% for EHS-CCP). These rates are lower than those in the 2022-23 school year, but may still be higher than optimal. Top barriers to attendance indicated by parents/guardians included illness, transportation, and appointments.
- When asked what resources their family was in need of, top responses from parents/guardians included: additional childcare, financial advice, and adult education.

### Current Issues Facing Early Care and Education Programs

- Nationally and at the state level, staff vacancies are causing closed classrooms and under enrollment in Head Start programs, an issue that extends beyond Head Start to all types of early care and education programs in Indiana. A key reason for staff vacancies and high turnover is compensation.

⇓Decreased Compared to 2018 ⇑Increased Compared to 2018

⇒Remained the Same Compared to 2018

Community Needs			
	Indiana	Lake County	Porter County
Population for Children Under Six Years	⇓ <b>480,167</b> (2018: 506,496)	⇑ <b>35,343</b> (2018: 35,030)	⇓ <b>10,428</b> (2018:11,076)
Percentage of Children Under 6 in Poverty	⇓ <b>18%</b> (2018: 22%)	⇓ <b>24%</b> (2018: 27%)	⇓ <b>13%</b> (2018: 14%)
Number of Children Receiving TANF Grants	⇓ <b>9,264</b> (2018: 11,202)	⇓ <b>869</b> (2018: 1,255)	⇓ <b>59</b> (2018: 118)
Households Receiving SNAP Benefits	⇑ <b>287,453</b> (2018: 270,609)	⇓ <b>28,728</b> (2018: 29,361)	⇑ <b>4,520</b> (2018: 4,384)
Number of Children Under 18 Receiving SSI Benefits	⇓ <b>19,564</b> (2018: 21,876)	⇓ <b>2,011</b> (2018: 2,242)	⇓ <b>312</b> (2018: 344)
Children Experiencing Homelessness (PIT Count)	⇑ <b>1,182</b> (2020: 962)	⇓ <b>29</b> (2020: 54)	⇓ <b>28</b> (2020: 31)
Students Experiencing Homelessness (McKinney-Vento Act)	⇓ <b>16,427</b> (2018: 18,811)	⇓ <b>823</b> (2018: 850)	⇓ <b>316</b> (2018: 422)
Total CHINS (Children in Need of Services)	⇓ <b>13,302</b> (2018: 21,588)	⇓ <b>675</b> (2018: 1,523)	⇓ <b>109</b> (2018: 178)
Youth Under 18 with a Known Disability Status	⇒ <b>4.9%</b> (2018: 5%)	⇒ <b>3.9%</b> (2018: 4%)	⇒ <b>3.1%</b> (2018: 3%)
Children Served through First Steps	⇓ <b>23,574</b> (2018: 26,072)	⇓ <b>1,756</b> (2018: 1,823)	⇑ <b>615</b> (2018: 585)
% No Early Prenatal Care (1st Trimester)	⇓ <b>29.1%</b> (2018: 31.9%)	⇓ <b>33.7%</b> (2018: 35.1%)	⇑ <b>29.1%</b> (2018: 27.9%)
Infant Mortality Rate	⇑ <b>7.2</b> (2018: 6.8)	⇒ <b>7.1</b> (2018: 7.1)	⇑ <b>5</b> (2018: 4.7)

Early Care and Education			
	Indiana	Lake County	Porter County
Children Under 6 Who Need Care Because All Parents Work	⬆️ <b>68%</b> (318,616) (2018: 64%)	⬆️ <b>67%</b> (22,545) (2018: 64%)	⬆️ <b>68%</b> (7,102) (2018: 63%)
Capacity Available to Children Who Need Care	⬆️ <b>59%</b> (2018: 40%)	⬆️ <b>59%</b> (2018: 36%)	⬆️ <b>37%</b> (2018: 22%)
Number of High-Quality Programs	⬆️ <b>1,872</b> (2018: 1,198)	⬆️ <b>196</b> (2018: 109)	⬆️ <b>33</b> (2018: 19)
Total High-Quality Capacity	⬆️ <b>103,083</b> (2018: 50,613)	⬆️ <b>8,448</b> (2018: 3,823)	⬆️ <b>2,223</b> (2018: 792)
Children with On My Way Pre-K Vouchers	⬆️ <b>7,990</b> (2019-20: 3,517)	⬆️ <b>679</b> (2019-20: 297)	⬆️ <b>125</b> (2019-20: 20)

⬆️Decreased Compared to 2018 ⬆️Increased Compared to 2018

⇒Remained the Same Compared to 2018

Geminus Meeting the Needs: 2023-24 Program Year			
	HS	EHS	EHS-CCP
Funded Enrollment	⬆️ <b>1,016</b> (2022-23: 1,216)	⬆️ <b>118 children</b> ⬆️ <b>30 pregnant women</b> (2022-23: 128 children, 20 pregnant women)	⇒ <b>200</b> (2022-23: 200)
Cumulative Enrollment	⬆️ <b>1,186</b> (2022-23: 1,368)	⬆️ <b>169 children,</b> ⬆️ <b>63 pregnant women</b> (2022-23: 159 children, 29 pregnant women)	⬆️ <b>317</b> (2022-23: 310)
Children/Pregnant Women from Income Eligible Families	⬆️ <b>291 (25%)</b> (2022-23: 569, 42%)	⬆️ <b>48 (28%)</b> (2022-23: 69, 43%)	⬆️ <b>78 (25%)</b> (2022-23: 126, 41%)
Children/Pregnant Women from Families Experiencing Homelessness	⇒ <b>46 (4%)</b> (2022-23: 46, 3%)	⇒ <b>9 (5%)</b> (2022-23: 9, 6%)	⬆️ <b>24 (8%)</b> (2022-23: 28, 9%)
Children/Pregnant Women from Families Receiving Public Assistance	⬆️ <b>658 (55%)</b> (2022-23: 544, 40%)	⬆️ <b>144 (85%)</b> (2022-23: 51, 32%)	⬆️ <b>161 (51%)</b> (2022-23: 100, 32%)
Children in Foster Care	⬆️ <b>38 (3%)</b> (2022-23: 37, 3%)	⬆️ <b>2 (1%)</b> (2022-23: 3, 2%)	⬆️ <b>7 (2%)</b> (2022-23: 9, 3%)

Geminus Meeting the Needs: 2023-24 Program Year (cont.)			
	HS	EHS	EHS-CCP
Total Families Served	↓ <b>1,096</b> (2022-23: 1,256)	↑ <b>197</b> (2022-23: 136)	↓ <b>274</b> (2022-23: 276)
% of Families That Received at Least One Service	↑ <b>97%</b> (2022-23: 96%)	↑ <b>98%</b> (2022-23: 95%)	↑ <b>96%</b> (2022-23: 93%)

↓ Decreased Compared to 2022-23    ↑ Increased Compared to 2022-23

↔ Remained the Same Compared to 2022-23

Unmet Need for Head Start Eligible Children			
	Supply (Geminus HS/EHS enrollment + Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) enrollment)	Demand (Young children living in poverty)	Unmet Need (Estimated slots needed for children in need)
Lake County	5,739	8,447	<b>2,708</b>
Porter County	753	1,340	<b>587</b>
Service Area Total	6,492	9,787	<b>3,295</b>
<i>EHS count includes child slots only and does not include slots for pregnant women.</i>			

### 3. Data Collection Methodology

TCG completed a mixed methods assessment collecting both qualitative and quantitative data from multiple sources to complete the community assessment update. TCG sought publicly sourced data for Geminus' service area, Lake and Porter counties. Publicly sourced population data was pulled from the U.S. Census Bureau 2018-2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates. Data related to young children not found through the ACS was drawn from the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration and other government offices. Data from the 2023-24 Program Information Report (PIR) was utilized from Head Start grantees. Slight variation exists in this year's PIR data as compared to the previous year due to changes in reporting requirements. Where possible, TCG included comparisons between public data and Geminus Head Start enrollment data from the PIR. This was a new feature added to the update report in 2024.

In order to further specify the needs of each county, TCG reviewed U.S. Census Bureau 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimate tables that held data at the township level. Lake County consists of 11 townships, while Porter County has 12 townships. With this level of detail, Geminus will be able to implement programming for communities that need it most, as well as determine the best



locations for their services. It should be noted that this level of detail has a margin of error that should be reviewed and considered before making significant programming changes.

TCG also analyzed qualitative data from Geminus Head Start parents/ caregivers. The parent/ caregiver survey shared in the spring of 2024 returned 81 responses, which is a low response rate compared to 2023.

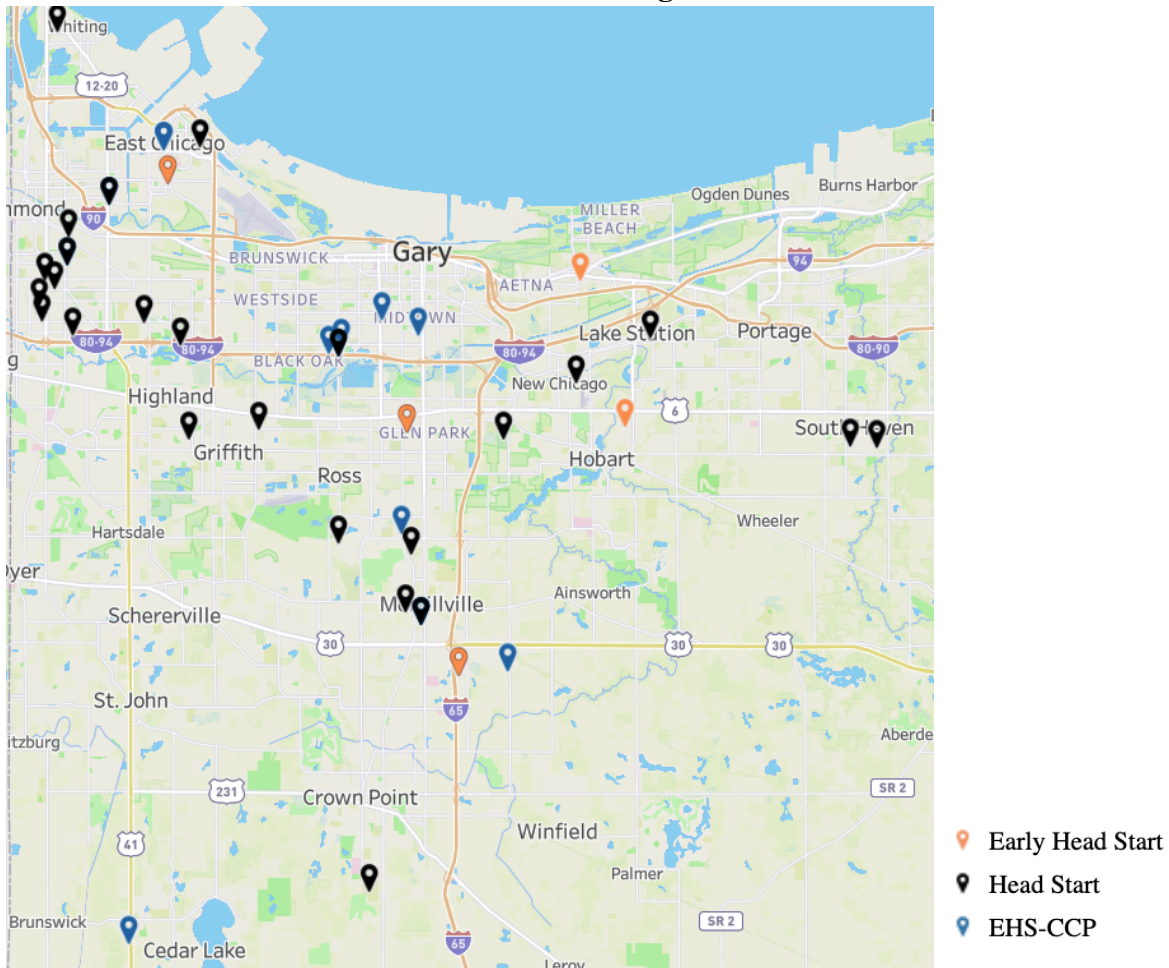
## 4. Geminus Head Start Overview

### Program Locations

#### PROFILE OF GEMINUS PROGRAMS

In the 2023-24 program year, Geminus Corporation offered Head Start and Early Head Start (EHS) services in 30 locations and EHS-Child Care Partnership Program services in 12 locations throughout Lake and Porter counties. In addition, home based services are provided to children and pregnant women.

**Geminus Head Start Program Locations**



## FUNDED ENROLLMENT

Geminus Head Start's total funded enrollment is 1,334 children and 30 pregnant women. This total funded enrollment decreased for children and increased for pregnant women from the previous year. Early Head Start has the capacity to serve 118 children ages birth through two and 30 pregnant women; Head Start has the capacity to serve 1,016 children ages three through five; and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) locations have the capacity to serve 200 children.

## CUMULATIVE ENROLLMENT

Due to turnover of enrollment, Geminus Head Start cumulatively served 1,672 children and 63 pregnant women in the 2023-24 program year. The majority of children served were enrolled in the Head Start program. Over one tenth (169 children and 63 pregnant women; 13%) of enrollment were children and women served in Early Head Start, and nearly one fifth (317; 18%) were served in EHS-CCP, and the remaining two thirds of participants (1,186; 68%) were served in Head Start programs.

## FAMILY SERVICES

In the 2023-24 program year, Geminus Head Start programs served 1,567 families. This is fewer families served compared to the previous year by 101.

During the 2023-24 program year, nearly all (97%) of total families received at least one service through the Geminus Head Start programs. The top five and lowest five services families received were the following:

Top Five Services Families Received		
HS	EHS	EHS-CCP
1. Involvement in discussing their child's screening and assessment results and their child's progress (97%) 2. Research-based parenting curriculum (77%) 3. Education on nutrition (59%) 4. Asset building services (e.g., financial education, debt counseling) (56%) 5. Supporting transitions between programs (i.e., EHS to HS, HS to kindergarten) (20%)	1. Research-based parenting curriculum (86%) 2. Education on nutrition (77%) 3. Asset building services (e.g., financial education, debt counseling) (68%) 4. Involvement in discussing their child's screening and assessment results and their child's progress (50%) 5. Mental Health Services (25%)	1. Education on nutrition (81%) 2. Asset building services (e.g., financial education, debt counseling) (71%) 3. Involvement in discussing their child's screening and assessment results and their child's progress (62%) 4. Research-based parenting curriculum (54%) 5. Housing assistance (e.g., subsidies, utilities, repairs) (33%)

Lowest Five Services Families Received		
HS	EHS	EHS-CCP
1. Assistance to families of incarcerated individuals (0%) 2. Substance misuse treatment (1%) 3. Substance misuse prevention (3%) 4. Education on postpartum care (e.g., breastfeeding support) (5%) 5. Housing assistance (e.g., subsidies, utilities, repairs) (5%)	1. English as a Second Language (ESL) training (3%) 2. Assistance to families of incarcerated individuals (3%) 3. Housing assistance (e.g., subsidies, utilities, repairs) (11%) 4. Substance misuse treatment (11%) 5. Substance misuse prevention (11%)	1. Substance misuse treatment (0%) 2. English as a Second Language (ESL) training (0%) 3. Assistance to families of incarcerated individuals (1%) 4. Education on relationship/marriage (1%) 5. Education on postpartum care (e.g., breastfeeding support) (1%)

## 5. Community Needs

### Population Demographics

#### POPULATION

Geminus Head Start programs, including Early Head Start (EHS), Head Start (HS), and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCP), serve children, families, and pregnant women in Lake and Porter counties. Both counties are located in the furthest northwest corner of Indiana, just outside of Chicago. The communities represent one of the largest metropolitan areas in the state of Indiana.

