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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**About Promise Early Education Center**

Promise Early Education Center (Promise) is a premier early learning program in Central Maine dedicated to educating the whole child and preparing children for success in school and opportunities beyond. As the Head Start program for Androscoggin County, Promise offers a results-driven curriculum taught by degreed, licensed teachers and engages parents in their child’s learning through partnership and commitment.

In addition to Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS) programs, Promise offers early education, pre-K programs, and childcare to children and families who are not eligible for Head Start. Like Head Start programs, early education is available to children ages 6 weeks – 3 years, and pre-K is available to children ages 3 – 5. Full-day, year-round childcare is available on a limited basis for children ages 6 weeks – 5 years. At Promise, we help all families put their children first. Last year, Promise served 269 children in Androscoggin County.

**Community Assessment Purpose & Process**

Promise’s programs meet a critical community need for high-quality, affordable early childhood care and education. By engaging in regular review of community, county, and state-wide data, Promise is able to ensure that its programs and services are informed by and responsive to actual community needs. By engaging in regular review of data about the children and families it services, Promise is able to see how program statistics compare to community, county, and state-wide data and can learn from internal program trends.

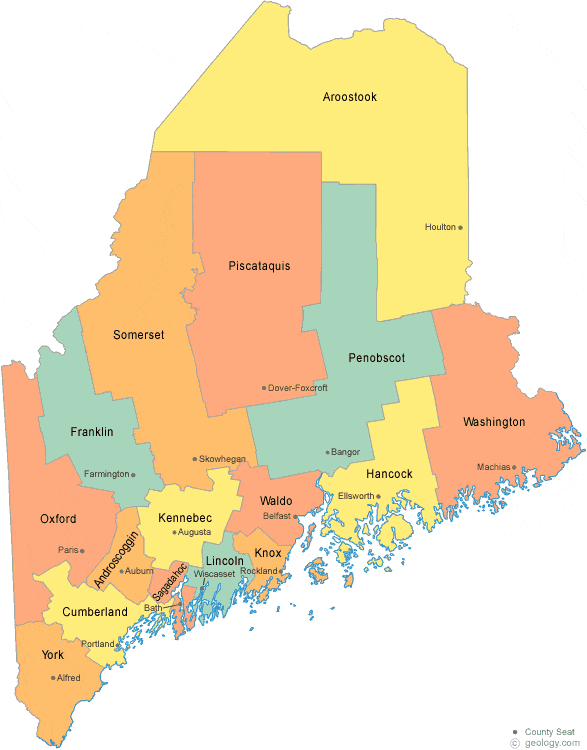
Community assessment is a comprehensive process that involves review of dozens of data sources and documentation of data points that demonstrate community need within Promise’s immediate service area of Androscoggin County and within the state of Maine. Promise engages in comprehensive community assessment once every five years per the terms of federal Office of Head Start funding requirements and updates select internal and external data points on an annual basis.

**Data Limitations**

The primary limitation of the data relied upon to write this report is that there is typically a lag between the year data is published and the year or span of years that data represents. Also, the data sources referenced in this report are not all collected or published on the same frequency, so some data may be up to nine years out of date[[1]](#footnote-1), while other data is only out of date by one year or less. While community, county, and state-wide data may not always be directly comparable, Promise’s internal program data offers a reliable, up-to-date picture of the demographics, strengths, and needs of the children and families Promise serves in Androscoggin County.

**Community Assessment Observations**

Community indicators around economic well-being, education, health, and safety at both the county and state levels demonstrate that there is a continued need for organizations like Promise to support early childhood education and provide connections for families to the resources and education they need. As the sole provider of EHS and HS programs in Androscoggin County, Promise is well-positioned to improve outcomes for children and families most in need who reside in this service area. In fact, Promise consistently reports improved development outcomes for enrolled children, and extended program duration has shown to be linked with even greater child outcomes. Finally, the ways in which Promise supports the whole family – parents and guardians as well as children – increases families’ chances of achieving their goals.

**GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA**

Promise’s service area includes all of Androscoggin County, ME – approximately 497 total square miles made up of 468 square miles of land and 29 square miles of water. It is the second smallest county in Maine by total area.[[2]](#endnote-1) Androscoggin County is bordered by Cumberland County to the South, Oxford County to the West, Franklin County to the North, and Kennebec and Sagadahoc Counties to the East.

**POPULATION**

**Total Population**

Androscoggin County is the fifth most populated county in Maine with a population of 111,532. The county’s population comprises 8% of the total population in Maine (see Table 1) and has a population density of 224 people per square mile of land.

The two largest cities in Androscoggin County are Auburn and Lewiston with populations of 22,801 and 36,381, respectively. The combined population of these two cities represents more than half (55%) of the county’s total population.[[3]](#endnote-2) Auburn and Lewiston are known locally as the Twin Cities or Lewiston – Auburn (L – A).

