

# EDUCATE. DEMONSTRATE. ADVOCATE.



*What happens when we model evidence-based practices, share those practices with families and educators, and work with business leaders and lawmakers to raise the standards of early childhood education?*

*Sustainable and lasting change for children and our community.*



**United Way Miami  
Center for Excellence  
in Early Education**



**UNITED WAY CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN EARLY EDUCATION | 2007–2021**

*Celebrating 15 years of championing early childhood care and education*

## OUR 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.

## OUR MISSION

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

Our journey to give all children the best possible start in school and life began 15 years ago.

Together with more than 100 early education and child care partners, we have:

- Improved the skills of 36,077 professionals who have influenced thousands of children
- Directly impacted 56,422 young children
- Provided quality enhancement services to 3,005 early education programs
- Invested more than \$122 million in early childhood programs





# 2007

The United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education (CFE) officially opens on January 8, 2007, with the mission of elevating the quality of early education for all children in Miami-Dade and beyond.

The Center welcomes a delegation from Haiti – one of more than 535 groups from 24 states and 21 countries to visit the Center since its opening – expanding our reach far beyond the Center's walls.

The Center's Demonstration School graduates its first class.

The Center receives a grant from the Early Learning Coalition to provide professional learning. The grant helps train more than 2,600 early childhood education professionals a year, who, in turn, have impacted tens of thousands of young children.

The Center launches the Early Childhood Program Administrators Institute (ECPAI) in partnership with Miami Dade College. This program elevated the skills of 768 early education professionals until the conclusion of the program in 2018.

Women leaders make their first advocacy trip to Washington, D.C., and Tallahassee to champion quality early education policies and investments at the state and federal levels.

# 2008

The Center joins the Educare Learning Network, becoming the seventh Educare Center in the country, and appoints the University of Miami as its local evaluation partner. Today, there are 25 centers in what is regarded as one of the nation's most effective early childhood education programs.



In collaboration with Florida International University, the Center hosts the first Visible Thinking South Florida conference with Harvard University professors. The Demonstration School continues to incorporate Visible Thinking into its curriculum.



# 2009

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Given the importance of developing early literacy skills, the Center receives a three-year, \$3.5 million Early Reading First grant from the U.S. Department of Education for Project LEER (Literacy Enhancement for Early Readers). Some 300 early care and education professionals and 580 students benefitted from the program.

# 2010

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The Center receives its first national accreditation, APPLE (Accredited Professional Preschool Learning Environment).



The Center expands its Early Head Start program to serve homeless mothers and children living at Lotus House Women's Shelter.

# 2011

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The Center receives a grant from The Children's Trust to implement the Mentoring All Educators, Supporting Teachers, Raising Outcomes (MAESTRO) program, which provides nearly 30 teachers with a total of 7,775 one-on-one coaching hours, another step in improving their skills.

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Launch of Pathways to Quality and expansion of its relationship with our early education funded programs. In addition to receiving funding from United Way, these programs begin receiving strategic planning and capacity-building support, another key step in elevating quality.

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For its innovation and excellence, the Center's infant and toddler program is singled out from among programs across the country by Head Start in its federal monitoring report.





# 2012

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The Center achieves accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the highest early care and education recognition in the nation.



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The Center receives a grant from Carol Jenkins Barnett and Barney Barnett of Publix Super Markets Charities to launch ReadingPals in partnership with The Children's Movement of Florida. This volunteer reader program has enabled 650 volunteers to provide 10,685 hours of reading to 1,832 children in preschool classrooms.

# 2013

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Florida Governor Rick Scott visits the Center to participate in a ceremonial signing of House Bill 7165. The landmark bill restructures the state's early learning system into the Department of Education and marks a significant step in changing the system of early education in Florida.

# 2014

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The Center is chosen from among 200-plus organizations nationwide to receive a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) grant totaling \$22.5 million over five years. In addition to the Center, the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe and Miami-Dade County receive EHS-CCP grants, a testament to the strides being made in this community around quality early education.

# 2015

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The start of the school year marks the beginning of the first year of implementation of our EHS-CCP grant, serving 320 children at 16 sites. Included are six infant and toddler classrooms opened by the Center, in partnership with Miami-Dade County Public Schools, at Ethel Beckford/Richmond Elementary School.