There are nearly half a million children under 6 years old residing across the state of Indiana. About 10% of the state's population of children under 6 live in Lake and Porter counties. Lake County has 35,343 young children including 17,232 children ages 0-2 and 18,111 children ages 3-5. Porter County has 10,428 children, including 4,789 ages 0-2 and 5,639 ages 3-5.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Source: Brighter Futures Indiana (August 29, 2024). Brighter Futures Indiana Data Center.

Total Population Under 6 Years Old			
	Infant to 2 Years	3 to 5 Years	Total Under 6
Indiana	233,531	246,636	480,167
Lake	17,232	18,111	35,343
Porter	4,789	5,639	10,428
Source: Brighter Futures Indiana (August 29, 2024). Brighter Futures Indiana Data Center.			

Both Lake and Porter counties have seen decreases in their young child populations over the last 10 years. Lake County's population of children ages 0-5 decreased 12% from 2012 to 2022. Porter County saw a similar decrease in its population of young children ages 0-5 between 2012 and 2022 (10%). These differences mirror trends at the state and national level.<sup>2</sup> Looking ahead to 2030, it is projected that children ages 0-4 will decrease by less than 1% in Porter County and increase by 1.5% in Lake County.<sup>3</sup>

Changes in Population Under 6 Years Old, 2012-2022			
	2012	2022	% Change
Indiana	519,186	494,371	-5%
Lake	40,253	35,261	-12%
Porter	12,011	10,755	-10%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022, Table B09001.			

## GENDER

Lake and Porter counties are split evenly between the male and female population in children under 6 years old. Both Porter and Lake counties' population under 6 is 51% male and 49% female.<sup>4</sup>

## RACE/ ETHNICITY

Nearly half (49%) of Lake County's population of young children are White, with Black children making up most (28%) of the remaining population. Fourteen percent are two or more races and 8% are some other race. American Indian children make up less than 1% and Asian children make up about 1%. On the other hand, Porter County's young children are mostly White (83%), and Black children make up 3% of the population. Eleven percent are two or more races and

<sup>2</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B09001.

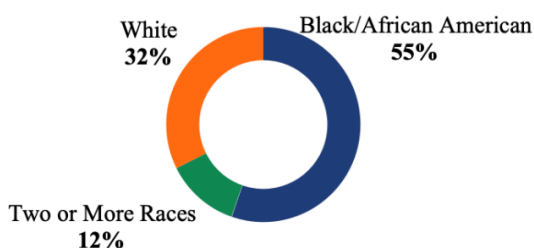
<sup>3</sup> Source: [https://www.stats.indiana.edu/pop\\_proj/](https://www.stats.indiana.edu/pop_proj/)

<sup>4</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S0101.

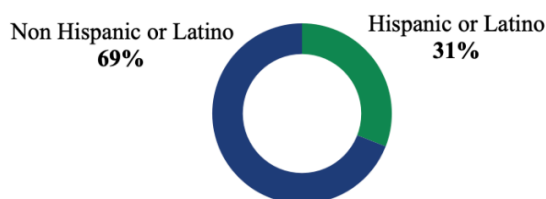
about 1% are some other race. Asian children and American Indian children both make up about 1%. Just over one fourth (27%) of Lake County’s children under 6 identify as Hispanic or Latino, compared to 14% of Porter County’s children.<sup>5</sup>

In comparison, over half (55%) of Geminus Head Start’s total enrolled children and pregnant women in the 2023-24 program year were Black/African American, one third (32%) were White, and over one tenth (12%) reported two or more races. Less than 1% reported another racial identity. Nearly one third (32%) of Geminus Head Start’s enrolled children and pregnant women were Hispanic/Latino.

**Geminus Cumulative Enrollment by Race**



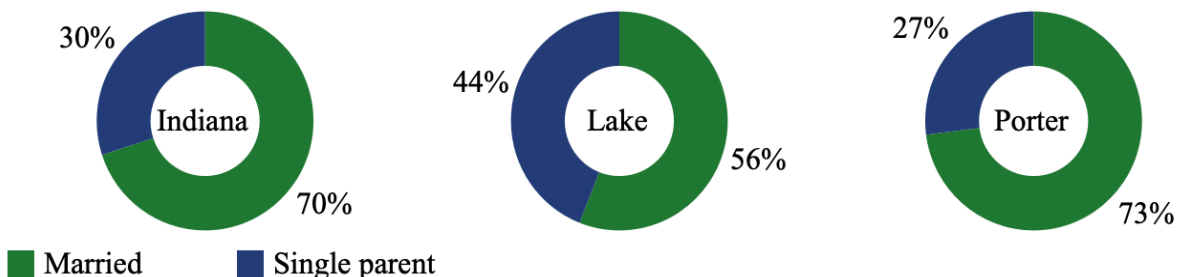
**Geminus Cumulative Enrollment by Ethnicity**



## HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Lake County has almost 22,000 family households with children under six years, while Porter County has over 7,000 family households with young children. In Indiana and Porter County, over two thirds (70%; 73% respectively) of these households with children under 6 years are married-couple households. Lake County has a higher percentage of single-parent households compared to Indiana and Porter County.<sup>6</sup>

**2022 Household Types with Children Under 6 Years**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022, Table S1101.

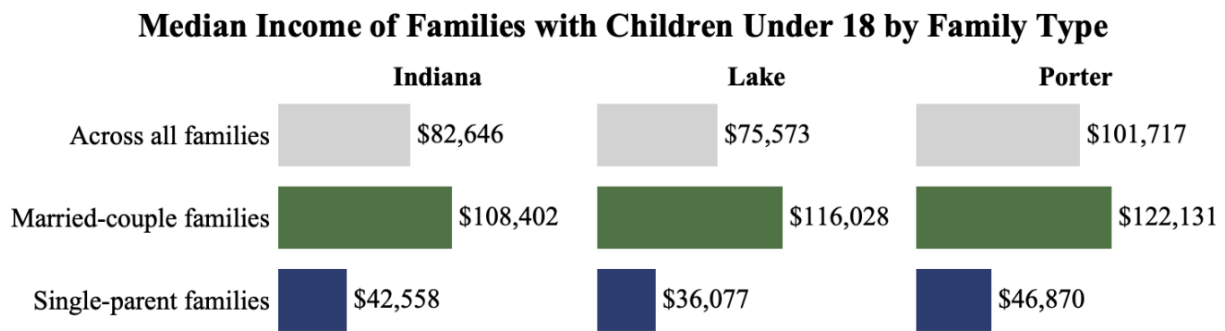
In comparison, over three fourths (76%) of families Geminus Head Start served in the 2023-24 program year were single-parent households.

<sup>5</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables B0100A-I.

<sup>6</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S0101.

## MEDIAN INCOME

Across all families with children under 18 years old, the median income is \$75,573 in Lake County and \$101,717 in Porter County, compared to Indiana at \$82,646. When looking at household composition for families with children under 18 years old, the median income for single-parent families is significantly lower than married-couple families.<sup>7</sup>



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022, Table B19125.

### County Snapshot - Median Annual Income<sup>8</sup>

The median household income for families with children under 18 years is mapped below by townships in Lake and Porter counties. The blue color is lightest in areas where the median income is lowest.

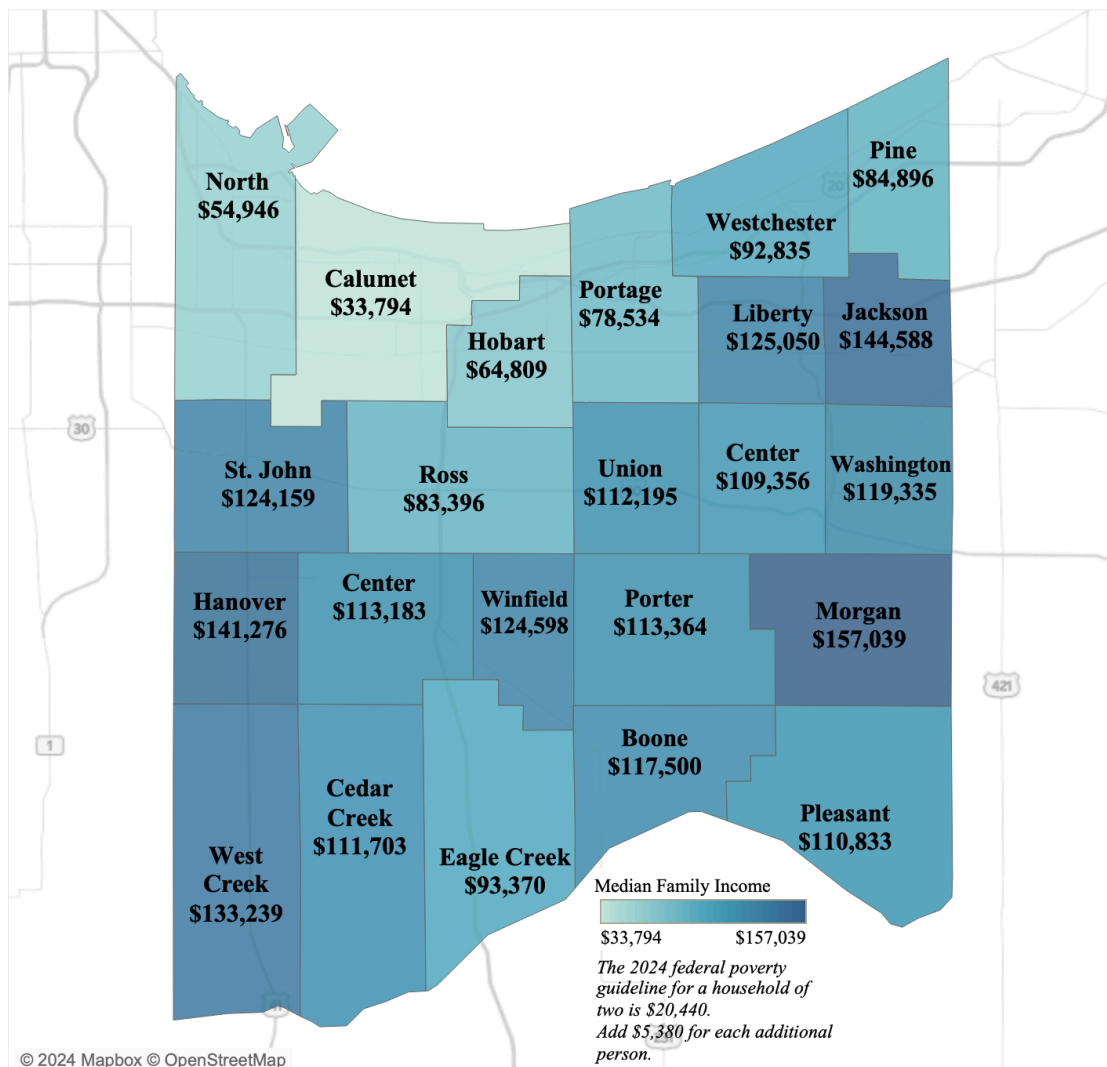
Areas in the northern part of Lake County are within the lowest income, with Calumet Township having the lowest median family income at \$33,974.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B19125.

<sup>8</sup> Source: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>; U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S1101.

<sup>9</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B19125.

## Median Annual Income for Families with Children under 18 in Lake and Porter Counties



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022, Table B19125.

## ACCESS TO INTERNET

Access to the internet has become a necessity for households, as it is essential to connect with teachers, track assignments, and practice skills – helping youth succeed both academically and socially.<sup>10</sup> Eighty-seven percent of Lake County households have an internet subscription, which is the same as the statewide average (87%). In Porter County, 90% of households have an internet subscription. Those living in lower income households are more likely to not have an internet subscription. Nearly one third (31%) of households earning less than \$20,000 annually are

<sup>10</sup> Source: Graves, J., Abshire, D., & Amiri, S. (2021). Disparities in technology and broadband internet access across rurality. *Journal of Health Promotion & Maintenance*, 44 (4).



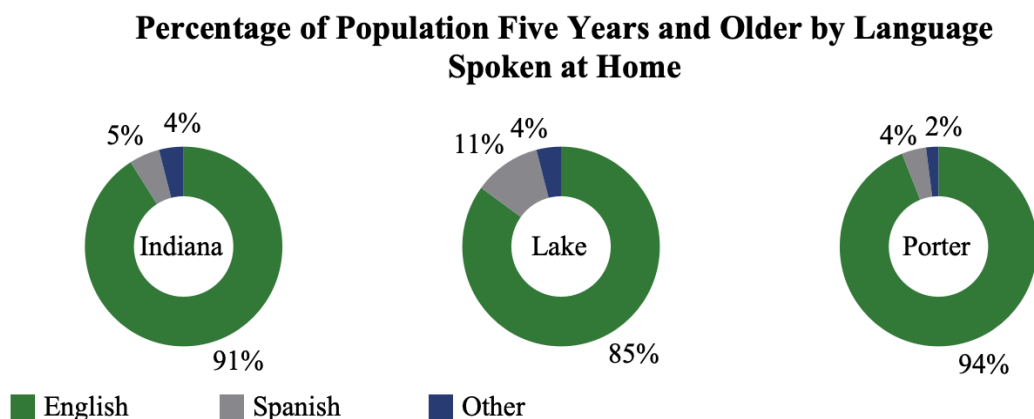
without an internet subscription, compared to 5% or less for households earning \$75,000 or more. These patterns in Lake and Porter counties are consistent with the state.<sup>11</sup>

Households Without an Internet Subscription by Annual Household Income			
	Less than \$20,000	\$20,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 or more
Lake	32%	17%	5%
Porter	31%	15%	3%
Indiana	31%	16%	5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S2801.

## LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME

Over nine tenths (94%) of the population in Porter County speak English at home, similar to the statewide average (91%). A smaller percentage of the population in Lake County speaks English at home (85%), with one tenth speaking Spanish at home (11%), and the remaining 4% of the population speaking some other language. Data on languages spoken by children under 5 is not currently available.<sup>12</sup>



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022, Table S1601.

The most common language other than English spoken at home in Lake and Porter counties is Spanish, followed by other Indo-European Languages such as French, German, and Hindi.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S2801.

<sup>12</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S1601.

