2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT

UNITED WAY CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN EARLY EDUCATION

United Way of Miami-Dade

MISSION

Elevate the quality of early care and education in Miami-Dade and beyond.

VISION

All children will have access to the highest quality early care and education, so they can have the best possible start in school and in life.

THE CENTER'S MISSION IS SUPPORTED BY THREE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

EDUCATE

EMPOWER INDIVIDUALS WORKING WITH CHILDREN

DEMONSTRATE

MODEL EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

ADVOCATE

PLATFORM FOR POLICY CHANGE

Dear friends, colleagues and champions for children,

After a year like no other, we're proud to celebrate the resiliency of the human spirit. Specifically, the resilience of our teachers, our staff, our volunteers and most of all, the resilience of our children.

Faced with unprecedented challenges, our colleagues at United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education retained their focus on our work – the families we serve, the children who depend on us, and the professionals we support.

Our dedicated teachers at the Demonstration School and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership sites created new ways to engage our students via digital activities and videos to ensure the learning process continued. And it would not have been but for the support from our parents – they were the driving force behind these efforts while doing double duty.

Our family engagement specialists maintained contact with our 580 families to assess, and help address their needs, and with the help of volunteers, assembled and delivered more than 2,300 care packages and educational kits.

To help fill the gap created by the closures of schools and cancellations of early literacy programs, our volunteers stepped up and shared storytelling videos with the children online.

Our Center staff also made sure that our education professionals continued to have access to the resources and skills they needed to best teach their students. In addition to adjusting to a new way of teaching and remote learning, 24 teachers across the county completed and received their Child Development Associate® (CDA) certification through the Center, putting them on a pathway to higher wages as well as continued professional development.

Despite the shutdown, Q4 reflected important increases in the assessments carried out at the end of the school year – this thanks to our staff's tireless dedication and hard work. Inside these pages, we welcome you to learn about the positive impact your investment is making in the lives of our community's future generation.

We can be nothing less than proud of our collective achievements and successes. Thank you for all you are doing to improve the quality of early learning for ALL children in our community and for your support during the most trying of times.

Lisa M. Mendelson
Chair, United Way Center
for Excellence in Early Education

Maria C. Alonso
President & CEO
United Way of Miami-Dade

RESEARCH

Making the case for high-quality early education

The early years matter …
Decades of research illustrate the importance of high-quality early education on long-term child development.

Children are born ready to learn …
A child's brain can form one million new neural connections per second during the first two years of life. These are the connections that build brain architecture – the foundation upon which all learning, behavior and health depend. It is a lot easier to help shape the developing brain by providing children with quality early learning experiences than it is to rewire it later.

The earlier we start, the better[1] …

18 MONTHS is the age at which disparities in vocabulary begin to appear. By age 4, a child from a low-income home will have only heard two words for every seven compared to a child in a higher income home.

90 - 100 PERCENT chance of development delays occurs when children experience significant adversity.

1 IN 3 ADULTS who recall having serious adverse experiences during their childhood are three times more likely to have cardiovascular disease later in life.

Early investment pays off …
Investing in early childhood strengthens the economy.
$1 invested in programs for low-income children can yield between $4 and $9 in returns to the society.

Sources:
1. Center on the Developing Child (200(). Five Numbers to Remember About Early Childhood Development (Brief). Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu
2. Schweinhart, L. J., Montie, J., Xian, Z., Barnett, W.S., Belfield, C.R., & Nores, M. (2005). Lifetime effect: The HighScope Perry Preschool study through age 40. (Monographs of the HighScope Educational Research Foundation, 14). Ypsilanti,MI: HighScope Press.