Image retrieved from Geology.com.   
<https://geology.com/county-map/maine.shtml>.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Table 1: Total Population estimate, State & County Comparison | |
|  | **Population** |
| Maine | 1,372,000 |
| Androscoggin County | 111,532 |

**Births**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Table 2: Births – State & County Comparison | |
|  | **2023 Births**  **(#)** |
| Maine | 11,511 |
| Androscoggin County | 1,107 |

The number of births in both Maine and Androscoggin County decreased from the previous year (see Table 2).[[4]](#endnote-3) .Androscoggin County has since 2015 decreased in the amount of births.

**Population by Age**

In many instances, this report focuses on data for children who are five and younger due to the fact that Promise programs only serve children in this age range. Children under five make up 4.6% of Maine’s total population and 5.6% of Androscoggin County’s total population (see Table 3).[[5]](#endnote-4)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Age Group | Maine #  (2022) | Androscoggin County (2022) |
| < 5 | 62,120 | 5,970 |
| 5 to 17 | 187,186 | 17,278 |
|  |  |  |
| < 18 | 249,306 | 23,248 |

**Table 3 Children under 5:**

Recent data is available for

population by single age for Maine

children aged five and below, but

the latest data on children by

single age for Androscoggin

County is from 2022 (see Table 4).

The total number of children aged 5 and under in Maine and Androscoggin County is 76,761 and 7,568, respectively.[[6]](#endnote-5) Androscoggin County has the fourth highest number of children aged 5 and under of all counties in Maine.

**Table 4:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Single Age | Maine  (2022)[[7]](#endnote-6) | Promise Enrollment (2022-2023)[[8]](#endnote-7) |
| <1 | 12002 | 15 |
| 1 | 11,642 | 25 |
| 2 | 12,599 | 21 |
| 3 | 12,727 | 61 |
| 4 | 12,774 | 141 |
| 5 | 13,052 | 4 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 5: Population by Race/Ethnicity – State & County Comparison | | | | |
|  | **Maine (2020)[[9]](#endnote-8)** | | **Androscoggin County (2020)[[10]](#endnote-9)** | |
|  | **#** | **%** | **#** | **%** |
| Hispanic or Latino | 8,953 | 3.5 | 809 | 3.5 |
| Non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaskan Native alone | 1,690 | 0.7 | 63 | 0.3 |
| Non-Hispanic Asian or Pacific Islander alone | 3,407 | 1.4 | 205 | 0.9 |
| Non-Hispanic Black or African American alone | 8,564 | 3.4 | 2,798 | 12 |
| Non-Hispanic Two or More Races or Some Other Race | 18,900 | 7.5 | 1,885 | 8.1 |
| Non-Hispanic White alone | 210,760 | 83,5 | 17,508 | 75.2 |
| Total less than age 18 | 252,274 | 100 | 23,268 | 100 |

**Population by Race/**

**Ethnicity**

The vast majority of people in Maine and Androscoggin County (83.5% and 75.2%, respectively) are “non-Hispanic white” (see Table 5).

Children enrolled in Promise programs are predominantly “white, non-Hispanic” or “black or African American, non-Hispanic” (see Table 6).

**Population by Family Nativity**

Family nativity is becoming an increasingly relevant data point for Androscoggin County and many other Counties in Maine due to rising immigration to the state over time. This is also a difficult data point to report accurately due to the number of new immigrants arriving each day and the fact that this data is not reported at frequent intervals.

**ECONOMIC WELL-BEING**

**Poverty**

Statistics in Table 6 are based on the number of individuals for whom poverty status was determined. For all three categories – all ages, age 0-17 and under 5 – Androscoggin County has higher poverty rates than the state of Maine overall. **Table 6:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Child Poverty Rates | Rate for  Children |
| Maine | 13.8% |
| Androscoggin County | 1% |

According to the latest data available, the largest demographic living in poverty were females aged 25-34 (9.6%), then females age 18-24 (7.6%), and finally females less than five years old (6.5%).[[11]](#endnote-10)

Androscoggin’s rate of child poverty is third highest in the state. Androscoggin counties rate of 4.6% of children receiving TANF is the highest in the state.

**Employment**

Unemployment rates in Androscoggin County and Maine have declined steadily since 2013. As of 2022 Androscoggin County has the same unemployment rate as the state of Maine – both 3%.

Workforce participation for Maine parents of young children varied between a high of 79.8% in Sagadahoc to a low of 51.1% in Franklin County in 2017-2021 9data not available for 2020 due to Covid).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Table 7: | Promise HS/EHS  (2022-2023) | |
|  | Hispanic/ Latino | Non-Hispanic |
| American Indian or Alaskan Native | 0 | 1 |
| Asian | 0 | 2 |
| Black or African American | 3 | 126 |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 1 | 0 |
| White | 4 | 103 |
| Biracial/Multiracial | 5 | 14 |
| Other | 0 | 1 |

For Promise EHS and HS programs, 95% of families of enrolled children ha at least one parent/guardian who is employed.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Table 8: Employment Status of Parents/Guardians with Children Enrolled in Promise Programs | |
| Total number of families in which: | |
| At least one parent/guardian is employed, in job training, or in school | 171 | |
| Neither/No parent/guardian is employed, in job training, or in school (unemployed, retired or disabled) | 73 | |
| The number of all families in which at least one parent/guardian is a: | |
| Member of the U.S. military on active duty | 3 | |
| Veteran of the U.S. military | 3 | |

**Income**

In 2022 Androscoggin County’s median household income is $64,500 – lower than the median household income for Maine overall ($68,251).