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The Center receives a \$1.3 million grant from The Children's Trust to implement the Quality Counts Neighborhood Learning Network.



# 2016

With help from 50 college students participating in Deloitte's Alternative Spring Break program and \$250,000 in funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Center revamps the playgrounds of the 16 EHS-CCP sites.

Eighty teachers at the 16 EHS-CCP sites complete their 10-month, 120-hour program to earn their Child Development Associate national credential, elevating their teaching skills.

In recognition of the Center's expertise in dual-language learning, the White House selects the Center to host its regional summit, during which the administration releases its dual-language policy statement and toolkit.

Along with other early education experts, Gladys Montes, the Center's vice president, and Annelies Da Costa Gomez, its committee chair, travel to Medellin, Colombia, to speak to more than 70 business leaders in Latin America about the importance of investing in the early years.

# 2017

The Center receives an expansion EHS-CCP grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The four-year, \$15 million federal grant allows us to serve an additional 200 low-income infants and toddlers and their families, and to expand the number of early learning programs that offer full-day/full-year services. This is in addition to the 320 [infants and toddlers] children already being served by the program.

As part of the EHS-CCP expansion, the Center and Miami-Dade County Public Schools join forces to expand their work at three public schools. For the first time, Center administers the early childhood program and its day-to-day operations.

The Lotus Village Early Care and Education Program, under the EHS-CCP, opens. It primarily serves the children of guests and alumni of the Lotus House Women's Shelter.

During the 2017 Florida legislative session, United Way Miami helps secure a \$25 million increase for school readiness access, plus \$15.5 million in performance funding.

Twenty United Way Women Leaders travel to Washington, D.C., to advocate for early childhood programs.



# 2018

A study by the University of Miami shows Head Start students enrolled in the Center's Demonstration School, Educare of Miami-Dade, have higher gains in science competency scores than children in similar programs in Miami-Dade.

Launch of the Parent Ambassadors Program, an intensive one-year leadership, advocacy and peer-to-peer training program that is part of Educare Learning Network grant.

The Quality Counts Neighborhood Learning Network Program completes its final year providing services and support to Early Childhood Education programs in Miami-Dade. More than 1,320 practitioners and 192 administrators in 192 priority programs have received on-site coaching, practice, training and behavior/mental health support.

EHS-CCP expands its outreach with new partnerships, including participating in the First WORDS Project research study with the University of Miami and Center for Autism and Related Disorders. The goal: Identify early signs of developmental language disorders, autism spectrum disorder and other communication delays in children from 9 to 24 months old.

United Way Miami successfully advocates for the passage of six early education state and federal bills and more than \$37 million in early childhood funding increases.

# 2019

Connecting Assessment with Intentional Teaching (CAIT) launches, with educators, administrators and providers in 30 programs in low-income neighborhoods receiving training on how to use individual students' assessment results to tailor their teaching for maximum impact.

The Bellwether Education Partners publication, "Leading by Exemplar: Case Studies of Head Start Programs," features the United Way Miami EHS-CCP because of its strategies to deal with COVID-19.

The Bellwether case study cites Educare Miami as an exemplary program of the EHS-CCP. This means the program has five key ingredients:

- Curriculum, assessment and instruction
- Meets the needs of all enrolled children
- Ensures high-quality teaching
- Family engagement
- Data utilization

The Bipartisan Policy Center report, "Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships: Spotlighting Early Successes Across America," features United Way EHS-CCP. As part of the publication, United Way Miami EHS-CCP leadership and a participating childcare provider and parent share the program's successes and challenges during a panel discussion with the former director of the Office of Head Start.





# 2020

CAIT renews its contract with The Children's Trust and expands services to 29 additional sites. The program now serves a total of 66 sites and manages 3,987 Teaching Strategies GOLD portfolios.

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

To keep children healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Center's Demonstration School transforms its main stage and training room into preschool classrooms to limit classes to 10 children per room. It also changes drop-off and pickup, and implements mask-wearing for everyone over the age of 2.

Other learning goes virtual, introducing the children to telling stories with the aid of technology. The school year ends with them creating drawings and sharing their stories with their classmates via Zoom.

