

“The time is always right to do
what is right.”

—Martin Luther King, Jr.



PROGRAMS OF THE CHILDREN'S FORUM 2021-2022



Message from the Board Chair

As the Forum's Board Chair, I find myself both happy and sad. Our long-serving, spectacular President and CEO, Dr. Phyllis Kalifeh, retired this summer after a full career in the early childhood arena. During her 22 years of service to the Forum, Dr. Kalifeh became established as a highly respected leader in the field, who was dedicated to research-based solutions that work. Her hard work has improved the lives of millions of children as well as those who care for them. Thanks, Dr. Kalifeh!

I am happy to announce that Dr. Kalifeh's successor as President and CEO is Erin Smeltzer. She is energetic and creative and will carry the Forum to new heights. Erin has spent her career working for many organizations that support early learning programs, and she is excited to assume the helm. I look forward to working with Erin on the Board's long-range plans to stay current in our ever-shifting environment.

The Forum's signature work of administering the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program and Help Me Grow® Florida continues. This year's \$10 million appropriation for T.E.A.C.H. and \$1.8 million for Help Me Grow was supported by the legislature and governor. T.E.A.C.H. helps to improve the compensation, education, and retention of early educators while Help Me Grow provides screenings, resources, and follow-up services to families with concerns about their child's behavioral health and development.

In addition to T.E.A.C.H. and Help Me Grow, the Forum is looking to expand the Early Childhood Educator INCENTIVE\$ Florida program into more counties. INCENTIVE\$ provides financial stipends to early educators based on their education and continuity of care. This program helps to attract and retain qualified staff.

Given the critical work they do, we know that early educators deserve living wages. We also know that families need affordable accessibility to high-quality child care programs. The exciting news is that the business community is recognizing the long-term benefits of investing in early care and education. Just recently, the Florida Philanthropic Network, a large group of Florida's grant-making foundations, turned their focus to early childhood. They know that to have the greatest effect, we need to start early!

Bob Buesing, J.D.
Board Chair

Children's Week Florida™

Children's Week Florida™ is the largest event held in the state that celebrates and honors its commitment to children, youth, and advocates. As the Organizing Partner for Children's Week Florida™, the Forum has taken the lead with helping to bring thousands of attendees, including legislators, public officials, nonprofit organizations, business leaders, child and youth advocates, teachers, and students, to the State Capitol each year during the legislative session. Together with our generous partners, we speak out as "One Voice" in support of children and families to deliver the message that every child should be healthy, ready to learn, and able to achieve their full potential.

Impact and Outcomes:

70+

statewide and community partners participated in Children's Week Florida™ 2022 events and activities.

Children's Week Florida™ 2022 Advocacy Award recipients:

Chiles Advocacy Award:

Doug Sessions, Jr., Executive Director of the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida

Youth Advocate Award:

Lauren Page, a high school student and founder of Page by Page Book Drive Program



T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program (T.E.A.C.H.) is an evidence-based strategy that helps to establish a well-qualified, fairly-compensated, and stable workforce for Florida's children.

Funded by the Florida Department of Education-Division of Early Learning and operated by the Children's Forum, T.E.A.C.H. provides scholarships and additional supports for early educators, directors, and owners working towards initial and renewal early learning credentials, college credit certificates, and degrees in early childhood education.

T.E.A.C.H. maintains a three-way partnership in which the early childhood educator, the sponsoring program (the scholar's employer), and T.E.A.C.H. share the costs for classes, books, and time away from work. Scholars earn a raise or bonus after the successful completion of an educational year and agree to work for at least one year with their sponsoring program.

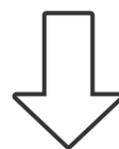
Impact and Outcomes:

Educated Workforce:	Economic Viability:	Reduced Turnover:
22,662 credit hours taken	11% average increase in earnings among Scholars	6.5% turnover rate vs. national rate of 30-40%
3.41 average Scholar GPA		

Early Childhood Educator INCENTIVE\$ Florida

Early Childhood Educator INCENTIVE\$ Florida, an affiliate of Child Care WAGE\$, rewards early childhood educators with financial incentives based on their education and continuity of employment. By retaining the early childhood workforce, INCENTIVE\$ provides children with more stable relationships and better-educated teachers. INCENTIVE\$ addresses individual professional development efforts and low wages, but does not affect budgets, regular wages, or parent fees within the child care program. INCENTIVE\$ is licensed by Child Care Services Association of Chapel Hill, NC and administered by the Children's Forum under a contract with local early learning coalitions, children's services councils, and private contributors. Through these partnerships, INCENTIVE\$ is enhancing the professional development of early childhood educators to improve the quality of child care programs.