The estimated living wage for a single adult with two children in Androscoggin County is $44.67 (compared with $49.94 for Maine). The living wage is defined as the wage needed to cover basic family expenses (basic needs budget[[12]](#footnote-2)) plus all relevant taxes.[[13]](#footnote-3) While the living wage increases each year based on rising household costs due to inflation, many families do not receive an annual wage or salary increase.

**Public Assistance**

On a county level, in 2023, the use of TANF among Maine's youngest children varied between a high of 7.1% in Androscoggin County and 6.2% in Piscataquis County to a low of 1.7% in Hancock County and 2.5% in Lincoln County and 2.7% in Sagadahoc County. The rate of SNAP use for children under age 6 varies by county in 2023 was above 30% in three counties- Washington County at 35.9%, Oxford at 32.6% and Androscoggin at 31.7%. By contrast, Sagadahoc, Cumberland and York Counties had the lowest rates, all between 14.2% and 15.6%.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Table 9: Children 5 years and younger in Families Receiving Public Assistance, by Type – State & County Comparison | | |
|  | **Maine 2023** | **Androscoggin County 2023** |
| TANF and/or SNAP (2023)[[14]](#endnote-11) | 9,646 | 2,800 |

For Children aged five and under, Table 9 shows the number of children who received TANF and/or SNAP.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Table 10: Families with Children 5 and Under Enrolled in Promise Programs Who Receive Public Assistance, by Type | |
| Income at or below 100% of federal poverty line | 90 | |
| TANF/SSI/SNAP | 134 | |
| Foster Care | 7 | |
| Homelessness | 7 | |
| Other | 31 | |

In addition to TANF and SNAP, Promise tracks the number of enrolled children who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Women, Infants & Children (WIC) benefits (see Table 10).

**EDUCATION**

**Early Care & Education Programs**

Early care and education programs typically serve children from birth through age 5 and sometimes older. There are numerous settings for these programs including childcare centers, family childcare homes, nursery schools, license-exempt childcare, Head Start, public pre-school, and in-home care.[[15]](#footnote-4) Table 11 is the most current data for all licensed childcare facilities. More recent data could be pulled by looking at individual childcare provider records through the Department of Health & Human Services.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 11: Licensed Childcare Facilities – State & County Comparison | | | |
|  | **Type of Licensed Child Care Facility** | **2024** | |
|  | **#** | **%** |
| Maine | Licensed center-based child care | 795 | 53% |
| Licensed family childcare | 703 | 47% |
| Total licensed providers | 1498 | 100 |
| Androscoggin County | Licensed center-based child care | 74 | 44% |
| Licensed family childcare | 94 | 56% |
| Total licensed providers | 168 | 100 |

A list of childcare programs in Androscoggin County by town appears in Table 12 below. This chart is not all-inclusive. Specifically, this chart does not capture license-exempt providers who also do not accept childcare subsidies and therefore are not required to report data on their programs to the state. All Promise programs are Star 5. The red text in table 12 shows where Promise programs are located.

Maine’s QRIS, called Rising Stars for ME. Rising Stars for ME is a five-Star program designed to increase awareness of the importance of quality early childhood and out of school time experiences.  
  
Rising Stars for ME has three goals: • To recognize early childhood and out-of-school time programs that meet standards of evidence-based quality practices.   
• To encourage and support programs to engage in continuous quality improvement efforts.   
• To provide families with identifiable standards of quality.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 12: Licensed Child Care Programs in Androscoggin County that Accept Child Care Subsidies[[16]](#footnote-5) [[17]](#endnote-12) | | | | | | |
|  | **Child Care Programs by Rising Stars Program (Star 1 is lowest and Star 5 is highest)[[18]](#endnote-13)** | | | | | |
| **Star 1** | **Star 2** | **Star 3** | **Star 4** | **Star 5** | **TOTAL** |
| Auburn 2 | 0 | 18 | 4 | 1 | **6** | **29** |
| Durham | 0 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 | **10** |
| Greene | 0 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | **7** |
| Leeds | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | **4** |
| Lewiston 4 | 0 | 49 | 5 | 4 | **5** | **63** |
| Lisbon/Lisbon Falls | 0 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 0 | **12** |
| Livermore/Livermore Falls 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | **1** | **6** |
| Mechanic Falls | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **5** |
| Minot | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | **5** |
| Poland | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | **5** |
| Sabattus | 0 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 0 | **11** |
| Turner | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **9** |
| Wales | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | **2** |
| TOTAL | **0** | **131** | **15** | **10** | **12** | **168** |

Promise operates five childcare classrooms (three serving children 6 weeks-3 years and two serving children 3-5). Additionally, we have six public pre-k partnership classrooms serving 4-year-olds, four six-hour head start classrooms serving children 3-5 (two of these rooms also have dually enrolled pre-k students), two EHS 6-hour rooms operating all year, and one 6 hour State funded room for children 0-3.