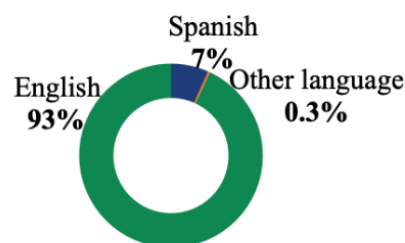
<sup>13</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table C16001.



Percentage of Population Speaking Languages Other Than English at Home			
Language	Indiana	Lake	Porter
Spanish	4.8%	10.6%	3.7%
French, Haitian, or Cajun	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%
German or other West Germanic languages	1.0%	0.2%	0.1%
Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages	0.3%	1.4%	0.6%
Other Indo-European languages	0.7%	0.8%	0.6%
Korean	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese)	0.4%	0.2%	0.4%
Vietnamese	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Tagalog (incl. Filipino)	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Other Asian and Pacific Island languages	0.7%	0.2%	0.2%
Arabic	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%
Other and unspecified languages	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table C16001.			

In comparison to the population over all, a much larger proportion of children and pregnant women Geminus Head Start served in the 2023-24 program year spoke Spanish at home (7%).

**Geminus Cumulative Enrollment by Language Spoken at Home**



## Eligible Children and Families

EHS/HS and EHS-CCP programs use various factors to determine need and eligibility for services. These factors include income level, participation in some public assistance programs, participation in foster care, and homeless status, and disability status. Data for populations that are eligible for EHS/HS and EHS-CCP services is listed below based on these factors.

### POVERTY AND ELIGIBILITY INCOME CUT-OFF

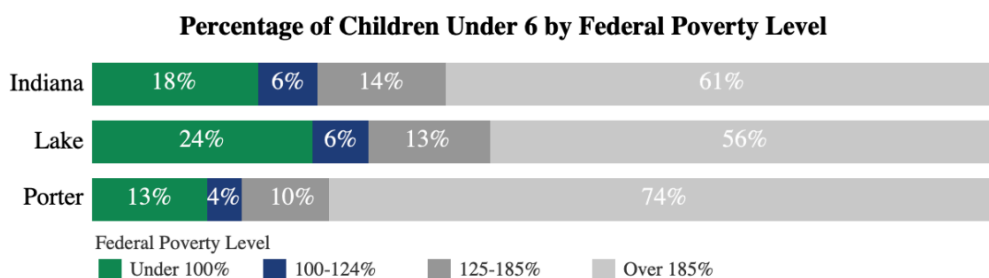
The income eligibility cut-off for HS/EHS is at 100% federal poverty level (FPL). Programs have an initial allowance for 10% of enrolled children and pregnant women (in each program) who may be over-income at any level above 100% FPL, provided there is a justifiable need that our program may help meet. If the program is still not fully enrolled despite best efforts at recruiting

eligible families, there is an additional over-income allowance of 35% of enrollment for children and pregnant women whose annual incomes exceed 100% FPL but fall below 130% of the FPL.

According to the 2024 Federal Poverty Guidelines that went into effect on January 17, 2024, the 100% FPL for an individual is an annual income of less than \$15,060. For households, each additional person adds \$5,380 to that number. This means a family of three would have an income below \$25,820 annually.<sup>14</sup>

2024 Federal Poverty Guidelines			
	Family of 2	Family of 3	Family of 4
100% FPL (Poverty)	\$20,440	\$25,820	\$31,200
125% FPL	\$25,550	\$32,275	\$39,000
130% FPL	\$26,572	\$33,566	\$40,560
Source: <a href="https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines">https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines</a>			

Young children are more likely to be living in poverty compared to the population of any age. When we look at children under 6 years in Lake County, the percentage living in poverty (24%) is much higher compared to the state of Indiana (18%). The percentage of children under 6 living in poverty in Lake County is also higher than the overall population of any age living in poverty (15%). Less than one fifth (13%) of young children in Porter County live in poverty, which is less than the state of Indiana but still higher than Porter County's total population of any age living in poverty (9%).<sup>15</sup>



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022, Table B17024.

Estimated Children Living Under 100% of the Federal Poverty Level by Age Group			
County	Infant-Two Years	Three-Five Years	Total Under 6 Years
Lake	4,118	4,329	8,447
Porter	615	725	1,340
<b>Service Area Totals</b>	<b>4,733</b>	<b>5,054</b>	<b>9,787</b>
Note: Estimates developed by applying the percentage of overall children under 6 in each age group to the total number of children under 6 in poverty. Source: Brighter Futures Indiana (August 24, 2024). Brighter Futures Indiana Data Center; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022, Table B17024.			

<sup>14</sup> Source: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>.

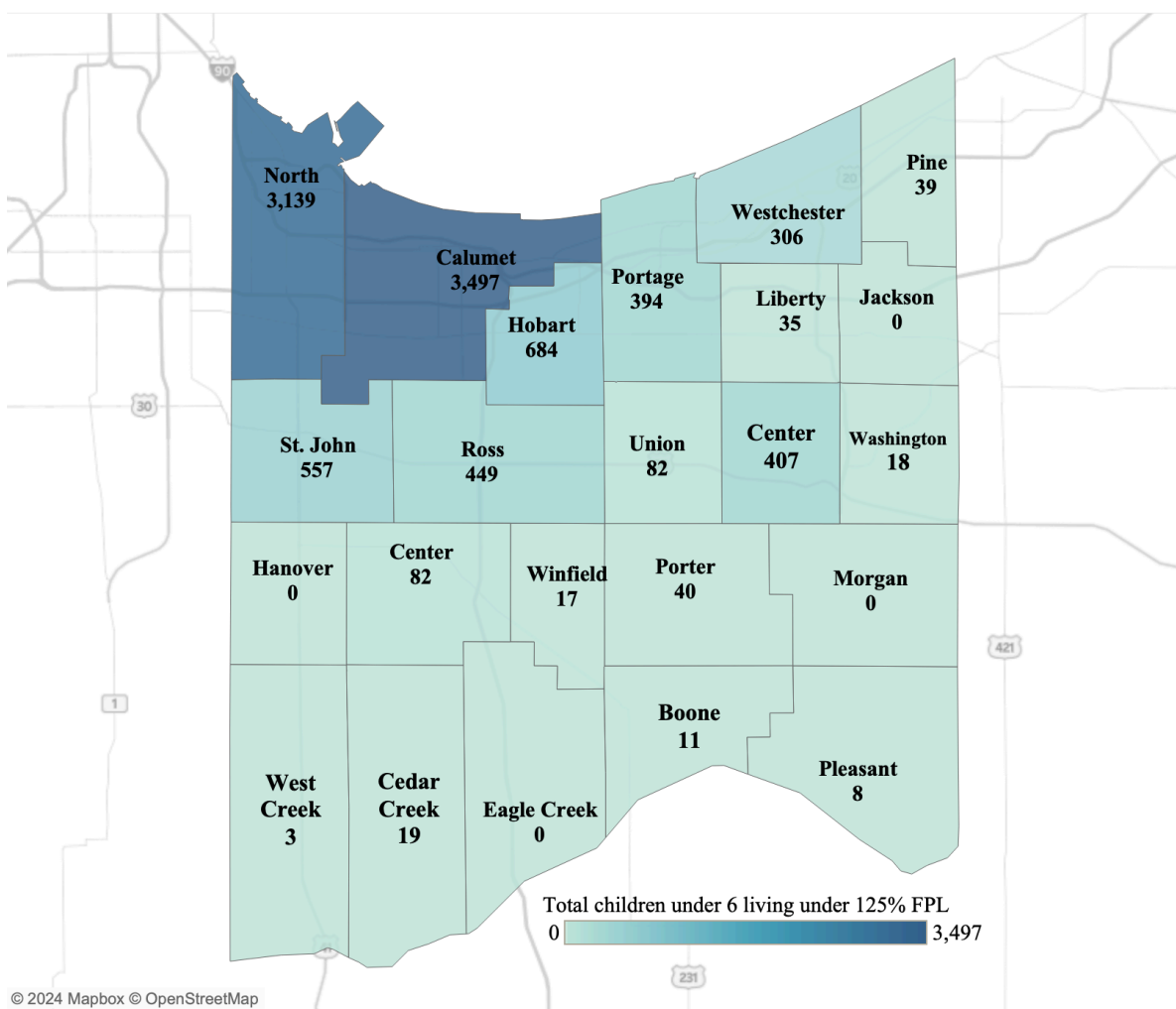
<sup>15</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022, Table B17024.

## County Snapshot - Young Children Living Below 125% FPL

The median income county snapshot above shows that there are not a lot of low income areas across Lake and Porter counties, but when we look at the same boundaries and label the number of young children living below 125% FPL, we see there are still low-income children all across the counties.

The map below labels the number of children under six years living below 125% of the federal poverty level. The darker blue colors represent a denser area of young children.<sup>16</sup>

**Young Children Living Below 125% FPL in Lake and Porter Counties by Township**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022, Table B17024.

<sup>16</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B17024.

## PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FOR LOW INCOME FAMILIES

Federal eligibility guidelines for Head Start programs state that children and pregnant mothers must fall into one of several eligibility categories. One of these categories is families receiving public assistance. Public assistance programs included in this category are Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Supplemental Social Security Income (SSI). The below section describes these programs and enrollment for each program in greater detail. Data on enrollment in these public assistance programs is reported for families overall, and is not currently available for families with children under 6 years old specifically.

**TANF** is a federal government program that assists families and caregivers. Families who receive TANF grants meet the public assistance eligibility criteria for access to Head Start programs. Indiana distributes the funds to support families with children under 18 years by providing cash assistance and support services, ultimately helping them reach economic self-sufficiency. Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) is responsible for the TANF program in the state.

In May 2024 in Lake County, there were 446 families receiving TANF grants, with all of them being single-parent families. Since May 2023, the number of families receiving grants has increased by 3% for single-parent families, a lower rate of change than the state, which increased by nearly 11%. Grants decreased by 100% for two-parent families in Lake County, while statewide grants to two-parent families increased by about 13%. Since May 2023, the number of children receiving grants has increased in Lake County by 11%, with 869 child grant recipients in May 2024.<sup>17</sup>

May 2024 Lake County TANF Recipients				
Child-Only and One-Parent Families				
	May 2024	May 2023	Lake Annual Change	Indiana Annual Change
Number of families receiving TANF Grants	446	433	3%	11%
Total number of grant recipients	1,041	959	9%	16%
Number of adult grant recipients	172	147	17%	52%
Number of child grant recipients	869	812	7%	11%
Two-Parent Families				
Number of families receiving TANF Grants	0	1	-100%	13%

<sup>17</sup> Source: <https://www.in.gov/fssa/dfr/forms-documents-and-tools/statistics/>

<b>Total number of grant recipients</b>	0	5	-100%	11%
Number of adult grant recipients	0	2	-100%	12%
Number of child grant recipients	0	3	-100%	10%
Note: Reports are updated on a monthly basis. Source: <a href="https://www.in.gov/fssa/dfr/forms-documents-and-tools/statistics/">https://www.in.gov/fssa/dfr/forms-documents-and-tools/statistics/</a>				

In May 2024 in Porter County, there were 34 families receiving TANF grants, with nearly all (33, 97%) of them being single-parent families. Since May 2023, the number of families receiving grants has decreased by 15% for single-parent families, compared to the state where Indiana increased by nearly 11%. Grants increased by 66% for two-parent families, while statewide grants to two-parent families increased by about 13%. In May 2024, 59 children received TANF grants in Porter County.<sup>18</sup>

May 2024 Porter County TANF Recipients				
Child-Only and One-Parent Families				
	May 2024	May 2023	Porter Annual Change	Indiana Annual Change
<b>Number of families receiving TANF Grants</b>	34	40	-15%	11%
<b>Total number of grant recipients</b>	71	86	-17%	16%
Number of adult grant recipients	15	15	0%	52%
Number of child grant recipients	56	71	-21%	11%
Two-Parent Families				
<b>Number of families receiving TANF Grants</b>	1	1	0%	13%
<b>Total number of grant recipients</b>	5	3	67%	11%
Number of adult grant recipients	2	2	0%	12%
Number of child grant recipients	3	1	200%	10%
Note: Reports are updated on a monthly basis. Source: <a href="https://www.in.gov/fssa/dfr/forms-documents-and-tools/statistics/">https://www.in.gov/fssa/dfr/forms-documents-and-tools/statistics/</a>				

<sup>18</sup> Source: <https://www.in.gov/fssa/dfr/forms-documents-and-tools/statistics/>

**SNAP** is another federal program that helps low to no income families and individuals by providing food assistance. Families who receive SNAP benefits meet the public assistance eligibility criteria for access to Head Start programs. In Indiana, FSSA is responsible for the program.

In May 2024 in Lake County, there were 28,728 households receiving SNAP benefits, which equated to 61,046 individuals. This is about a 1% increase in households and individuals since the previous year. Indiana increased the number of households (4%) and individuals (4%) receiving SNAP benefits from the previous year. Data on SNAP benefits is reported for households overall, and is not currently available for households with children under 6 years old specifically.

May 2024 Lake County SNAP Benefit Recipients					
	May 2024	April 2024	May 2023	Lake Annual Change	Indiana Annual Change
<b>Number of households receiving SNAP benefits</b>	28,728	28,547	28,394	1%	4%
<b>Number of recipients</b>	61,046	60,419	60,224	1%	4%
Note: Reports are updated on a monthly basis. Source: <a href="https://www.in.gov/fssa/dfr/forms-documents-and-tools/statistics/">https://www.in.gov/fssa/dfr/forms-documents-and-tools/statistics/</a>					

In May 2024 in Porter County, there were 4,520 households, including 8,993 individuals who were receiving SNAP benefits. Similar to Indiana, this is an increase in households (4%) and individuals (3%) since the previous year.<sup>19</sup>

May 2024 Porter County SNAP Benefit Recipients					
	May 2024	April 2024	May 2023	Porter Annual Change	Indiana Annual Change
<b>Number of households receiving SNAP benefits</b>	4,520	4,450	4,351	4%	4%
<b>Number of recipients</b>	8,993	8,813	8,756	3%	4%
Note: Reports are updated on a monthly basis. Source: <a href="https://www.in.gov/fssa/dfr/forms-documents-and-tools/statistics/">https://www.in.gov/fssa/dfr/forms-documents-and-tools/statistics/</a>					

<sup>19</sup> Source: <https://www.in.gov/fssa/dfr/forms-documents-and-tools/statistics/>

**SSI** is another federal program that provides monthly payments to adults and children with a disability who have income and resources below specific financial limits. SSI payments are also made to individuals age 65 and older without disabilities who meet the financial qualifications. Families who receive SSI benefits meet the public assistance eligibility criteria for access to Head Start programs.