Impact and Outcomes:



The average turnover rate for INCENTIVE\$ participants was

12%

compared to 30-40% turnover in the field nationally.



The average annual stipend for INCENTIVE\$ participants was

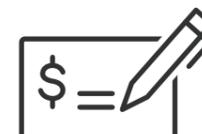
\$2,472

which is equivalent to at least \$1.18 more per hour.



939

child care programs participated in INCENTIVE\$.



2,353

recipients received at least one financial stipend.

PROGRAMS OF THE CHILDREN'S FORUM 2021-2022

Help Me Grow® Florida

Help Me Grow® Florida (HMGF) promotes the healthy development of all children by providing access to free developmental and behavioral screenings and connecting families to the resources they need to succeed. By building cross-sector collaboration among community agencies, child healthcare professionals, and early childhood educators, HMGF addresses the critical importance of early detection and intervention. HMGF provides a centralized access point that supports families through developmental monitoring, parenting information, and available community resources. Since HMGF care coordinators continue to follow-up with families, HMGF can ensure that the needs of the family have been met.

Impact and Outcomes:



7,985

developmental and behavioral screenings completed.



92%

of children were successfully connected to at least one service.



5

average number of care coordination follow-ups per family.



113

community-based screening events to bring our services to families and community partners.

Early Learning Career Center

Operated by the Children's Forum and funded by The Children's Trust (TCT), the Early Learning Career Center (ELCC) offers professional development services to all early learning programs and educators in Miami-Dade County. The ELCC, which is part of the Miami-Dade Early Learning Quality Improvement System (QIS), provides career advising and TCT Educator Scholarships in support of a diverse workforce. The ELCC also connects early childhood educators in Miami-Dade to other professional development supports such as the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship Program and salary incentives funded by TCT.

Impact and Outcomes:

76%

of educators recently received TCT scholarships and/or INCENTIVE\$ salary supports.

80%

of educators obtained a credential since entering the QIS.

42%

of educators report being bilingual.

\$10,046

average salary increase of educators who earn degrees and credentials, speak English fluently, and stay in the QIS for 5+ years.



“Early childhood investment is a smart investment. The earlier the investment, the greater the return.”

-Nobel laureate economist James Heckman

Professional Development Registries

The Children's Forum maintains two professional development registries, the Miami-Dade Professional Development Registry and the Palm Beach County Training Registry. These registries provide a central database to record the workforce qualifications of early childhood educators, such as employment history, compensation, benefits, credentials earned, and college courses/training activities completed. Funding for the Miami-Dade Professional Development Registry and Palm Beach County Training Registry is provided by The Children's Trust and the Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County.

Impact and Outcomes:

Program Participants:

2,168

in Palm Beach County

3,235

in Miami-Dade

ECE Program Improvement:

Registries can be used to make policy-informed decisions to improve the quality of early learning programs.

Assessment and Coaching Services Unit

The Children's Forum holds a contract with the Florida Division of Early Learning for providing Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®) observation and coaching services within each county in Florida. The Forum offers CLASS® services to early learning coalitions, Head Start agencies, and other entities to help them meet state and federal program assessment requirements and improve early childhood classroom practices. The Forum has provided CLASS® services in every region and over half of the counties in Florida.

Impact and Outcomes:

65

certified CLASS® assessors and coaches were available to provide services.

1,757

early learning programs received assessments.

24

agencies received CLASS® services.

4,837

assessments were conducted.

Child Care Evaluation Services

The Child Care Evaluation Services Department provides the following accreditation management and educational support services for the Florida Department of Education - Division of Early Learning and Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), Office of Licensing:

- ★ Evaluating applications from prospective Florida Child Care Professional Credential (FCCPC) training institutions to determine their eligibility to offer the FCCPC, and monitoring the status of all FCCPC training programs in the state
- ★ Evaluating applications from prospective and renewing accrediting associations to determine their eligibility for designation as Gold Seal Quality Care Accrediting Associations
- ★ Assisting owners/operators of early care and education (ECE) programs in Florida with questions about becoming a Gold Seal Quality Care designated program, assisting current Gold Seal programs with inquiries about their status, and maintaining the state database of early care and education programs that have attained Gold Seal status
- ★ Designing and producing public awareness documents for dissemination
- ★ Coordinating the DCF annual Statewide Child Care Training Meeting

Impact and Outcomes:



8

newsletters and brochures (four of each) for DCF were produced.



1,921

early childhood and family child care home programs maintained Gold Seal designation.