**Table 13:**

Promise EHS and HS programs are typically fully enrolled and have a number of families on the waitlist. Waitlist data for the 2020-2023 program years is shown above (Table 13).

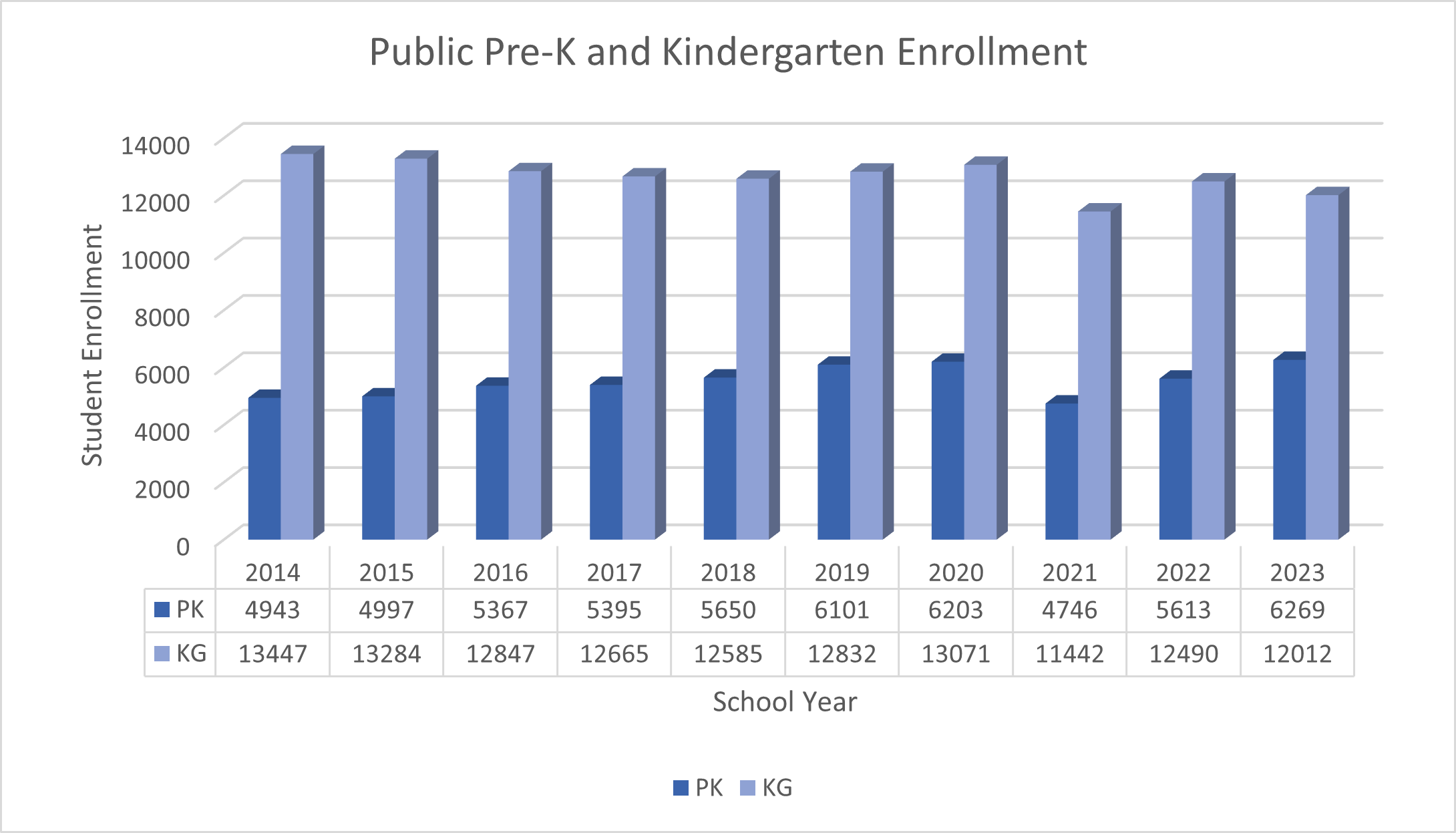
Waitlists tend to be shorter in the fall because families move from the waitlist to open EHS or HS program slots or families make other arrangements. The waitlists tend to be larger in the spring due to Promise’s promotion or registration for the coming year. Regardless of the reasons behind the data, these waitlist trends are indicative of the high demand for EHS and HS programs among families in Androscoggin County.

**Public Pre-K Enrollment**

Every school district in Androscoggin County offers public pre-K. While not every family chooses this option, existing programs have the capacity to serve all families who choose to enroll.

A significant factor in a family’s decision to enroll in public pre-K is transportation to and from home or to and from a childcare provider who is providing before and after care. For the 2017-2018 program year, 68% (98 school districts) reported that they provided transportation in both directions for pre-K students.[[19]](#endnote-14)

Lewiston Public Schools, the largest school district in Androscoggin County, had the highest public-pre-K enrollment (see Table 15). There are 53 Lewiston Public School Pre-K students and 18 Spruce Mountain School District Pre-K students who are dually enrolled in Promise programs (2023-24).