In 2022, a total of 2,323 children under 18 received SSI benefits in Lake and Porter counties. The number of child recipients decreased in 2022 compared to recipients in 2018. Though data on SSI benefits to children under 5 is not available at the state or county level, nationally 12% of child beneficiaries were under 5 years of age in 2022.<sup>20</sup>

Number of Children Under 18 Receiving SSI Benefits			
	2022	2018	Percentage Change
<b>Indiana</b>	19,564	21,876	-11%
<b>Lake</b>	2,011	2,242	-10%
<b>Porter</b>	312	344	-9%

Source: [https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/ssi\\_sc/index.html](https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/ssi_sc/index.html)

## CHILDREN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

In addition to families receiving public assistance, federal eligibility guidelines for Head Start programs state another allowable eligibility category is children from families experiencing homelessness. Indiana annually completes a point-in-time count for individuals experiencing homelessness. The point-in-time count is conducted on a single night, counting the number of sheltered and unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness. The last count was completed in November 2023. In Indiana, there were a total of 4,635 households experiencing homelessness, which equals 6,017 individuals. This is more households and individuals than were reported in 2022. The majority of homeless households reported to be without children, but 12% of homeless households have at least one child, which is about the same as (11%) 2022. Nearly one fifth (19%) of homeless individuals were under 18 years old.<sup>21</sup>

The most recent Point-in-Time Homeless Counts for Lake and Porter counties reported through the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority were held in January of 2024. In Lake County, there were 10 households with at least one adult and one child who were homeless. Of these households, there were 39 homeless people, 29 of them children under the age of 18.

<sup>20</sup> Source: <https://www.in.gov/fssa/dfr/forms-documents-and-tools/statistics/>

<sup>21</sup> Source: HUD 2023 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs Homeless Populations and Subpopulations. [https://files.hudexchange.info/reports/published/CoC\\_PopSub\\_State\\_IN\\_2023.pdf](https://files.hudexchange.info/reports/published/CoC_PopSub_State_IN_2023.pdf)

During the January 2024 Point-in-Time Homeless Count for Porter County, 13 households had at least one adult and one child who were homeless, which equaled 45 people, 28 of whom were children under the age of 18.<sup>22</sup>

The McKinney-Vento Act provides rights and services to children and youth experiencing homelessness. Children in need of services under this act are identified and served through schools. The total number of students identified by the McKinney-Vento Act as homeless or housing unstable in Indiana in 2023 was 16,427. This is a 13% decrease from 2018 (18,811 students). A total of 823 students in Lake County and 316 students in Porter County were identified as homeless or housing unstable in 2023.<sup>23</sup>

## CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

In addition to families receiving public assistance and children experiencing homelessness, federal eligibility guidelines for Head Start programs state another allowable eligibility category is children in foster care. The prevalence of children in Indiana experiencing abuse and neglect was over the national average in 2022 (12.2 children per 1,000 in Indiana, 7.7 children per 1,000 nationally). According to the Children’s Bureau’s Child Maltreatment report, Indiana has the fifteenth highest rate in the nation. **Half (50%) of children who were reported as victims of maltreatment in Indiana in 2022 were young children (ages 0-5), including 24% specifically under the age of one.**<sup>24</sup>

The Indiana Department of Child Services offers a data dashboard updated monthly sharing data about the conditions of children. The “CHINS [Child in Need of Services] Placements by County” measure reports the placement of children who are in need of services. As of July 2024, Lake County had 675 children in need of services, while Porter County had 109 children. In Lake and Porter counties, about two thirds of these children are placed in out-of-home placements.<sup>25</sup>

July 2024 Children in Need of Services (CHINS)					
	Total CHINS	In Home		Out-Of-Home Placement	
Indiana	13,302	4,136	31%	9,166	69%
Lake	675	245	36%	430	64%
Porter	109	30	28%	79	73%
Source: <a href="https://www.in.gov/dcs/reports-and-statistics/practice-indicator-reports/">https://www.in.gov/dcs/reports-and-statistics/practice-indicator-reports/</a>					

<sup>22</sup> Source: Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority. (2024). PIT Results by Region. [Data Set] [https://www.in.gov/ihcda/indiana-balance-of-state-continuum-of-care/hmis\\_data\\_portal/](https://www.in.gov/ihcda/indiana-balance-of-state-continuum-of-care/hmis_data_portal/)

<sup>23</sup> Source: Indiana Youth Institute. (2024). Homeless Students Data Set. <https://iyyi.org/resources/data-set-homeless-students/>

<sup>24</sup> Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children’s Bureau. (2024). *Child Maltreatment 2022*. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/cm2022.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Source: <https://www.in.gov/dcs/reports-and-statistics/practice-indicator-reports/>



Total CHINS in Indiana and Lake and Porter counties have decreased by half since 2018 (47%, 52%, and 54% respectively).<sup>26</sup> This may be in part due to significant legislative and policy changes made in 2019 and coinciding with the 2018 federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). This policy shift was designed to prioritize family permanence and prevent removal whenever possible.<sup>27</sup>

## YOUTH UNDER 18 WITH A KNOWN DISABILITY STATUS

In Lake County, 3.9% of youth under 18 have a known disability and 3.1% of youth in Porter County have a disability status; slightly less than youth under 18 in Indiana overall (4.9%). As youth become older, the more likely they will be diagnosed with a disability. The most common known disability type for youth under 18 in Lake and Porter counties is cognitive difficulty.<sup>28</sup> Cognitive difficulties can impact an individual's ability to think, process, learn, remember, and make decisions.

Disability Type By Detailed Age Groups			
Disability Type	Lake	Porter	Indiana
<b>Any Known Disability</b>	<b>13.3%</b>	<b>11.4%</b>	<b>13.7%</b>
Population under 18 years	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>
Population under 5 years	0.6%	0%	0.6%
Population 5 to 17 years	5.0%	3.9%	6.4%
<b>With a hearing difficulty</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>
Population under 18 years	0.3%	0.2%	0.5%
Population under 5 years	0.4%	0%	0.3%
Population 5 to 17 years	0.3%	0.2%	0.6%
<b>With a vision difficulty</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
Population under 18 years	0.7%	0.3%	0.7%
Population under 5 years	0.2%	0%	0.3%
Population 5 to 17 years	1.7%	0.4%	0.9%
<b>With a cognitive difficulty</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>
Population under 18 years	2.8%	2.8%	3.8%
<b>With an ambulatory difficulty</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>
Population under 18 years	0.4%	0.1%	0.5%

<sup>26</sup> Source: <https://www.in.gov/dcs/reports-and-statistics/practice-indicator-reports/>

<sup>27</sup> Source: [https://www.iyi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/IYI\\_22Spotlight\\_FandC.pdf](https://www.iyi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/IYI_22Spotlight_FandC.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Table S1810.

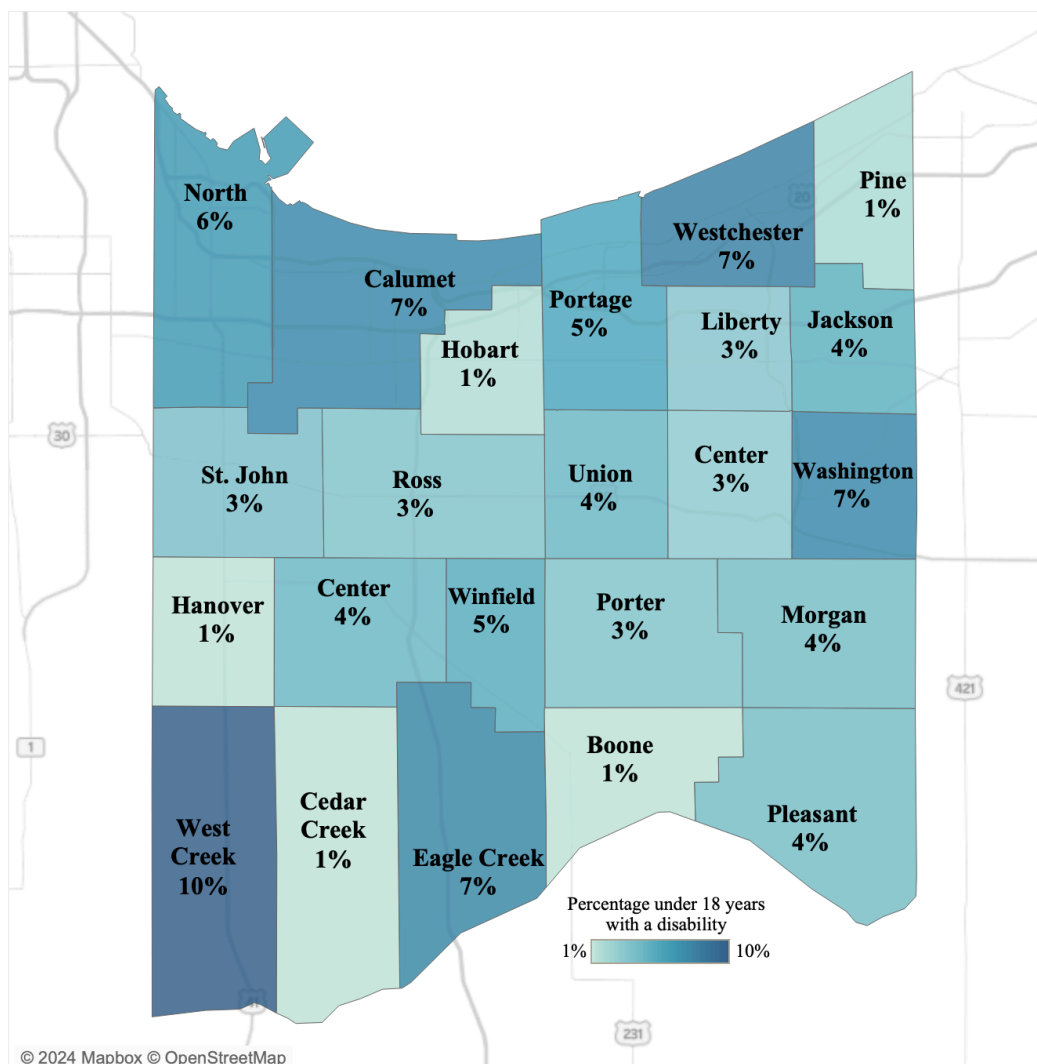
<b>With a self-care difficulty</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
Population under 18 years	0.6%	0.9%	0.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Table S1810.

### County Snapshot - Children Under 18 Years With a Known Disability<sup>29</sup>

The percentage of youth with a known disability varies greatly across Lake and Porter counties. The map by township below shows ranges up to 10%. Data at this geographic detail is limited for young children under 5 years, but see the appendix for more information on the number and percentage of children under 18 years with a disability.

**Percentage of Children Under 18 Years with a Known Disability**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022, Table S1810.

<sup>29</sup> Data for children under 5 with a disability by township is unreportable due to low numbers.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022, Table S1810.

Geminus Head Start assesses all newly enrolled children to determine potential developmental delays. For those children with identified potential delays, subsequent referrals are made to the local responsible Part B or Part C agencies for further evaluation.

## GEMINUS HEAD START ENROLLMENT BY ELIGIBILITY

Head Start serves children ages 3 to 5 (age determined as of the state's kindergarten entry date) while Early Head Start serves pregnant women, infants, and toddlers to age 3. Federal eligibility guidelines state that (most) children and pregnant women must also fall into one of the following categories:

- Children from families with incomes below U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines (100% Federal Poverty Level [FPL])
- Children from families experiencing homelessness are eligible regardless of family's income
- Children from families receiving public assistance (such as TANF, SSI, or SNAP)
- Foster children are eligible regardless of the foster family's income

Geminus Head Start programs use this criteria to determine eligibility. The table below details the number of students and pregnant women Geminus serves who are eligible within each of these categories.

Geminus Cumulative Enrollment by Eligibility Category			
	HS	EHS	EHS-CCP
Children/Pregnant Women from Income Eligible Families	291 (25%)	48 (21%)	78 (25%)
Children/Pregnant Women from Families Experiencing Homelessness	46 (4%)	9 (4%)	24 (8%)
Children/Pregnant Women from Families Receiving Public Assistance	658 (55%)	144 (62%)	161 (51%)
Children in Foster Care	38 (3%)	2 (1%)	7 (2%)
Children/Pregnant Women With Eligibility Based On Some Other Type Of Need, But Not Listed Above	111 (9%)	24 (10%)	31 (10%)
Children/Pregnant Women from Families with Income Between 100% and 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (Over-Income)	42 (4%)	5 (2%)	16 (5%)

In addition to the eligibility criteria above, Head Start programs are also dedicated to serving young children with disabilities, and must ensure at least 10% of their total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Children in EHS ages 0-2 are eligible for an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and children in HS ages 3-5 are eligible for an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Many Head Start

programs also serve children who are Dual Language Learners (DLLs), and there are specific Head Start Performance Standards designed to support DLLs and their families.

Geminus Cumulative Enrollment Regardless of Income Eligibility Dual Language Learners and Children with Disabilities			
	HS	EHS	EHS-CCP
Dual Language Learners	143 (12%)	29 (17%)	16 (5%)
Children who have an IEP/IFSP	113 (10%)	27 (16%)	27 (9%)

## Education Needs of Eligible Families

### LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT INFORMATION

According to the 2023-24 Indiana Department of Education school directory, there are 23 public school corporations across Lake and Porter counties and an additional 14 charter schools, private schools, and educational co-ops.<sup>30</sup> There are 16 public school corporations in Lake County, 120 public schools, and 29 non-public schools. There are 7 public school corporations in Porter County, 54 public schools, and 10 non-public schools.<sup>31</sup>

During the 2023-24 school year, within Lake County schools, nearly half (35,915; 49%) of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. This is significantly more than Porter County, where less one fourth (5,978; 23%) of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch.<sup>32</sup>

### DISABILITY SERVICES

First Steps is a program of the Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services. Children who receive services via First Steps or special education programs in schools are eligible for Head Start programs regardless of income. EHS/HS has a 10% enrollment eligibility requirement, which requires 10% of children served to be children who receive disability services.

First Steps is Indiana's early intervention program that provides services to infants and toddlers from birth to third birthday who have developmental delays or disabilities. First Steps brings families together with a local network of professionals from education, health and social service agencies. Regions across the state have a local system point of entry that helps to refer children and families to local agencies.

For Lake and Porter counties, the local point of entry (or service provider) for First Steps is 1st Kids located in Crown Point. The table below details participation in First Steps for the state and Lake and Porter counties in 2021.

<sup>30</sup> Find the school directory under the “General School Information” section here:

<https://www.in.gov/doe/it/data-center-and-reports/>.

<sup>31</sup> Source: Indiana Department of Education (2024). Corporations and School Directory.

<sup>32</sup> Source: Indiana Department of Education (2024). Corporation Enrollment by Ethnicity and Free/Reduced Meal Status 2016-2024.

2021 Enrollment in First Steps			
Location	Annual Count of Children Served	Average Age at Referral (months)	Children Moving to Preschool Special Education after First Steps
Indiana	23,574	14	4,688 (47%)
Porter	615	13	108 (44%)
Lake	1,756	13	374 (52%)

Note: Reporting period is 04/01/2020 - 03/31/2021.  
Source: Indiana Family and Social Services Administration. (July 2021) First Steps Program Evaluation reports: County Profiles.