CHILDREN WHO RECEIVE HIGH-QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION ARE

53%
LESS LIKELY TO HAVE AN ARREST

18%
MORE LIKELY TO BE EMPLOYED

24%
MORE LIKELY TO OWN A HOME

MORE LIKELY TO HAVE HIGHER EARNINGS

CAIT

CAIT

CAIT

Quality Counts

CAIT

Pathways to Quality

Quality Counts

Quality Counts

LAST YEAR, THE CENTER

IMPROVED THE SKILLS OF

1,026

EDUCATORS

PROVIDED

6,147

HOURS OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

IMPROVED QUALITY OF SERVICES IN

248

EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

IMPACTED THE LIVES OF

13,102

YOUNG CHILDREN

EDUCATE

The United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education is a hub for professional learning. We equip early childhood professionals, families, community leaders and others, with the skills, knowledge and resources to understand and deliver high-quality early care and education.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMS

Connecting Assessment with Intentional Teaching (CAIT)
Launched in 2019 in collaboration with The Children's Trust's Thrive by 5 Initiative, the Center manages, coordinates and delivers assessment training and support for early child care educators, administrators and providers through CAIT - Connecting Assessment with Intentional Teaching. Educators from programs located in low-income neighborhoods are trained how to use assessment results from each individual student to understand that child's skill level and progress in order to tailor their teaching to correspond with each child's strengths and needs.

"We have seen significant progress. CAIT has helped teachers identify the particular needs of each individual child and as a result, tailor our creative curriculum to meet each child's needs."
— Maria Gabriela Quintero, owner and pre-K teacher, Little Stars Learning Center

Pathways to Quality
The Pathways to Quality program works with early care and education professionals in 21 early childhood programs across Miami-Dade County to elevate the quality of classroom instruction by enhancing the skills of teachers and program administrators through professional learning opportunities and coaching. To achieve this, Pathways to Quality leverages United Way of Miami-Dade funding and the expertise of United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education to curate intentional professional development.

"United Way funds support the work we do with young children with disabilities at The Arc of South Florida's Project Thrive early childhood education centers in Kendall and Florida City. We were able to fill the gaps of transportation costs for children to and from home and school as well as support salaried staff during gap weeks in between funded programs. This support was so appreciated!"
— Laura Secord, director, Children and Youth Department, The Arc of South Florida

Quality Counts Neighborhood Learning Network
Quality Counts Neighborhood Learning Network program, founded by The Children's Trust and in collaboration with United Way, completed its third and final year providing services and support to a network of Early Childhood Education programs, elevating the quality of early care and education in Miami-Dade. In total, 1,285 professionals in more than 190 programs received on-site coaching, communities of practice, school readiness enhancement trainings and behavior/mental health supports, among other services.

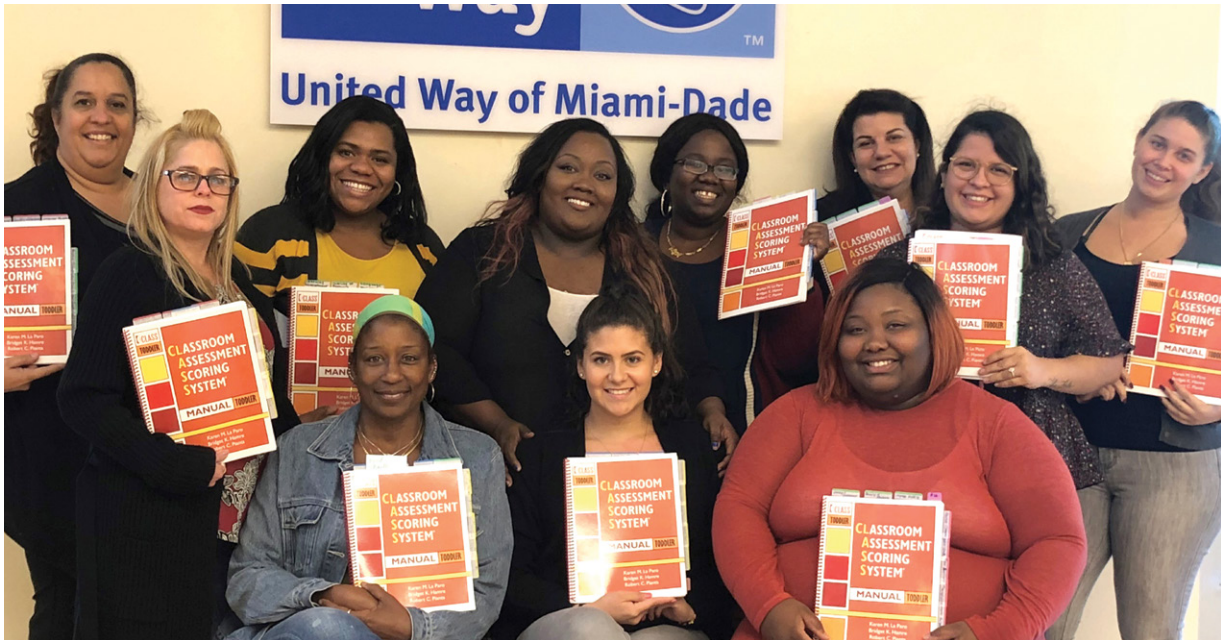
"Thanks to the support provided by the Quality Counts Team, the quality of our program was raised to Accreditation and Gold Seal standards. The scholarships helped our staff better interact and make meaningful connections and experiences which in turn helped raise the learning gains of our Rainbow children."
— Annie P. Benedetti, program director, Rainbow Intergenerational Learning Centers