Currently, public Pre-K in Maine is available for 4-year-olds in approximately 86% of school administrative units or SAUs. **Table 14:**

**Enrollment, Age 3 and Over**

Androscoggin County has a higher number of children enrolled in early education as every school district in the county offers public pre-k and has sufficient slots to accommodate all families who want to enroll. This is not the case in all areas of the state.

Participation in early childhood education programs (EHS, HS, private pre-school, public pre-K, and kindergarten) is linked with school readiness and improved early learning and development outcomes. The eligible population for these programs is generally children aged three to five.

**Outcomes, Early Head Start & Head Start**

Promise utilizes the Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG) assessment tool to measure child developmental outcomes in six areas.[[20]](#footnote-6) By the end of the 2022-23 program year, 97% of EHS participants met or exceeded developmental expectations in each of the six assessment areas (see Figure 2). HS participants experienced significantly improved outcomes over the two assessment periods, halfway through the program year and at year end.

Promise offers both full-day (6 hours) and part-day programs for HS. Each of these options exceeds the state’s minimum instructional time requirement of 10 hours per week for pre-k students. Promise also offers before and after care to meet the needs of full-time working families.

Programming with expanded duration appears to positively impact child outcomes, these children meet or exceed in all six of the TSG assessment areas (see below).

**Outcomes, Pre-K through 12th Grade**

The TSG assessment is the most common research-based tool to measure ongoing, whole-child development among statewide public pre-K programs. Outcome data is not available due to the fact that there is no statewide standardized assessment.

In terms of academic proficiency of students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools, performance of students statewide exceeds the performance of students in Auburn Public Schools and Lewiston Public Schools in all three testing areas (see Table 15).[[21]](#endnote-15)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 15: Percent Performing at or above State Expectations, by Content Area – State and District Comparison | | | |
|  | **English Language Arts/Literacy** | **Mathematics** | **Science** |
| Maine | 50.24% | 37.05% | 58.88% |
| Auburn Public Schools | 40.77% | 28.13% | 51.84% |
| Lewiston Public Schools | 25.42% | 16.87% | 30.29% |

Similarly, the statewide graduation rate in 2022-2023 for a four-year cohort (87.3%) while the graduation rate for Auburn Public Schools (92.1%) and Lewiston Public Schools (72.5%).[[22]](#endnote-16)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Table 16: Children who Entered CDS by Primary Disability [[23]](#endnote-17) | | |
|  | **#Children,**  **Birth to <3** | **#Children,**  **Age 3 to 5** |
| Autism | 0 | 262 |
| Deaf-Blindness | 0 | 0 |
| Deafness | 0 | 3 |
| Developmental Delay | 947 | 172 |
| Emotional Disability | 0 | 17 |
| Hearing Impairment | 0 | 11 |
| Intellectual Disability | 0 | 8 |
| Multiple Disability | 0 | 26 |
| Orthopedic Impairment | 0 | 2 |
| Other Health Impairment | 0 | 180 |
| Specific Learning Disability | 0 | 0 |
| Speech or Language Impairment | 0 | 1244 |
| Traumatic Brain Injury | 0 | 1 |
| Visual Impairment including Blindness | 0 | 2 |
| Total | 947 | 1928 |

**Children with Disabilities, Birth through 5**

Child Development Services (CDS) is the state entity that oversees the determination of eligibility, screening, allocation of funds, and coordination of services for children with disabilities from birth through age five. CDS tracks early intervention services for children less than three and special education and related services for children age three to five.

In Maine, the predominant disability type for children birth through age 2 is developmental delay, and the predominant disability type for children three to five is speech or language impairment (see Table 16).

Promise works with three of the nine regional CDS sites – First Step, Opportunities and PEDS. The unduplicated number of children who received direct services at these sites is 292, 146 and 242, respectively, and the predominant disability among children who received services through these three sites is speech or language impairment.[[24]](#endnote-18)

In 2022-23 four children enrolled in Promise EHS programs and 69 children in HS programming were eligible to receive intervention services. The disabilities among children enrolled in Promise programs last year were speech (28), autism (20), ADHD (16), Developmental Delay (8) Intellectual Disability (2), and Emotional Disturbance (2).

In the current year 2023-24 through 4/1/24 we have 62 children with an IEP and 6 children with an IFSP while there are another 30 children in the referral process. Diagnosed disabilities as of 4/1/24 were Speech (33), Autism (16), ADHD (12), Developmental Delay (8), and Intellectual Disability (2). Many of our HS classrooms have 50% or more of the enrolled children eligible for special education, including both children with an active IEP and children awaiting their IEP. The significant increase in children identified with special education needs is further complicated by long wait lists and the lack of available service providers and special education classrooms to provide Part B services. As of March 2024, only 41% of children were receiving all the services listed on the IEP, 13% of children were receiving partial services listed on the IEP and 46% of children were receiving no special education services.