Beyond the age of three, the Indiana Department of Education offers special education programs to students in preschool. In 2023, Indiana public schools served 13,682 students ages 3-5 through preschool special education programs. This is an increase of 11% over 2021. At the local level, as of August 2019, Lake County served 676 children ages 3-5 in special education, while Porter County served 251 children.<sup>33</sup>

## Health Needs of Head Start Eligible Children and Families

### IMMUNIZATION RATES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

The official childhood vaccination series is 4:3:1:3:3:1:4,<sup>34</sup> and children that receive the series are fully immunized. In 2023, 87% of 2- and 3-year-olds in Lake County were assessed for the vaccination series, and 50% completed the series. In Porter County, 90% of 2- and 3-year-olds were assessed, and two thirds (61%) completed the vaccination series. These rates are similar to Indiana as a whole, where 95% were assessed, and over half (56%) completed the vaccination series.<sup>35</sup>

Immunization Rates for 2- and 3-Year-Olds		
Location	Percentage of Children Assessed	Percentage of Children that Completed Vaccination Series
Indiana	95%	56%
Porter	90%	61%
Lake	87%	56%

Source: Indiana Department of Health. (2023). County Rate Assessment Report.  
[https://www.in.gov/health/immunization/files/County\\_Rate\\_Assessment\\_Report\\_2023.pdf](https://www.in.gov/health/immunization/files/County_Rate_Assessment_Report_2023.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Source: Indiana Department of Education (2024). School Directory.

<sup>34</sup> Four doses of DTaP, 3 doses IPV, 1 dose MMR, 3 doses Hib, 3 doses HepB, 1 dose Varicella, and 4 doses PCV.

<sup>35</sup> Source: Indiana Department of Health. (2023). County Rate Assessment Report.

[https://www.in.gov/health/immunization/files/County\\_Rate\\_Assessment\\_Report\\_2023.pdf](https://www.in.gov/health/immunization/files/County_Rate_Assessment_Report_2023.pdf)

## CHILDREN WITH INSURANCE COVERAGE

In Indiana, 94% of children under 6 years have insurance coverage. Lake and Porter counties are higher than the Indiana rate, at 97%.<sup>36</sup> Medicaid enrollment is reported on a monthly basis. In June 2024, 42% of individuals enrolled in Medicaid were children under 18 years old in Indiana. This is similar to Lake and Porter counties, at 39% and 38%, respectively.<sup>37</sup>

Young Children Under 6 Years Old Insured		
	Insured	Uninsured
Indiana	94%	6%
Porter	97%	3%
Lake	97%	3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Table S2701.

## MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH

### *Number of Expectant Mothers*

In 2022, there were over 5,000 births in Lake County and almost 1,600 in Porter County. In 2022, the teen birth rate in Indiana was 16.7 births per 1,000 females between the ages of 15-19 years old, compared to Lake County at 20 births per 1,000 females and Porter County at 10 births per 1,000 females.<sup>38</sup>

In 2022, nearly half of all births were to mothers between the ages of 20-29 years old in both Lake County (49%) and Porter County (47%). The average age of mothers is 28 years old in Lake County and 29 years old in Porter County.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Table S2701.

<sup>37</sup> Source: Family and Social Services Administration. (2024). Medicaid Enrollment Dashboard.  
<https://www.in.gov/medicaid/members/member-resources/How-a-return-to-normal-will-impact-some-Indiana-Medicaid-members/medicaid-enrollment-dashboard/>

<sup>38</sup> Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). Natality.  
<https://wonder.cdc.gov/controller/datarequest/D149;jsessionid=A0E80FF0F806FE1589FBC28D0E6E>

<sup>39</sup> Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). Natality.  
<https://wonder.cdc.gov/controller/datarequest/D149;jsessionid=A0E80FF0F806FE1589FBC28D0E6E>

2022 Births to Mothers by Age					
	Under 19	Ages 20-29	Ages 30-39	Ages 40+	Total Births
Indiana	3,766	42,321	31,449	2,026	79,562
	5%	53%	40%	3%	
Lake	219	2,572	2,281	175	5,247
	4%	49%	43%	3%	
Porter	32	752	741	65	1,590
	2%	47%	47%	4%	

Note: Discrepancy between births by mothers age and total births over time due to unreported mothers' ages for some births.  
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). Natality.  
<https://wonder.cdc.gov/controller/datarequest/D149.jsessionid=A0E80FF0F806FE1589FBC28D0E6E>

Over the last five years, the birth rate declined in Lake County by over 8% and in Porter County by over 6%, while the state rate declined by less than 3%.<sup>40</sup>

5-Year Change in Live Births						
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Five Year % Change
Indiana	81,651	80,851	78,566	79,953	79,649	-2.5%
Lake	5,765	5,684	5,410	5,418	5,256	-8.8%
Porter	1,707	1,642	1,622	1,670	1,592	-6.7%

Sources: Indiana Department of Health, Office of Data Analytics, Data Analysis Team; Vital Records Variable ID: 'BIRTH009' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). Natality.  
<https://wonder.cdc.gov/controller/datarequest/D149.jsessionid=A0E80FF0F806FE1589FBC28D0E6E>

<sup>40</sup> Sources: Indiana Department of Health, Office of Data Analytics, Data Analysis Team; Vital Records Variable ID: 'BIRTH009' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). Natality.  
<https://wonder.cdc.gov/controller/datarequest/D149.jsessionid=A0E80FF0F806FE1589FBC28D0E6E>

### ***Health Outcomes***

In 5 of 6 maternal and infant health outcomes, Lake County is higher (worse) compared to Indiana, while Porter County is lower (better) than Indiana in 5 outcomes.<sup>41</sup>

2022 Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes						
	Low Birth Weight (<2,500 G)	Preterm (<37 weeks gestation)	No Early Prenatal Care (1st Trimester)	Not Breastfeeding	Mother on Medicaid	Smoking
Indiana	8.7%	10.9%	29.1%	16.1%	41.1%	10.9%
Lake	9.3%	11.4%	33.7%	20.3%	50.7%	5.9%
Porter	6.6%	10.4%	29.1%	12.5%	33.2%	7.3%

Sources: Indiana Department of Health. (2022). Birth Outcomes and Infant Mortality Dashboard. <https://www.in.gov/health/mch/data/birth-outcomes-and-infant-mortality-dashboard/>;  
Indiana Department of Health. (2022). Smoking and pregnancy, <https://www.in.gov/health/tpc/files/Pregnancy-and-Smoking.pdf>

### ***Prenatal Care***

Prenatal care helps prevent complications and informs parents of the appropriate steps to take during pregnancy. Timely prenatal care helps with three main areas: (1) reduce the risk of pregnancy complications, (2) reduce the fetus' and infant's risk for complications, and (3) help ensure the medications women take are safe.<sup>42</sup> However, during 2022, approximately three in 10 (29%) pregnant individuals in Indiana and Porter County did not receive prenatal care in the first trimester. Lake County had a higher rate of individuals not receiving prenatal care during the first trimester at 34%.<sup>43</sup>

### ***Infant Mortality***

The 2022 infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births in Lake County is 7.1 while the rate in Porter County is 5. The infant mortality rates have stayed the same in Lake County and increased in Porter County since 2018, when they were 7.1 and 4.7, respectively. Indiana's infant mortality rates have increased since 2019, from 6.5 to 7.2. The figure below details state-level infant mortality rates per 1,000 births by cause in 2018-2022. Sudden unexpected infant deaths (SUIDS - sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) or accidental suffocation and strangulation in bed) in the northwest region of the state containing Lake and Porter counties was 89.5 per 100,000 live births from 2018-2022. The other data on infant deaths by cause is not available at the county level.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Source: Indiana Department of Health. (2022). Birth Outcomes and Infant Mortality Dashboard. <https://www.in.gov/health/mch/data/birth-outcomes-and-infant-mortality-dashboard/>

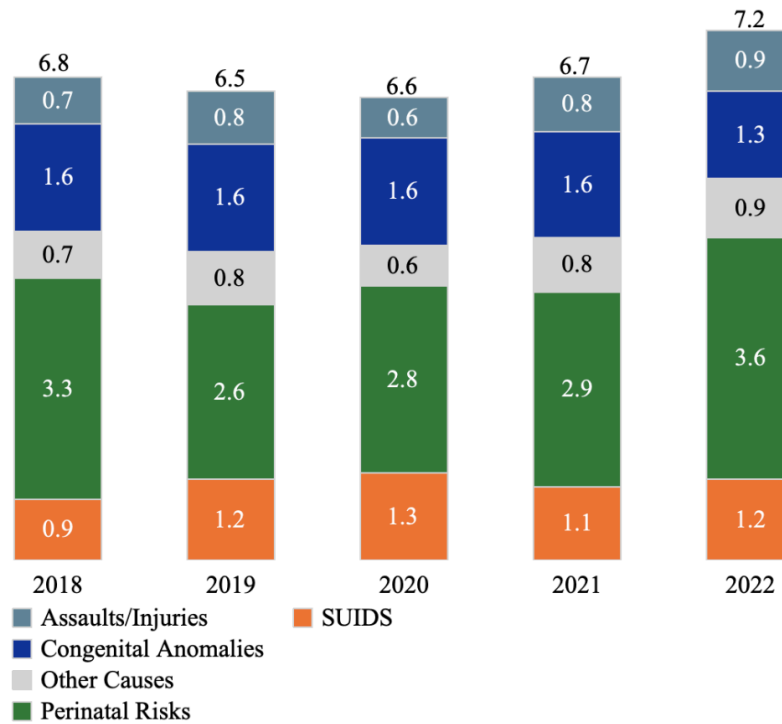
<sup>42</sup> Source: <https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/pregnancy/conditioninfo/prenatal-care>

<sup>43</sup> Source: Indiana Department of Health. (2022). Birth Outcomes and Infant Mortality Dashboard. <https://www.in.gov/health/mch/data/birth-outcomes-and-infant-mortality-dashboard/>

<sup>44</sup> Source: Indiana State Department of Health Division of Maternal and Child Health, Infant Mortality Fact Sheets 2022.



### Indiana Infant Mortality Rates by Cause



Source: Indiana State Department of Health Division of Maternal and Child Health, Infant Mortality Fact Sheets 2022.

Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) is a group of conditions caused when a baby withdraws from certain drugs they are exposed to in the womb before birth. NAS is most often caused when a woman takes drugs called opioids during pregnancy. The estimated rate of NAS in Indiana in 2022 was 6.72 per 1,000 live births. This is a decrease from the rate in 2018 (9.49). Between May 2021 and July 2022, an estimated 76 infants were born with NAS in Lake County, and an estimated 61 infants were born with NAS in Porter County.<sup>45</sup>

### *Policy Changes with the Potential to Impact Infant and Maternal Health*

In August 2022, Indiana passed a law banning abortions within the state. This law took effect on August 1st, 2023. This policy change has the potential to impact maternal and infant health outcomes in the coming years. Annual updates to this report will examine this data to understand changes in the years after this policy is enacted. This policy also has the potential to affect the demand for early childhood education services and other services aimed at supporting pregnant people and infants.

<sup>45</sup> Source: Regenstrief Institute. (2022). Opioid Use Disorder Emergency Department Visits. <https://www.regenstrief.org/iadc-dashboards/>

## GEMINUS HEAD START MATERNAL HEALTH OUTCOMES

Geminus Head Start is funded to serve 30 pregnant women, but was able to serve 63 pregnant women during the 2023-24 program year. Geminus Head Start partners with other maternal health organizations, such as My Healthy Baby, to provide services and support to pregnant women.

In the 2023-24 program year, 86% of the pregnant women Geminus served had a medical home, and 94% had medical insurance. This is an improvement from the 2022-23 program year when 79% of pregnant women Geminus served had a medical home, and 83% had health insurance.

## GEMINUS HEAD START HEALTH SERVICES

Per performance standard requirements, EHS/HS and EHS-CCP programs are required to review the accessibility of healthcare and insurance for children enrolled in a program. Nearly all students had health insurance and accessible healthcare by the end of the 2023-24 program year. Over 80% of HS students were up-to-date with immunizations, while a little less than one quarter of EHS and over one half EHS-CCP students were up-to-date. Although nearly all Head Start students were up-to-date on immunizations, less than three quarters (67%) had completed a professional dental examination during the program year. Most HS children had a dental home, but fewer EHS and EHS-CCP students reported having a dental home.

Health Services Percentage of Students by the End of the Program Year						
	Head Start		Early Head Start		Early Head Start-CCP	
	2022-23	2023-24	2022-23	2023-24	2022-23	2023-24
Medical home	99%	100%	77%	99%	99%	99%
Health insurance	98%	98%	79%	99%	92%	94%
Up-to-date on immunizations	83%	86%	58%	72%	51%	59%
Current physical exam	83%	89%	60%	96%	74%	82%
Dental home	95%	96%	52%	75%	87%	72%
Completed a professional dental exam during the program year	43%	67%	46%	53%	39%	38%

# 6. Early Care and Education

## EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION AVAILABILITY

In 2022, it is estimated that 29,647 young children in Lake and Porter counties need care because all of their parents are in the workforce (both parents in a two-parent household or one in a single-parent household). Over two thirds of Lake (67%) and Porter (68%) counties’ young children need care, similar to the need in Indiana (68%).<sup>46</sup>

Lake County known early care and education programs have the capacity to serve a little over half (59%) of young children in need of care because parents work, which is the same percentage as Indiana overall. Porter County can serve just over one third (37%) of young children in need; significantly lower than the capacity in both Lake County and the state. The remaining percentage of young children who need care are being cared for by a family member, friend, or neighbor.

Capacity in Early Care and Education for Children in Need of Care			
Location	Children Under 6 Years Who Need Care	Capacity to Serve Young Children in Known Care	Capacity Available to Children That Need Care
Indiana	318,616	189,095	59%
Lake	22,545	13,374	59%
Porter	7,102	2,659	37%
Service Area Total	29,647	16,033	54%
	Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B23008.	Source: Brighter Futures Indiana (October 4, 2024). Brighter Futures Indiana Data Center. <a href="https://brighterfuturesindiana.org/data-center">https://brighterfuturesindiana.org/data-center</a>	

In Indiana, early care and education programs include child care centers, family child care homes, registered ministries, and school-based programs. As of October 4, 2024, Lake County has 387 known programs, which is a slight increase from 2023 (376 programs). Porter County has 54 programs, which is a small decrease from 2023 (57 programs).<sup>47</sup>

In Lake County, 60% of programs are family child care homes, one quarter (26%) are child care centers, over one tenth (13%) are registered ministries, and 1% are school-based programs. Porter County has a smaller portion of family child care homes compared to Lake County, but homes still make up nearly half (48%) of all programs. One third (35%) of programs are child

<sup>46</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B23008.

<sup>47</sup> Source; Brighter Futures Indiana. (October 4, 2024). Brighter Futures Indiana Data Center.

care centers, 13% are registered ministries, and 4% are school-based programs. These portions are similar to Indiana where 51% of programs are homes, 25% of programs are child care centers, 18% are registered ministries, and 6% are school-based programs.