Comcast Early Learning Technology Program
With support from Comcast, early learning professionals learn how to integrate technology in the classroom through hands-on experience. Using existing and emerging technologies and digital media tools, participants learn instructional strategies, receive resources to share with colleagues and immerse themselves in a supportive community of early child care educators.

EHS-CCP

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership

United Way Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) provides infants and toddlers access to high-quality early education programs to help them transition to kindergarten ready to learn. Last year, the partnership raised the quality of early care and education for 648 children at 20 early care sites in high-need, low-income neighborhoods across Miami-Dade.



SOUTH DADE COUNTY

Florida City
Mitchell Large Family Child Care Home
Homestead
Disciples ABC Learning Inc.
Theresa Brooks Family Child Care Home
Tiny Kingdom Learning Center
Richmond/Perrine
Ethel F. Beckford/Richmond Primary Learning Center

CENTRAL DADE COUNTY

Coconut Grove
St. Alban's Child Enrichment Center / Coconut Grove
South Miami
St. Alban's Child Enrichment Center / South Miami
Little Havana
Bright Steps Academy
Las Americas Learning Center

NORTH DADE COUNTY

Allapattah
Easterseals South Florida
Brownsville
A New World Academy III
City of Opa-Locka
Osman Family Day Care Home
Miami Gardens
Carol City Elementary School
Easterseals (Ophelia Brown)
Norland
A New World Academy II
Overtown
Lotus Village Early Care and Education Program
West Little River
A New World Academy
Clements Family Day Care Home
Lillie C. Evans K-8 Center

From teachers to Family Child Care Home Providers

Kimika Hoilett and Theresa Brooks started their journey in early childhood education as co-teachers working with infants and toddlers at Ethel F. Beckford Primary Learning Center. The more training and techniques they learned, the more intrigued and impressed they became with the Early Head Start program. They both obtained their Child Development Associate® (CDA) credential through the Center and opened their own small family child care center, becoming a United Way EHS-CCP provider.

"I was just really inspired by what we were going to be learning and doing for the community. I knew that the work that I was doing really meant something."

— Kimika Hoilett,
Early Head Start-Child
Care Partnership provider

Lotus Village Playground Enhancements

Early Childhood Education students from Barry University donated time and resources to enhance the playground at Lotus Village focused on nurturing exploration and creating spaces to promote math and science to fit infants and toddlers inquisitive personalities.

Looking after families in times of crisis

During the COVID-19 lockdown, the Center's staff kicked into high gear to help assemble and deliver more than 2,300 newborn and infant care packages to 580 Early Head Start families as well as distribute food and assist families at the Demonstration School.

The EHS-CCP intervention specialists also continued to provide services

and support to teachers and parents with children with disabilities. Therapy services moved to telehealth; speech and language pathologists helped teachers address speech and language concerns in remote classroom settings; and mental health professionals assisted teachers with handling stress and addressing challenging behaviors.

A new initiative was started where a licensed mental health consultant checked in with our families to address any concerns they may have and help them access resources.

DEMONSTRATE

The United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education Dolphin Digital Media Demonstration School, Educare of Miami-Dade serves 120 children, aged 6 weeks to 5 years old, in a mixed-income model environment. It is a model for observation and implementation of research-based practices in early learning.