**English Learners**

Maine reported having 6,259 English Learners (ELs) as of 2023 enrollment data – 3.6% of the total student population – an increase from the prior school year when there were 5,614 ELs.[[25]](#endnote-19) Of these ELs, 17,248 are age three to five.[[26]](#endnote-20)

Androscoggin County has non-English speakers with the most predominant native languages being Portuguese, French, Somali, Swahili, Pashtu, and Spanish.

English is the predominant language spoken at home by children enrolled in both EHS and HS programs -51.6% followed by African languages - 35% (2023 PIR).

**Educational Attainment, Age 18 and Over**

In Androscoggin County, the most predominant level of educational attainment among individuals age 18 – 24 (45.2%) is some college or an associate’s degree. The least common level of educational attainment among individuals ages 18-24 (6.7%) is a bachelor’s degree or higher. Among the 25 and older age group, the most predominant level of educational attainment (37%) is high school graduate or an equivalency program. The least common level of educational attainment for the 25 and older age group (3.9%) is less than 9th grade.

State-wide data mirrors the trends noted above for Androscoggin County with only small differences in percent value. Maine has a higher percentage of individuals age 18-24 with a bachelor’s degree or higher, individuals age 25 and older with a bachelor’s degree and individuals age 25 and older with a graduate or professional degree (see Table 17).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 17: 2022 Population by Educational Attainment – State & County Comparison[[27]](#endnote-21) | | | | |
|  | **Androscoggin County** | | **Maine** | |
| **Total** | **Percent** | **Total** | **Percent** |
| **Estimate** | **Estimate** |  |  |
| Population 25 years and over | 57,150 | (X) | 714,260 | (X) | |
| Less than 9th grade |  |  | 34,000 | 5% | |
| High school graduate (includes equivalency) |  |  | 340,000 | 47% | |
| Associate degree |  |  | 81,000 | 11% | |
| Bachelor's degree |  |  | 169,000 | 24% | |
| Graduate degree |  |  | 92,000 | 13% |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Table 18: Educational Attainment of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of Children Enrolled in Promise Programs (PIR 2023) | |
|  | Of the total number of families, the highest level of education obtained by the child’s parent(s)/guardian(s): | |
| An advanced degree or baccalaureate degree | 51 | |
| An associate degree, vocational school, or  some college | 26 | |
| High school graduate or GED | 102 | |
| Less than high school graduate | 53 | |

Parents/guardians of children enrolled in Promise programs have a slightly lower educational attainment than the total adult populations of Androscoggin County and Maine. High school graduate or GED is the highest level of education obtained by 43.9% of HS/EHS parents/guardians (see Table 18).

Fifty-nine Promise families (25%) – EHS and HS combined – had one or more parent/guardian in job training or in school.[[28]](#endnote-22)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Table 19: | Pregnant Women | Children |
| Total with health insurance coverage | 2 | 267 |
| Enrolled in Medicaid/CHIP | 2 | 258 |
| Private Health Insurance | 0 | 9 |
| No health insurance coverage | 0 | 0 |

**HEALTH**

**Health Insurance Status**

The 2022 Androscoggin County Health Profile reports an uninsured rate in Androscoggin County for the period of 8.6% (compared to 9.5% for Maine).[[29]](#endnote-23)

Nearly all children enrolled in Promise EHS and HS programs (including pregnant women) had health insurance coverage by the end of the 2022-23 program year, and of these insured children and pregnant women, nearly all were enrolled in Medicaid and/or CHIP (see Table 19).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 20: Children’s Participation in Maine-Care – State & County Comparison[[30]](#endnote-24) | | | | |
|  | **Maine (2023)** | | **Androscoggin County (2023)** | |
|  | # | % | # | % |
| Children ages 0-5 | 39,066 | 51.8% | 4,536 | 62.8% |
| Children ages 6-18 | 94,365 | 49.7% | 10,464 | 59.4% |

MaineCare is a state-sponsored health insurance program for financially eligible Maine residents who cannot otherwise afford private health insurance. For state fiscal year 2023, a total of 133,431 were enrolled and the percentage rose to the highest rate since at least 2010. In 2023, 51.8% of children ages 0 -5 were enrolled in MaineCare, while the rate was 49.7% for ages 6-18.

In terms of county rates, as of June 30, 2023, six counties-- Washington, Piscataquis, Somerset, Oxford, Aroostook and Androscoggin Counties had rates above 60%.  Washington County had the highest rate at 71.1%. By contrast, three counties had rates at or below 39%- Cumberland (37.1%), Sagadahoc (37.9%), and York (39.0%).

**Access to Healthcare Providers**

One hundred percent of children and pregnant women enrolled in Promise EHS and HS programs have access to a medical home. At the end of the 2022-23 enrollment year, 95% of participants were up-to-date on a schedule of age-appropriate preventative and primary health care.[[31]](#footnote-7)

Eighty-four percent of Promise participants had continuous, accessible dental care provided by a dentist.