Early Care and Education Programs					
Location	Child Care Center	Registered Ministry	Family Child Care Home	LEA	Total Programs
Indiana	1,065	750	2,191	267	<b>4,273</b>
Lake	102	51	232	2	<b>387</b>
Porter	19	7	26	2	<b>54</b>
Service Area Total	121	58	258	4	<b>441</b>
Data Note: Local Education Affiliates (LEAs) are often not required to register with the state and so may be undercounted in this data. Some LEAs may also be captured in the Child Care Center data, as those LEAs that do choose to become licensed are often categorized as child care centers. Source: Brighter Futures Indiana. (October 4, 2024). Brighter Futures Indiana Data Center.					

Lake County can serve 13,374 children in licensed programs, while Porter County can serve 2,659 children.<sup>48</sup> Family child care home programs make up a majority of the program count but are closer to holding only one fifth of the actual capacity due to homes being able to serve a smaller number of children compared to child care centers and ministries. Lake County can serve over half (58%) of children in child care centers and the remaining half is split between registered ministries (21%) and family child care homes (20%). Porter County can serve two thirds (68%) of children in child care centers. The remaining capacity is in registered ministries (16%), family child care homes (13%), and school-based (3%) programs.

Early Care and Education Capacity					
Location	Child Care Center	Registered Ministry	Family Child Care Home	LEA	Total Capacity
Indiana	96,661	59,178	27,991	5,265	<b>189,095</b>
Lake	7,816	2,866	2,692	NA	<b>13,374</b>
Porter	1,800	421	358	80	<b>2,659</b>
Service Area Total	9,616	3,287	3,050	80	<b>16,033</b>
Data Note: Local Education Affiliates (LEAs) are often not required to register with the state and so may be undercounted in this data. Some LEAs may also be captured in the Child Care Center data, as those LEAs that do choose to become licensed are often categorized as child care centers.					

<sup>48</sup> Capacity is only reported for licensed programs. Reporting is optional and limited for exempt programs.

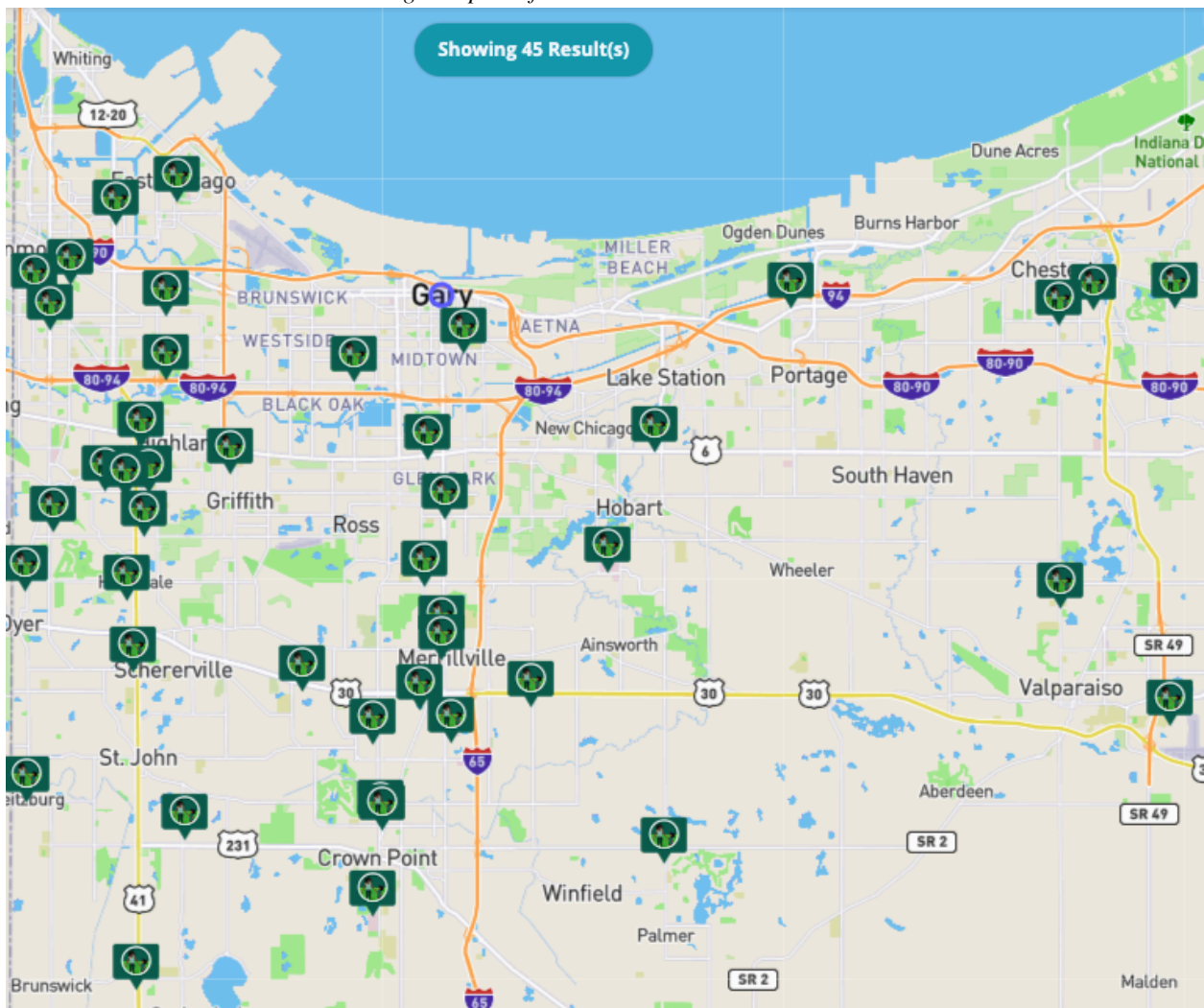
Source: Brighter Futures Indiana. (October 4, 2024). Brighter Futures Indiana Data Center.

According to the Indiana Department of Education, in the 2023-24 school year Pre-K programs were offered in 16 school corporations in Lake and Porter counties and served 1,682 children in Lake County and 201 children in Porter County.<sup>49</sup>

The maps below are snapshots from FSSA Child Care Finder, showing licensed centers registered to serve children in Lake and Porter counties. In general, more licensed centers are available to older children than to younger children. In fact, nearly twice as many centers are available to preschoolers than to infants in Lake and Porter counties. See the appendix for additional program and capacity counts by cities within Lake and Porter counties.

### Map of Early Care and Education Sites in Lake and Porter Counties Serving Infants

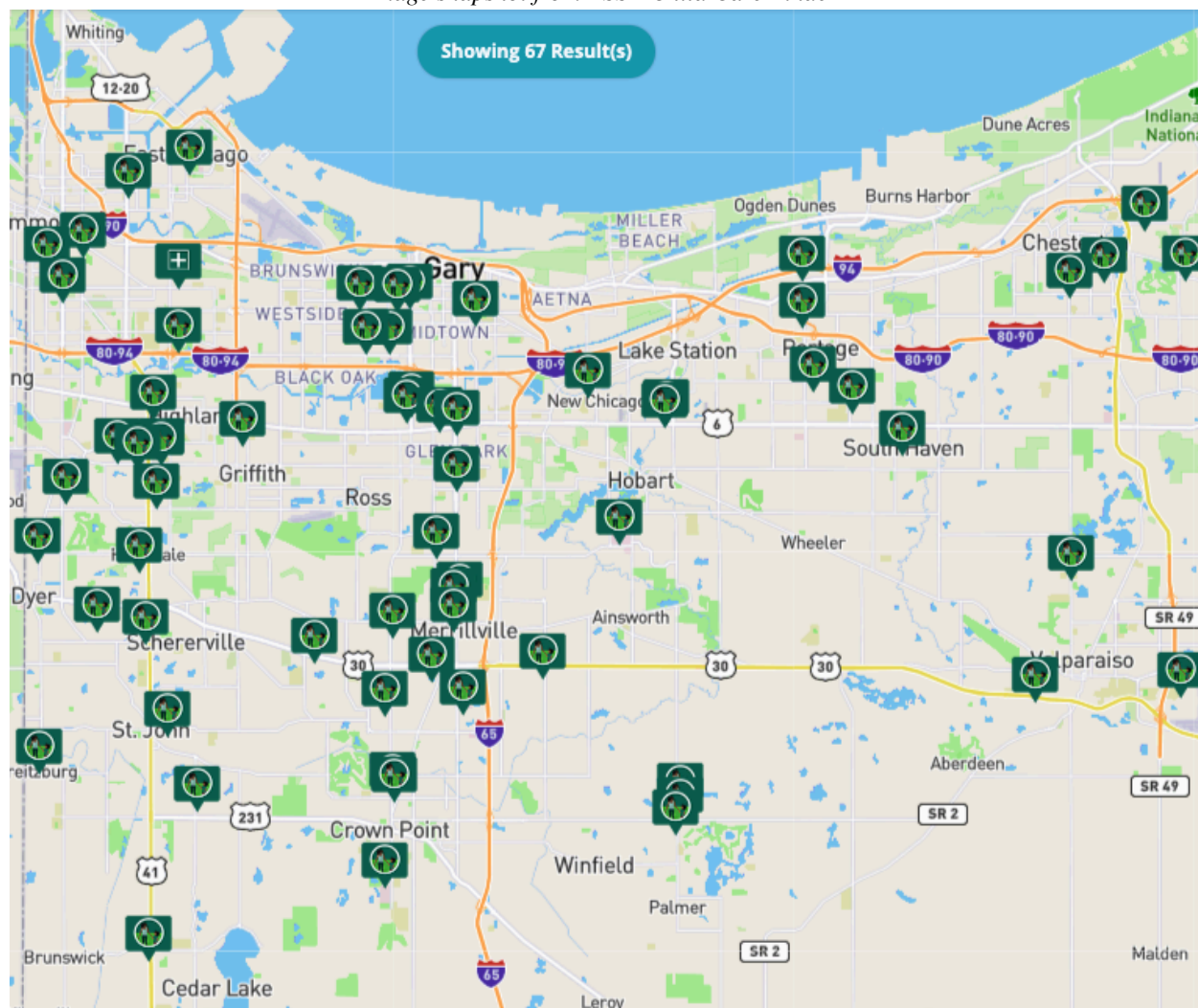
*Image snapshot from FSSA Child Care Finder*



<sup>49</sup> Source: Indiana Department of Education (2024). Corporation Enrollment by Grade Level.

## Map of Early Care and Education Sites in Lake and Porter Counties Serving Toddlers

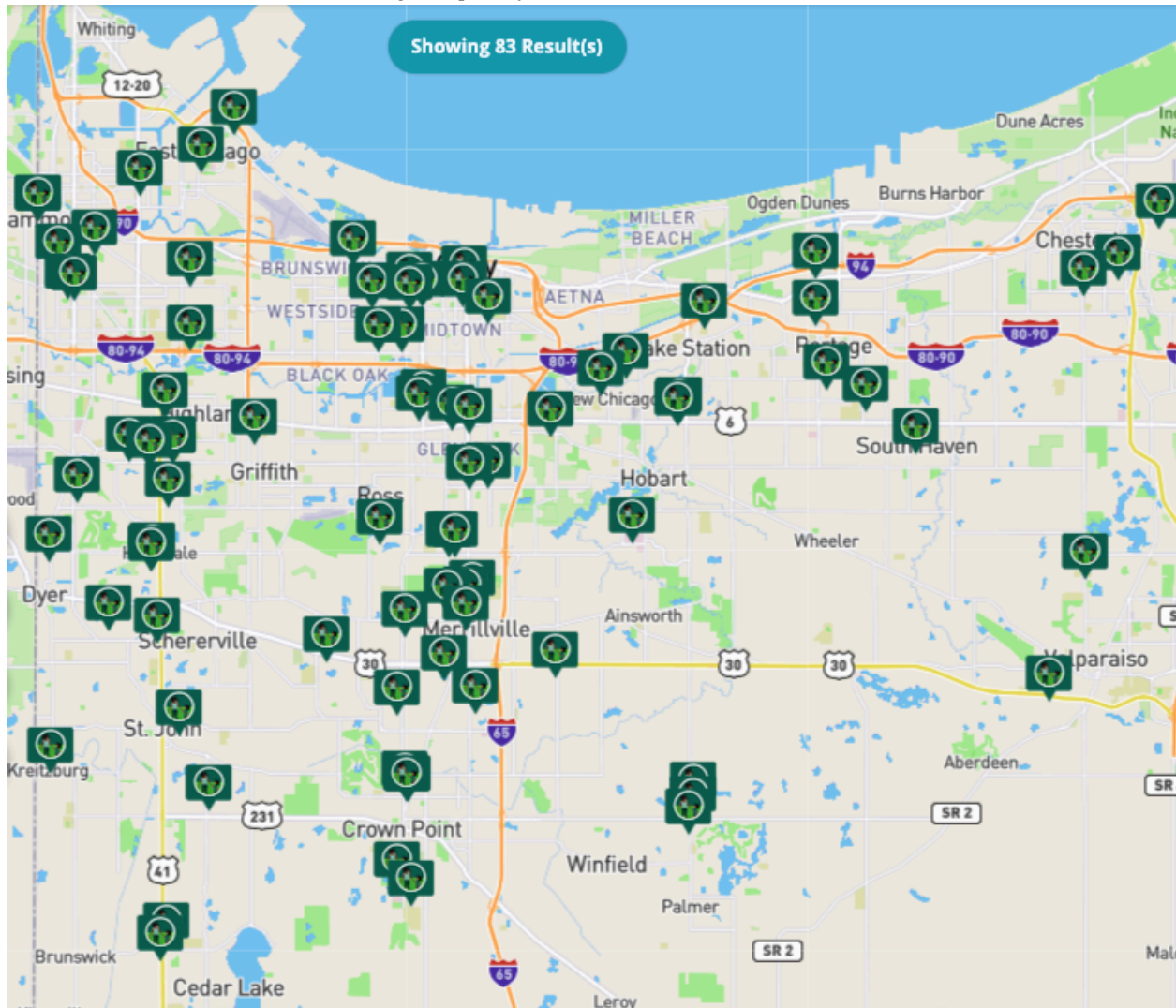
*Image snapshot from FSSA Child Care Finder*





## Map of Early Care and Education Sites in Lake and Porter Counties Serving Preschoolers

*Image snapshot from FSSA Child Care Finder*



## APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HEAD START - INCOME ELIGIBLE CHILDREN SERVED

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Lake County has over 8,000 children under six living below 100% FPL (poverty) and an additional 2,147 living between 100% and 125% FPL. Porter County has 1,340 children living in poverty and an additional 393 living between 100% and 125% FPL.<sup>50</sup>

Young Children within the Federal Poverty Guidelines			
Location	<100% FPL (poverty)	<125% FPL	<185% FPL
Lake	8,447	10,594	15,215
Porter	1,340	1,733	2,732
<b>Service Area Total</b>	<b>9,787</b>	<b>12,327</b>	<b>17,947</b>
<b>% of Total Children Within the Federal Poverty Guidelines Geminus has Capacity to Serve (1,334 funded enrollment)</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>% of Total Children Within the Federal Poverty Guidelines Geminus Serves (1,672 cumulative enrollment)</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>9%</b>
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B19125.			