Nine key practices modeled at the Demonstration School are:

- Technology
- Family Engagement
- Inquiry-based learning
- Meaningful interactions/environments
- Continuity of Care
- Dual Language learning
- Early Literacy
- Social-Emotional development
- Scientific and mathematical thinking

INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING

At the Demonstration School, teachers model an inquiry-based learning approach guided by investigation and questions posed by children. At the beginning of the school year, the children in the Preschool 3 classroom showed a great interest in stories – whether it was a book, a story told by the teacher or seen on a computer. The teachers took notice and created a web with the children's thoughts to the question, "What is a story?"

They explored the parts of a story – beginning, middle and end – and the different ways to tell stories and what is learned from them. Throughout the year, the classroom environment/lessons included scenarios (provocations) where children could create their own stories using props. The teachers also used storybooks to incorporate science in their inquiry. The example of the "story-science" connection was illustrated with the story of The Three Little Pigs. After the teacher read the book, she presented the children with a challenge of building a stable house using the different materials they had available.

As we moved from the classroom to virtual learning, the children were introduced to telling stories with the aid of technology. The school year ended with the children creating drawings and sharing their stories with their classmates via Zoom.

ONE OF OUR KEY AREAS OF FOCUS IS SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS

The **Early Science Initiative** promotes and advances science as a foundational focus to raise and expand the quality of teaching and learning in early childhood classrooms. Led by Dr. Daryl Greenfield from the University of Miami, the Demonstration School, Educare of Miami-Dade, along with 11 Educare schools across the country, is developing a school-wide culture of scientific inquiry providing children an outlet to satisfy their natural curiosity to explore and understand the world around them.

Wilda Ramos and Diana Najera, two toddler teachers from the Demonstration School, attended the Early Childhood STEM Conference in Pasadena, California. The teachers shared their experiences with the children at the Demonstration School and how the new concepts learned impacted their teaching practices as well as children's learning experiences.

"The Demonstration commitment to the Early Science Initiative is palpable. The teachers in the audience were able to get concrete classroom examples from Wilda and Diana that were incredibly helpful. The Center is really elevating the quality of early care and education in Miami-Dade and beyond by sharing classroom experience at a national level."

— Daryl Greenfield, Ph.D., University of Miami

"The Early Science Initiative changed the practice in my classroom in many ways. As an educator, I am now drawn to follow my young children's natural curiosity about how the world works, and allows me to support their learning across multiple developmental domains such as in math and advanced language."

— Addlina Sands, Demonstration School, Toddler 1 Family 2 teacher

ADVOCATE

The United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education believes all children should have access to high-quality early care and education, health and family support services. Working with 28 United Ways in Florida and other local and national early care and education partners, we strengthened our collective ability to move the needle on key education issues and improve the lives of children and their families.

OUR 2020 FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE SUCCESSES

In Early Learning
Funding for early learning programs increased by nearly $70 million, including $60 million for the School Readiness program to serve an additional 10,000 students in high-poverty neighborhoods and decrease the number of students on waiting lists; and an increase of $9.9 million for Florida's VPK program.

Parent Ambassador Program
The Parent Ambassador Program is an intensive one-year leadership, advocacy and peer-to-peer training program where parents learn how to engage, inspire and motivate other families to make their voices be heard, build and foster relationships with community partners to benefit children, and gain skills toward self-sufficiency.

In January, Amarilis Gutierrez, parent ambassador for the Demonstration School, attended the 2020 Winter Leadership Institute Conference in Washington, D.C. to learn about policies that affect Head Start and the role of parents as advocates. The visit also allowed her the opportunity to meet with members of Congress and build strong, meaningful relationship with other parents.

Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart pictured with Maria Clara Hoyos, family engagement, EHS-CCP; Zoey Iturbe, family engagement specialist, Demonstration School; and Amarilis Gutierrez, parent ambassador for the Demonstration School. (pictured l-r)

EHS-CCP: Spotlighting Early Successes Across America

Marcella Mapp, EHS-CCP Policy Council Member and parent at Lillie C. Evans Elementary School; Gladys R. Montes, vice president, United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education; Elizabeth Pena, center director/ owner, Tiny Kingdom Learning Center; Frank Perez-Llona, owner, Tiny Kingdom Learning Center; Sujey M. Venegas, senior director family, community engagement & health, EHS-CCP, United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education (pictured l-r) at the EHS-CCP: Spotlighting Early Successes Across America briefing event co-hosted by the Bipartisan Policy Center, Educare Learning Network and First Five Years Fund.