All pregnant women (100%) received prenatal health care and prenatal education on fetal development while enrolled in Promise EHS. One pregnant woman received mental health interventions and follow-up while enrolled in EHS, one received substance abuse treatment, and one received a professional dental examination and/or treatment.

**Immunizations**

Androscoggin County has the fourth lowest percentage of 2–3-year-olds in Maine who are up-to-date with recommended immunizations (see Table 21).[[32]](#footnote-8)

Eighty-eight percent of EHS participants and 94% of HS participants have been determined by a healthcare professional to be up-to-date on all immunizations appropriate for their age. These rates far exceed the rates at the County and state levels.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tavle 21: | 2-3 Year Olds Up-To-Date with Recommended Immunizations |
| Maine | 72% |
| Androscoggin County | 64.2% |

**Food Insecurity**

Androscoggin County has a higher childhood food insecurity rate than Maine – 17.1% compared to 14.6%.[[33]](#endnote-25) This data point represents children under age 18 living in households where in the previous 12 months there was an uncertainty of having or an inability to acquire enough food for all household members because of insufficient money or other resources.

Promise promotes healthy eating habits, ensures that nutrition services are culturally and developmentally appropriate, and offers access to a variety of nutritious foods at no cost to enrolled families. Promise supports breastfeeding mothers by accommodating mothers who wish to breastfeed during program hours and ensuring the capacity to properly store breast milk.

Promise partners with local producers to obtain fresh ingredients for its nutrition program. Meals and snacks are also provided for parent and Policy Council meetings and for family and community events. Menus are created collaboratively by the Promise Chef, Nutrition Manager and a Registered dietician to ensure that meals meet children’s daily nutritional needs while still being child friendly.

**Exposure to Lead A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generatedA screenshot of a graph

Description automatically generated**

Maine CDC has designated four communities made up of seven cities as high-risk areas as these communities have historically had Maine’s highest levels of childhood lead poisoning. Androscoggin County has the highest prevalence of lead poisoning among children aged 1-2 who have been tested in all Maine counties. Lewiston-Auburn has the highest percentage of older housing than anywhere else in the State.

Promise has a Health Coordinator who has phlebotomy training and is able to perform finger pricks. Tests are sent to the State Laboratory, and once results are received, Promise shares the information with the child’s parents/guardians and primary care physician.

When needed, Promise follows-up on positive lead tests by providing education or resources to families. An example of a resource for parents that Promise refers to frequently is The Lead Paint Project operated by Pine Tree Legal Assistance, which provides information about lead screening, the harmful effects of lead, landlords’ responsibilities with regard to lead testing and abatement, and how to access free lead testing. As a result of Promise’s extensive work around lead screening and education, children enrolled in Promise programs have much lower rates of lead poisoning than children in the broader community.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Table 22: Alcohol and Drug Trends on the Rise – State & County Comparison | | |
|  | **Maine** | **Androscoggin County** |
| Overdose deaths per 100,000 | 37.3 | 47.9 |
| Overdose emergency medical service responses per 10,000 population | 76.7 | 108.1 |
| Drug-induced deaths per 100,000 | 29.5 | 28.4 |
| Alcohol-induced deaths per 100,000 | 11.6 | 14.9 |

**Substance Use**

Rates of alcohol and drug use and overdose deaths in Androscoggin County and Maine are on the rise (see Table 22).

Androscoggin County has the second highest rate among all Maine counties (9.5%) of infants who, at birth, were potentially exposed or actually affected by alcohol or illicit or prescribed substances- compared to 7.8% in Maine.[[34]](#endnote-26)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Table 23: Child Protective Services Summary Statistics – State & County Comparison[[35]](#endnote-27) | | |
|  | **Maine** | **Androscoggin County** |
| Referrals | 24,243 | 2,525 / Rank: 4 |
| Reports Assigned to Alternate Response | 1,256 | 207 / Rank: 1 |
| Reports Assigned for CP Assessment | 10,616 | 1,115 / Rank: 5 |
| Total Victims Age 0-4[[36]](#footnote-9) Associated with Assigned Reports | 5,697 | 641 / Rank: 4 |

**SAFETY**

**Child Protective Services**

The number of referrals to Child Protective Services (CPS) decreased in 2020 while the reports assigned for Child Protective (CP) assessment remained virtually the same. Androscoggin County continued to rank first in the number of reports assigned to Alternate Response, fourth in number of referrals and fifth in reports assigned for CP assessment[[37]](#footnote-10) (see Table 23).

Of the reports assigned for CP assessment, 74% of cases in Androscoggin County were found to be unsubstantiated versus the State rate of 69%.

**Children in Care**

In 2023, there were 2,401 children age 0-17 in Maine who were in placements outside of their home, and there were 404 children age 0-17 in Androscoggin County in placements outside of their home.[[38]](#footnote-11) [[39]](#endnote-28)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Table 24: Foster Care & Child Welfare Involvement of Children Enrolled in Promise | | |
| Enrolled children who were in foster care at any point during the program year | 12 |
| Enrolled children who were referred to HS/EHS services by a child welfare agency | 11 |

**Homelessness**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Table 25: Homelessness Data for Children & Families Served by Promise during the Enrollment Year | |
| Families experiencing homelessness | 14 |
| Children experiencing homelessness | 14 |
| Families experiencing homelessness that acquired housing | 9 |

Of the families that were served by Promise at some point during the enrollment year, a majority (64%) acquired housing during the enrollment year (see Table 25).

**COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

Promise strives to meet the needs of the children and families it serves through both direct delivery of early childhood care and education as well as through referrals to community partners that provide other essential services in support of children and families. Below is a complete list of these community partners.

**School District Partners**

* Lewiston Public Schools
* Spruce Mountain School District (RSU 73)

**Special Education Partners**

* Early Learning Center (ELC)
* Maine Department of Education
* Sandcastle

**Health & Safety Partners**

* Advocates for Children
* Community Clinical Services
* Community Dental
* Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child & Family Services
* Pine Tree Legal Assistance, The Lead Paint Project
* St. Mary’s Regional Medical Center
* Tri County Mental Health Services
* Women, Infants & Children (WIC)

**MOU Partners for Utilization of Space**

* Auburn Housing Authority
* City of Lewiston
* Lewiston Housing Authority

**Contract Partners**

* Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Infant Mental Health Specialist
* Registered Nurse, Health Consultant

1. 2010 U.S. Census data for children by single age in Androscoggin County referenced in Table 4 on page 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. **END NOTES**

   United States Census Bureau. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Androscoggin_County,_Maine>. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
3. Maine Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health Systems. Retrieved from <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/public-health-systems/data-research/data/index.html>. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
4. Maine Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health Systems. Retrieved from <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/public-health-systems/data-research/data/index.html>. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
5. The Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center. *Children by age group*. Retrieved from <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/>. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
6. U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. *American Fact Finder*. Retrieved from <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
7. The Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center. *Children by single age group.* Retrieved from <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/>. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
8. Promise Early Education Center. *Early Head Start PIR 2020-2021.* [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
9. The Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center. *Child population by race.* Retrieved from <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/>. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
10. U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/androscoggin-county-me/>. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
11. U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/androscoggin-county-me/>. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
12. Basic needs budget = Food cost + child care cost + (insurance premiums + health care costs) + housing cost + transportation cost + other necessities cost [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
13. For more information visit: http://livingwage.mit.edu/resources/MIT-Part-Time-Documentation.pdf  [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
14. Maine Department of Health & Human Services. *Summary Count of 5 Year Olds & Younger Active on TANF and/or Food Supplement* Retrieved from <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/documents/ofi/reports/2018/SummaryCountsByCounty-Jun2018.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
15. A list of childcare settings can be found here: <https://www.childcarechoices.me/> . [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
16. This table does not include license-exempt childcare providers, of which there are many in Androscoggin County. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
17. University of Southern Maine Cutler Institute. (n.d). Child Care Choices. Retrieved from [www.childcarechoices.me](http://www.childcarechoices.me). [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
18. Maine Department of Health and Human Services Early Care & Education Early Childhood Division. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/qualityforme.htm>. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
19. Maine Department of Education. *Maine Public Pre-K: Data Results from the Annual Report.* [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
20. Social/emotional, physical development, language, literacy, cognitive, and math. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
21. Maine Department of Education. Maine Assessment and Accountability Reporting System (MAARS). *Summary of Results*. Retrieved from <https://lms.backpack.education/public/maine>. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
22. Maine Department of Education. Data Warehouse. *Graduation Rates & Dropout Rates.* Retrieved from <https://www.maine.gov/doe/data-reporting/reporting/warehouse/graduation-dropout-data>. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
23. *Child Development Services Annual Report to the Legislature.* [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
24. *Child Development Services Annual Report to the Legislature.* [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
25. Maine Department of Education (2018, October). Data Warehouse. Statewide Student Group Counts. Retrieved from <https://www.maine.gov/doe/data-reporting/reporting/warehouse/student-enrollment-data>. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
26. Maine Department of Education (2018, October). Data Warehouse. Statewide Student Group Counts. Retrieved from <https://www.maine.gov/doe/data-reporting/reporting/warehouse/student-enrollment-data>. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
27. U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Educational attainment. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
28. Promise Early Education Center. EHS & HS PIR. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
29. Maine Center for Disease Control, Central Maine Healthcare, Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems, et. al. *2022 Androscoggin County Health Profile: Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment*. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
30. [Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Office of MaineCare Services](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/oms/). [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
31. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
32. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
33. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
34. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
35. Maine Department of Health and Human Services Office of Child & Family Services. *Child Protective Services Annual Report.* [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
36. These values may include duplicates due to the fact that if children were involved in more than one report in a calendar year, they would be counted each time. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
37. Alternate response is appropriate when reports of child abuse or neglect are deemed to be of low to moderate severity. CP assessment cases are severe enough to warrant being assigned to a caseworker for further investigation. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
38. Maine total includes children in out of state placements and children where their county of origin is not recorded. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
39. Maine Department of Health & Human Services Office of Child & Family Services Division of Child Welfare Services. Retrieved from <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/>. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)