The federal Office of Head Start completes a successful audit of our EHS-CCP program and recognizes several areas where program innovations have improved early care and education in Miami-Dade.

Early childhood education students from Barry University donate time and resources to enhance the playground at Lotus Village, with a focus on nurturing exploration and creating spaces to promote math and science for infants and toddlers.

A licensed mental health consultant begins checking in with our EHS-CCP families to address any concerns they may have and help them access resources.

Funding for early learning programs increases 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.





# 2021

The Demonstration School reaches a total of 428 young children successfully transitioned to kindergarten since its founding in 2007.

Gladys Montes, group vice president, United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education, joins the new Educare Governance Council, expanding its ability to help advance Educare's work and impact the early education field.

Parent ambassadors meet with Florida state representatives to advocate for high-quality early learning for all children, emphasizing that opportunities offered to families in federally funded Head Start and Early Head Start programs are not available to those in state-funded school VPK programs.

## United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education Chairs

**Hilarie Bass**  
2004–2007

**Toni Randolph**  
2007–2010

**Yolanda Berkowitz**  
2009–2012

**Elizabeth Leight, Psy.D.**  
2012–2016

**Annelies Da Costa Gomez**  
2015–2020

**Lisa Mendelson**  
2019–2021

**Dr. Lilia DiBello**  
2021–Present



# PROGRAM PARTNERS

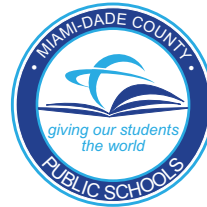
During the past 15 years, the United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education has had the privilege of collaborating with many key partners who share our vision. Together, we continue to elevate the quality of early care and education in Miami-Dade and beyond.

BARRY UNIVERSITY  
BRANCHES, INC.  
CENTER FOR AUTISM AND RELATED DISABILITIES  
CHILDPLUS  
CHILDREN IN MOTION  
CHILDREN'S FORUM  
THE CHILDREN'S MOVEMENT OF FLORIDA  
THE CHILDREN'S TRUST  
CITRUS HEALTH NETWORK, INC.  
COLGATE BRIGHT SMILES  
COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY  
COMMUNITY PLAYTHINGS  
CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE  
DEVERAUX  
EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF MIAMI-DADE/MONROE  
EDUCARE LEARNING NETWORK  
FAIRCHILD TROPICAL BOTANIC GARDEN  
FAMILY CENTRAL, INC.  
FIU CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP  
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN MIAMI-DADE  
FLORIDA HEAD START COLLABORATION OFFICE  
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE  
OF EDUCATION  
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY  
FREE INJURY COALITION FOR KIDS – MIAMI  
FRUITY VEGGIE NUTRITION  
THE HAWN FOUNDATION  
HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM  
HEALTHY START COALITION  
HEARING AND SPEECH CENTER OF FLORIDA, INC.  
HIGHSCOPE  
INSTITUTE FOR CHILD & FAMILY HEALTH, INC.  
KAPLAN  
LEADING FOR CHILDREN  
LEARNING GENIE  
LIKE MINDS  
MAILMAN CENTER FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT AT  
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
MIAMI CHILDREN'S INITIATIVE







MIAMI DADE COLLEGE  
MIAMI PROJECT  
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY  
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
MUSIC PARTNERS  
MY THERAPY CENTER  
NICKLAUS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY  
PÉREZ ART MUSEUM MIAMI  
PRO SOLUTION TRAINING  
PUSH HARD CPR  
PSYCHMIAMI  
QUALITY CONSULTING & RESEARCH GROUP  
RACCEE  
ROLE MODEL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
SABIAM CONSULTING  
SEEK HIGHER GROUND  
SHORT CHEF  
SOUTHEASTERN COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

SPIRIDIS CONSULTING  
START EARLY (FORMERLY THE OUNCE OF PREVENTION FUND)  
STOP PARENTING ALONE  
TEACHING STRATEGIES  
TEACHSTONE  
TINY NINJAS  
THE TRAUMA RESOLUTION CENTER  
UNITED WAY WORLDWIDE  
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA  
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI  
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI FROST SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
VISIBLE THINKING, SOUTH FLORIDA  
YES INSTITUTE  
ZERO TO THREE



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