"As a parent, representing the Parent Ambassador Program, it was a great opportunity to get to learn more about Head Start and its role in advocacy and to be able to speak to representatives about our program. Participating in these discussions, not only inspired me, but also motivated me to be more involved in advocating for my community needs."

— Amarilis Gutierrez, parent ambassador, Demonstration School

FUNDING PARTNERS

$5 MILLION +
United States Department of Health
and Human Services

$100,000 – $999,999
The Children's Trust
Lotus Village
Miami-Dade County Public Schools

$10,000 – $99,999
Anthony R. Abraham Foundation
Randi Wolfson and Chris Adamo
The Batchelor Foundation
Yolanda and Jeffrey Berkowitz
City of Miami
Comcast
Laura Coulter-Jones
Edward W. Easton Sr.
Fisher Island Philanthropic
Florida Power and Light Company
Annelies Da Costa Gomez
Helios Education Foundation
Rosario Rico-Toro-Korn and Robert G. Korn
Elizabeth B. and Nathan Leight
Kerin McCarthy M.D.
Lisa and Victor Mendelson
Padrón Family Foundation
Peacock Foundation
Jorge Pérez
Betsy and George Sherman
Jo and John Sumberg
Wells Fargo

$1,000 – $9,999
Manuel J. Becerra
Mayi de la Vega
Claudia Grillo
Judith and Robert A. Maynes
Linda Paresky
PNC Foundation

PROGRAM PARTNERS

Allied Therapy Professional INC
Behavioral Aid
Behavioral Aid Solutions
Behavioral Family Solutions
Borinquen Medical Center of Miami-Dade
ChildPlus
The Children's Movement of Florida
The Children's Trust Miami Dade Grade Level Reading Campaign
The Children's Trust The Book Club
Chrysalis
Connecting Fathers with Children
Conscious Discipline
Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade
The Development Mother
Friends of South Florida Music
PsychMiami LLC
Early Discovery
Early Steps North (UM)
Early Steps North Dade Program "UM Early Steps"
Early Steps South (Benchmark)
Educare Learning Network
Epidemiology Department
Epilepsy Foundation Florida
Essential Elements
Expanding Opportunities for Young Families
Family Central
Fatherhood Task Force of South Florida Inc.
Florida Asthma Coalition
Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County
Florida Occupation Protection and Resource Center
Florida Shots
Fruity Veggie
Iheoma U. Iruka, Ph.D. - RACCEE
John Gunnarson
Jessie Trice Community Health System
Kids Life Solutions
Kids Therapy
Kodo Kids
La Fuerza de Creer Family Engagement Workshops for Families
Laura J. Monsalvatge
Leading for Children
Literacy Partners
Miami Dade College-Mission North Star
Miami Dade County Head and Early HeadStart
Miami Dade County Public Schools
My Therapy Centre
National Family Development Credential (FDC) Program
Nicklaus Children's Hospital Dental Mobile
Outreach Communities-New Life Resources Inc.
Parenting Curriculum: The Incredible Years
Parenting Curriculum: The Incredible Years & Baby and Me Groups
Pro Solution Training
Push Hard CPR
Quality Consulting & Research Group
Ready, Set, Go Miami! Early Literacy Initiative
Research Study: Improving Early Detection of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
Role Model Professional Development
Sabiam Consulting
Seals on Wheels Dental Mobile Unit
Sertoma Speech & Hearing Foundation of Florida, Inc.
SPEC (Speech Pathology and Educational Center Inc)
Spiridis Consulting
Start Early (formally The Ounce of Prevention Fund)
Stop Parenting Alone
Susan McDonald
Teaching Strategies
Teachstone
Trauma Resolution Center
UCONN| University of Connecticut
University of Miami and The Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD)
University of Miami Pediatric Mobile Clinic
University of Miami, Families First Parenting Groups
Western Kentucky University T&TA
WIC & Nutrition Program

CENTER COMMITTEE

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Volunteer/Community Leader

W.J. Blechman, M.D.
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Buffett Early Childhood Fund

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