Based on Geminus Head Start program's funded enrollment of 1,334 children, Geminus has the capacity to serve 14% of children living at or below poverty in Lake and Porter counties, with a majority of the funded enrollment located in Lake County.

Based on the cumulative enrollment of 1,672 children served in Geminus Head Start programs, Geminus served 17% of total young children in poverty in Lake and Porter counties.

### Unmet Need for Head Start Income-Eligible Children

In Lake County, the demand for child care based on young children living in poverty is 8,447 child care slots. The supply of care is based on cumulative enrollment in Geminus Head Start and from young children served with Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) vouchers is a total of 5,739. The difference from the supply and demand creates **an unmet need of 2,708 slots in Lake County**. In Porter County, the demand for child care from children living in poverty is 1,340 slots. The supply from Geminus Head Start and CCDF is 753 slots, creating an estimated **unmet need in Porter County of 587 slots**. In both Lake and Porter counties, the unmet need for slots is greater for children ages 0-3 compared to the need for slots for children ages 3-5.

<sup>50</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B17024.



Unmet Need for Head Start Income-Eligible Children				
	<b>Supply</b> (Geminus HS/EHS and EHS-CCP cumulative enrollment)	<b>Supply</b> (Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) enrollment)	<b>Demand</b> (Young children living in poverty)	<b>Estimated Unmet Need</b> (Slots needed for children in need)
<b>Lake County Total Under 6</b>	1,552	4,187	8,447	<b>2,708</b>
Ages 0-2	431	1,759	4,118	<b>1,928</b>
Ages 3-5	1,121	2,427	4,329	<b>781</b>
<b>Porter County Total Under 6</b>	119	634	1,340	<b>587</b>
Ages 0-2	26	242	615	<b>347</b>
Ages 3-5	93	393	725	<b>239</b>
<b>Service Area Total Total Under 6</b>	1,671	4,821	9,787	<b>3,295</b>
Ages 0-2	457	2,001	4,733	<b>2,275</b>
Ages 3-5	1,214	2,820	5,054	<b>1,020</b>
<p><i>EHS count includes child slots only and does not include slots for pregnant women.</i></p> <p><i>The income eligibility threshold for CCDF increased from 127% of the federal poverty threshold to 150% in July 2023, increasing the number of children and families eligible for assistance.</i></p> <p>Geminus Data Source: Geminus Head Start, Program Information Report, 2023-24 Cumulative Enrollment.  CCDF Source: FSSA OECOSL, CCDF County Fact Sheets December 2023.  Children in Poverty Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B19125.</p>				

## High-Quality Early Care and Education Availability

### QUALITY

High-quality early care and education in Indiana is defined as a program rated at Paths to QUALITY™ Levels 3 or 4 or an approved nationally accredited program. These programs move beyond standard health and safety requirements and offer a planned curriculum. As of October 4, 2024, 51%—or 196 programs—were considered high quality in Lake County. In Porter County, 61%—or 33 programs—were considered high quality. Lake and Porter counties both have a higher



percentage of programs that are high quality compared to Indiana overall, where 44% are high quality.

Percentage of Early Care and Education Programs that are High Quality			
	Total Programs	High-Quality Programs	Percentage of Programs that are High Quality
Indiana	4,273	1,872	44%
Lake	387	196	51%
Porter	54	33	61%
Service Area Subtotal	441	229	52%
Source: Brighter Futures Indiana (August 6, 2024). Brighter Futures Indiana Data Center.			

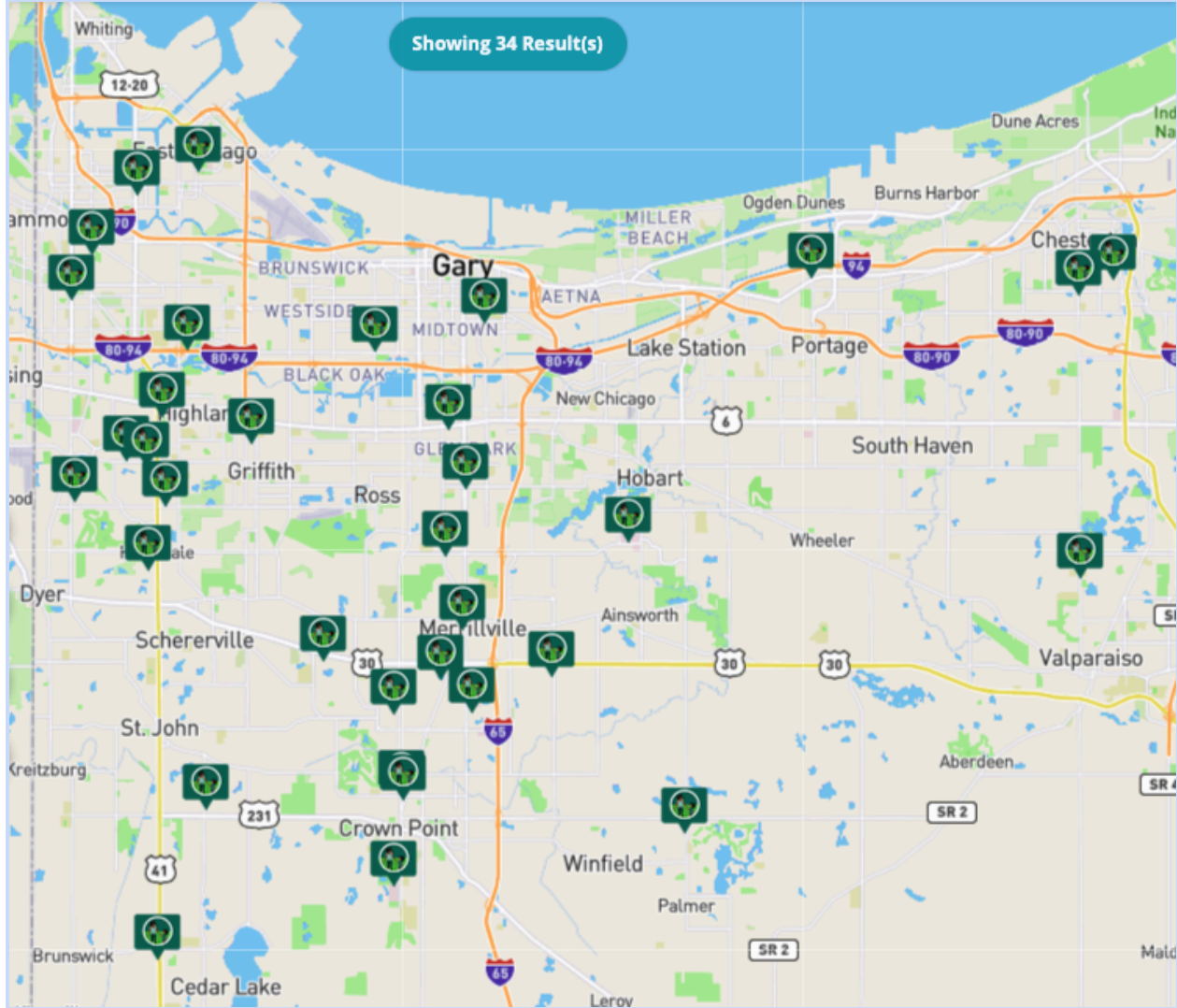
Lake County's early care and education programs have the capacity to serve nearly two thirds (63%; 8,448) of children in a high-quality program seat. Porter County has a higher percentage of high-quality capacity, with the space to fill 84% (2,223) of the total capacity (2,659) in a high-quality seat. The percentages in Lake and Porter counties are higher than the state overall where 55% of seats are in a high-quality program.

Percentage of Capacity in High-Quality Programs			
	Total Capacity	High-Quality Capacity	Percentage of Capacity that are High Quality
Indiana	189,095	103,083	55%
Lake	13,374	8,448	63%
Porter	2,659	2,223	84%
Service Area Subtotal	16,033	10,671	67%
Source: Brighter Futures Indiana. (October 4, 2024). Brighter Futures Indiana Data Center.			

The map below is a snapshot from FSSA Child Care Finder, showing high-quality licensed centers registered to serve children 0-5 years of age in Lake and Porter counties.

## Map of High-Quality Early Care and Education Sites in Lake and Porter Counties

*Image snapshot from FSSA Child Care Finder*



### SUBSIDIZED EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

There are assistance programs available to help families afford care. In Indiana, the two main publicly funded early care and education programs outside of HS/EHS are the Child Care Development Fund vouchers and On My Way Pre-K.

#### *Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)*

The Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) provides voucher assistance to low-income families for child care so they can work or attend school. In 2023, 64% of total vouchers went to children under 6 years of age in Lake and Porter counties.

Children Served in Early Care and Education with a CCDF Voucher						
		Under 1 Year Old	1-2 Years Old	3-5 Years Old	5 Years Old	Total Under 6 (2023)
Lake	Number of Children	317	1,442	2,361	66	4,187
	Percentage of Total Vouchers	5%	22%	36%	1%	
Porter	Number of Children	43	199	389	4	173
	Percentage of Total Vouchers	5%	21%	41%	0.4%	
Source: FSSA OECOSL, CCDF County Fact Sheets December 2023.						

Recent policy changes may impact the number of children served through CCDF. Effective July 1, 2023, initial family income eligibility for CCDF increased from 127% of the federal poverty level to 150% - which equals around \$45,000 in annual income for a family of four. This expansion created access for approximately 11,000 more children and families to receive assistance. If more families become eligible to receive CCDF vouchers, then there will also need to be enough seats within child care programs to meet the demand. In Lake County, there are 374 CCDF-eligible programs with over 12,000 eligible seats for youth under 13. In Porter County, there are 58 CCDF-eligible programs with over 2,700 seats for youth under 13.

#### *On My Way Pre-K*

On My Way Pre-K (OMWPK) awards grants to low-income families with children 4 years of age, so that they may have access to high-quality pre-K the year before they begin kindergarten. In order to qualify, a parent must also be working or enrolled in school. In the 2023-2024 program year, nearly 8,000 children were served in an OMWPK program across Indiana, an increase of 28% over the 2022-23 program year (6,230). In Lake County, 679 children were served in an OMWPK program, which is an increase of 36% since the 2021-22 program year (500). Porter County enrolled 125 children in OMWPK, which increased by 30% (96) over last year. To monitor OMWPK participation in the 2024-25 program year, visit <https://www.in.gov/fssa/5688.htm>.

Children with On My Way Pre-K Vouchers					
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Indiana	3,517	2,476	4,793	6,230	7,990
Lake	297	184	336	500	679
Porter	20	36	94	96	125
Source: Family and Social Services Administration, On My Way Pre-K County Grant Enrollment, <a href="https://www.in.gov/fssa/5688.htm">https://www.in.gov/fssa/5688.htm</a> .					

Recent policy changes have likely impacted the number of children served through OMWPK. Effective July 1, 2023, initial family income eligibility for OMWPK increased from 127% of the federal poverty level to 150% - which equals around \$45,000 in annual income for a family of four. This expansion created access for approximately 11,000 more children and families to receive assistance.

## 7. Stakeholder Feedback

Geminus Head Start conducted stakeholder feedback with parents/guardians of current HS/EHS participants. Feedback was collected to gather input on how to improve the program and to learn about the general experiences families have with Geminus Head Start.

### PARENT/ GUARDIAN FEEDBACK

Geminus Head Start gathered 81 responses, including four Spanish-speaking families, in the spring of 2024 on the parent/ guardian survey. The responses are fewer than in years prior to the 2023-24 school year. Geminus Head Start staff are exploring new distribution tactics to increase the number of respondents in future years.

The survey was distributed to all Geminus Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Head Start-CCP locations. Families from a variety of program sites completed the survey to express their overall experience with Geminus Head Start and answer specific questions on barriers to attendance, communication preferences, and resource needs.

Survey respondents indicated the following as their Geminus school/program:

- |                                       |                                     |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Alexander Hamilton Elementary      | 10. Safe Haven Academy              |
| 2. Anonei Park Academy                | 11. South Haven Elementary          |
| 3. Early Learning Academy             | 12. Southridge                      |
| 4. Faith Child Care Center            | 13. St. Mark Early Learning Academy |
| 5. Faith Child Care Home              | 14. The Arc                         |
| 6. Paul Saylor Elementary             | 15. TradeWinds                      |
| 7. Ridge View Elementary              | 16. Wiggles & Giggles               |
| 8. Ridgewood                          |                                     |
| 9. Robertson Child Development Center |                                     |

Length of participation in Geminus Head Start programs varied for respondents. Nearly half (41%) had been participating for 1-3 years, and about one third (35%) had been participating for less than one year. One quarter (25%) percent had been participating for 3 years or more.

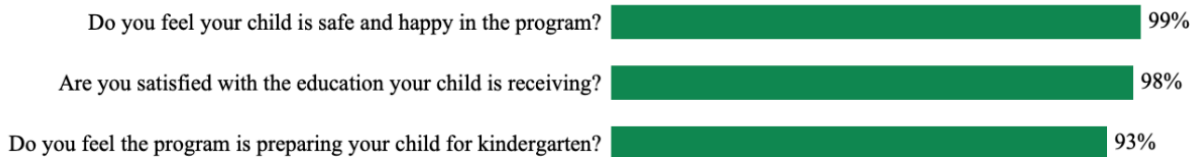
### Experience with Geminus Head Start Programs and Staff

Overall, respondents had a positive experience with Geminus Head Start programs. Nearly all respondents (98%) reported that they were satisfied with the education that their child received at the HS/EHS programs, and 99% reported they felt their child was safe and happy at their HS/EHS site. Further, 93% felt that HS/EHS prepared their child for kindergarten or their next

level of education. One respondent stated, “[*Geminus HS/EHS programs*] have done such an amazing job with my son, he is more than ready for kindergarten.”

## Parent/Guardian Satisfaction with Geminus Head Start

N = 81

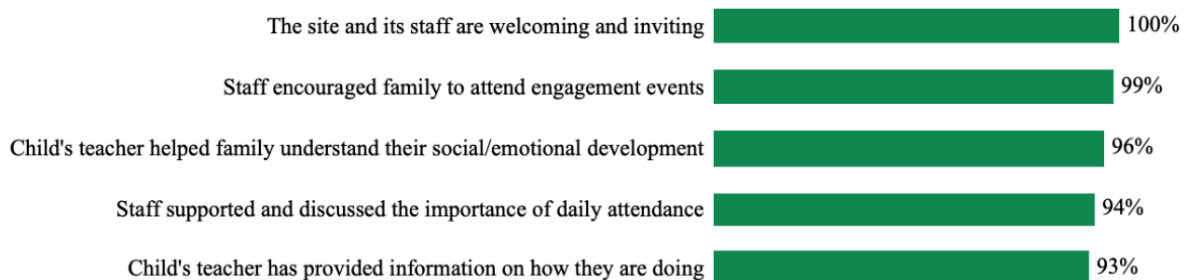


Respondents also reported a positive experience with their child’s HS/EHS staff and teachers. Nearly all respondents (99%) stated that HS/EHS staff encouraged participation in family engagement events such as School Family Connection, Parent University, Financial Empowerment, and Connecting Parents with Conscious Discipline. Further, all respondents felt that their HS/EHS site and staff members were welcoming. One respondent stated, *“I just want to say how grateful I am for everyone at this school, from everyone in the office, teachers, as well as lunch ladies, janitors—everyone has been beyond welcoming and more than kind to me and my family.”*

Additionally, 96% of respondents indicated that teachers and staff members helped parents/guardians understand their child’s social and emotional development and needs. Nearly all (94%) reported that HS/EHS staff discussed the importance of daily attendance, furthering positive outcomes for children. One respondent noted, *“I am very satisfied and truly grateful for the teachers, staff, and the Head Start program. Everyone involved has been very helpful and played a great part in the growth of our child.”* Another respondent shared: *“Estoy muy feliz que mi niña esté en el programa! Todos el personal es muy amable siempre, y ella ama asistir a clases, y a sus maestras.”*

## Parent/Guardian Experience With Geminus Head Start Staff

N=81





Additionally, families that were assigned a Head Start Case Manager or Family Advocate work to set achievable goals with families. Ninety seven percent of respondents noted that these staff members helped families achieve their goals.

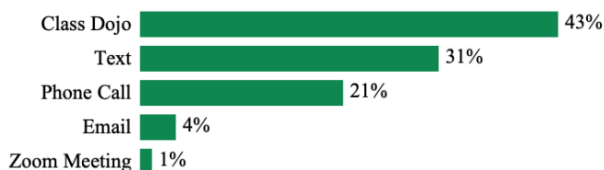
### Communication

Respondents indicated their preferred communication method during the school year. Nearly half of respondents (43%) preferred Class Dojo, and nearly one third (31%) preferred text messages. Additionally, 21% preferred phone call, and the remaining 5% preferred email or Zoom meetings.

Ninety four percent of respondents stated that HS/EHS staff encouraged downloading apps and other resources to help improve communication efforts. Additionally, 95% received a monthly newsletter and calendar with upcoming events so that parents/guardians could plan ahead.

#### Preferred Communication Methods

N = 81



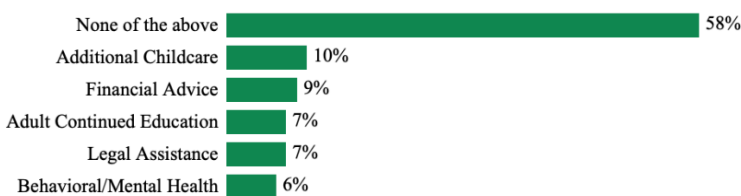
### Resources

Nine in 10 respondents (90%) reported that they received community resources to support their family's needs. Respondents were asked to report on resources they were still in need of at the time of the survey. Over half of

respondents (58%) indicated that they received all resources needed from HS/EHS and other Geminus programs. Other services that respondents were still in need of included additional child care, financial advising, legal assistance and child support, among others.

#### Top Resources Families Need

N = 81

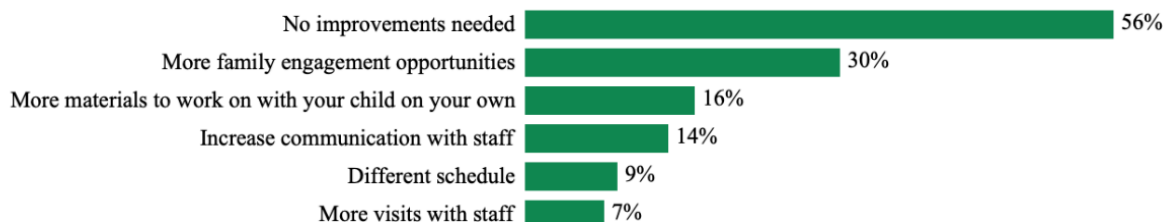


### Opportunities for Improvement

More than half of respondents (56%) indicated that there were no improvements needed for Geminus Head Start programs. The remaining 44% of respondents shared opportunities to improve services, including offering more family engagement activities, providing additional materials to work on with children at home, and increasing communication with staff members. A few responses were related to improvements in program schedule and offering. One respondent noted how the schedule impacts their ability to work, *“Short notices of no school days or switching school days or random early releases that are not in school calendar schedule makes it difficult to obtain employment.”*

## Top Opportunities for Improvement

N = 81



Overall, Geminus Head Start received positive comments and praise from parents and guardians on their programming and staff.

***“I absolutely love the head start program I’ve seen so much improvement over the years and the staff is absolutely amazing” ~ Parent/Guardian***

## 8. Key Findings

In reviewing the public data to inform the 2023-24 Geminus Head Start Community Needs Assessment, TCG identified a number of key findings likely to inform organizational strategy and decision making in the coming years.

### The Need for Services

- The percentage of children under 6 who need care has remained consistent over the last five years in Lake County but has increased in the last five years in Porter County.
- While the total number of families receiving TANF grants decreased between 2018 and 2024, the total number of households receiving SNAP benefits increased in Lake and Porter counties. This is especially relevant given in April 2022, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) released a joint announcement about a change in Head Start policy which makes it easier for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households to become eligible for Head Start programs.
- Individuals in Lake County are more likely to speak a language other than English at home than those in Porter County or in Indiana in general. In Lake County, Spanish is the most common language other than English spoken at home (11% of the population). In 2023-24, Geminus served 7% of enrollment where the primary language spoken at home was Spanish or another language other than English.
- Median household income for families with children under 18 years of age was significantly lower for single-parent families than for two-parent families. This suggests these families may be especially in need of community services due to lower average



household income. The majority (75%) of children and pregnant women served by Geminus in the 2023-24 program year were from single-parent households.

### **Early Care and Education Program Capacity**

- The capacity of licensed early care and education programs in Lake County can serve just over half of children under 6 who need care in Lake County (59%), and just over one third of the need in Porter County (37%).
- More licensed centers are available to older children than to younger children. In fact, nearly twice as many centers are available to preschoolers than to infants in Lake and Porter counties.

### **Geminus Meeting the Needs**

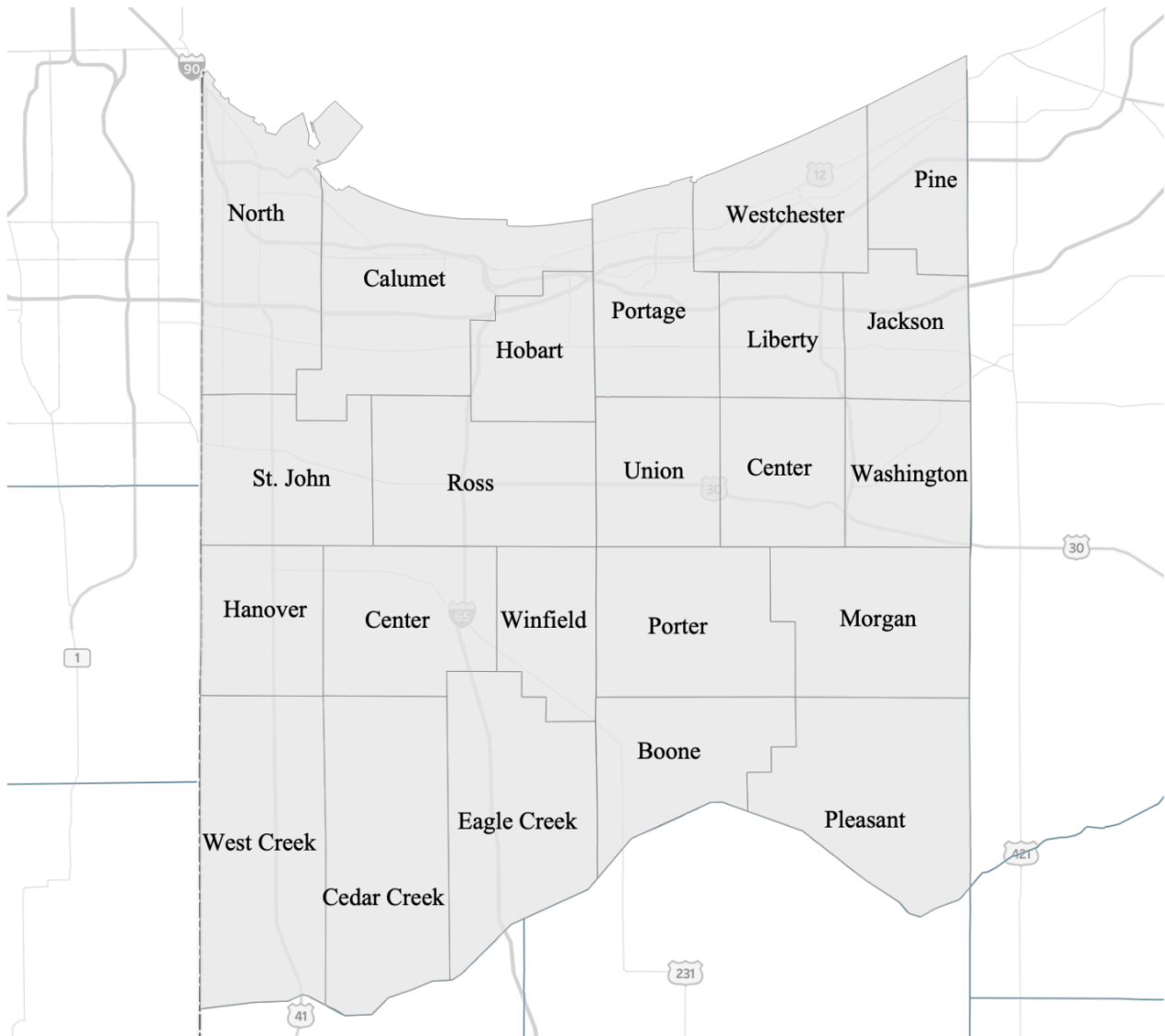
- Geminus Head Start saw high rates of chronic absenteeism in the 2023-24 program year (66% for HS, 43% for EHS, 53% for EHS-CCP). These rates are lower than those in the 2022-23 school year, but may still be higher than optimal. Top barriers to attendance indicated by parents/guardians included illness, transportation, and appointments.
- When asked what resources their family was in need of, top responses from parents/guardians included: additional childcare, financial advice, and adult education.

### **Current Issues Facing Early Care and Education Programs**

- Nationally and at the state level, staff vacancies are causing closed classrooms and under enrollment in Head Start programs, an issue that extends beyond Head Start to all types of early care and education programs in Indiana. A key reason for staff vacancies and high turnover is compensation.

# Appendix A

## Townships in Lake and Porter Counties



# Appendix B

## Median Annual Family Income and Child Population Living Under 125% FPL by Township

County	Township	Median Annual Income for Families with Children Under 18 Years	Number of Children Under 6 Years Living Under 125% FPL
Lake County	Calumet township	\$33,794	4,441
	Cedar Creek township	\$111,703	19
	Center township	\$113,183	108
	Eagle Creek township	\$93,370	0
	Hanover township	\$141,276	0
	Hobart township	\$64,809	891
	North township	\$54,946	3,891
	Ross township	\$83,396	592
	St. John township	\$124,159	632
	West Creek township	\$133,239	3
	Winfield township	\$124,598	17
Porter County	Boone township	\$117,500	47
	Center township	\$109,356	574
	Jackson township	\$144,588	0
	Liberty township	\$125,050	35
	Morgan township	\$157,039	0
	Pine township	\$84,896	39
	Pleasant township	\$110,833	8
	Portage township	\$78,534	485
	Porter township	\$113,364	79
	Union township	\$112,195	127
	Washington township	\$119,335	18
	Westchester township	\$92,835	321

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables B19125 and B17024.

# Appendix C

## Children Under 18 Years Old With a Known Disability by Township

County	Township	Number of Children Under 18 Years with a Known Disability	Percentage of Children Under 18 Years Old with a Known Disability
Lake County	Calumet township	1,211	7%
	Cedar Creek township	18	1%
	Center township	358	4%
	Eagle Creek township	18	7%
	Hanover township	18	1%
	Hobart township	80	1%
	North township	1,963	6%
	Ross township	215	3%
	St. John township	333	3%
	West Creek township	157	10%
	Winfield township	121	5%
Porter County	Boone township	16	1%
	Center township	167	3%
	Jackson township	39	4%
	Liberty township	60	3%
	Morgan township	22	4%
	Pine township	4	1%
	Pleasant township	35	4%
	Portage township	411	5%
	Porter township	50	3%
	Union township	61	4%
	Washington township	81	7%
	Westchester township	228	7%
Data for children under 5 with a disability by township is unreportable due to low numbers. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022, Table S1810.			

# Appendix D

## Early Care and Education Programs and Capacity in Cities

### Lake County, Indiana Cities

City	Total Programs	High Quality Programs	% High Quality Programs	Total Capacity	High Quality Capacity	% High Quality Capacity
Gary	149	68	45.6%	3,779	1,979	52.4%
Hammond	81	41	50.6%	2,162	1,351	62.5%
Merrillville	49	24	49.0%	1,968	1,216	61.8%
East Chicago	25	15	60.0%	520	402	77.3%
Crown Point	19	12	63.2%	1,101	943	85.6%
Hobart	19	8	42.1%	784	357	45.5%
Highland	10	6	60.0%	652	408	62.6%
Whiting	10	7	70.0%	174	92	52.9%
Griffith	4	3	75.0%	466	406	87.1%
Schererville	4	2	50.0%	354	244	68.9%
Dyer	3	0	0.0%	230	0	0.0%
Lake Station	3	3	100.0%	105	105	100.0%
Saint John	3	1	33.3%	205	139	67.8%
Cedar Lake	2	2	100.0%	207	207	100.0%
Lowell	2	1	50.0%	71	6	8.5%
Munster	2	2	100.0%	402	402	100.0%
Gray	1	0	0.0%	3	0	0.0%
Winfield	1	1	100.0%	191	191	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>50.6%</b>	<b>13,374</b>	<b>8,448</b>	<b>63.2%</b>

### Porter County, Indiana Cities

City	Total Programs	High Quality Programs	% High Quality Programs	Total Capacity	High Quality Capacity	% High Quality Capacity
Valparaiso	24	20	83.3%	1,154	1,020	88.4%
Chesterton	11	5	45.5%	686	648	94.5%
Portage	11	6	54.5%	675	483	71.6%
Hebron	4	1	25.0%	104	60	57.7%
Porter	4	1	25.0%	40	12	30.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>61.1%</b>	<b>2,659</b>	<b>2,223</b>	<b>83.6%</b>

Data and Image Source: Brighter Futures Indiana. (October 4, 2024). Brighter Futures Indiana Data Center.