NEWSWORTHY NOTES

Forum Selects Erin Smeltzer as Next President and CEO



The Children's Forum, along with our Board of Directors, is pleased to announce that Erin Smeltzer has been selected as the Forum's next President and CEO. Dr. Phyllis Kalifeh officially retired on July 31, 2022, after serving as the Forum's leader for the past 22 years.

Erin received her bachelor's degree in Child and Family Development from the University of Georgia, a master's degree in Education from Nova Southeastern University, and is a Zero to Three Academy Fellow. As president of a local NAEYC affiliate, the public policy representative for Florida AEYC, and a former child care center director, Erin advocates at the national level that early childhood must become a priority in our society.

Forum Partners with the Florida Afterschool Network to Build Brighter After School Programs

The Children's Forum is proud to serve as the administrative hub for the Florida Afterschool Network (FAN)! Established in 2005, FAN has a mission to expand high-quality extended learning programs offered to children and youth. FAN serves as a convener and advocate for policy, funding, and innovative initiatives to better support positive youth development and career and college readiness. By shining a light on afterschool, FAN continues to build support for public and private investment in expanding learning opportunities that prepare our future leaders for success today. Visit flafterschool.com to learn more about FAN initiatives.



Get Ready for Children's Week 2023

The Children's Forum is excited to share next year's Children's Week Florida™ celebration, happening **March 26-31, 2023!** With thousands of children, teens, families, teachers, advocates, and legislators expected to attend next year's celebration, the 28th annual event will bring back favorite staples such as the Celebration of the Hands in the Capitol Rotunda, the Advocacy Dinner and Awards Ceremony, and Children's Day at the Capitol. In addition, we are excited to welcome new activities, including virtual sessions with some of our 2023 partners on Workshop Wednesday and enrichment opportunities for middle and high school students on Teen Thursday. Please visit childrensweek.org to stay in the know for all things Children's Week Florida™!



Forum Announces New Policy Initiative

The Children's Forum is excited to announce a new initiative called the Early Childhood Policy WORKS Advocacy Fellowship (ECPWAF) that aims to overcome the challenges and barriers facing advocacy and engagement. The ECPWAF guides novice early learning advocates through the legislative process and how the system works.



The ECPWAF committee selected a diverse cadre of 21 Policy Fellows comprised of teachers, parents, directors, and early childhood stakeholders. Through a series of in-person and virtual meetings, the Fellows will be equipped and empowered to serve as change agents in local, state, and national conversations around issues of early childhood and the early learning workforce. They will "graduate" as advocacy experts during Children's Week in March 2023.

Children's Forum Staff

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President and CEO

Erin Smeltzer, M.S.,
Incoming President and CEO

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Dana Trabulsky
April Wigsten
Ellen Waters
Doretta Williams
Erika Williams***
Heather Wilson***
Lauren Wofford
Tamela Young***

* Five-Nine Years of Service
** Ten-Fourteen Years of Service
*** Fifteen Years of Service or More

Children's Forum Board of Directors

Forum board members are volunteers who contribute their time and expertise to provide oversight and guidance on behalf of the Forum's mission. We are proud of their dedication to our work and grateful for their generous service.

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Retired, Child Care Licensing
Tampa, FL

Funders & Clients

- 2-1-1 Big Bend, Inc.
- 2-1-1 Brevard, Inc.
- 2-1-1 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast
- 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, Inc.
- AUCD/CDC Learn the Signs. Act Early
- Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County
- Division of Early Learning, FDOE
- ELC of Alachua County
- ELC of Broward County
- ELC of the Emerald Coast
- ELC of Escambia County
- ELC of Flagler and Volusia Counties
- ELC of Florida's Heartland
- ELC of Florida's Gateway
- ELC of Hillsborough County
- ELC of Indian River, Martin and Okeechobee Counties (IRMO)
- ELC of Lake County
- ELC of Marion County
- ELC of Miami Dade and Monroe
- ELC of the Nature Coast
- ELC of Northwest Florida
- ELC of Osceola County
- ELC of Polk County
- ELC of Sarasota
- ELC of Seminole
- ELC of Southwest Florida
- EOC of Indian River County
- Episcopal Children's Services
- Erek Culbreath
- Florida Afterschool Network
- Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions
- Florida Department of Children and Families
- Florida Family Child Care Home Association
- Florida Head Start Association
- Heart of Florida United Way
- Redlands Christian Migrant Association
- The Children's Trust
- United Way of Florida
- United Way of Lee County

Financial Report

2021-2022	Revenue	Expenditures
T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program	\$9,823,281	\$9,858,744
Help Me Grow® Florida	\$1,768,384	\$1,768,384
Early Learning Career Center/Professional Development Registries	\$1,076,209	\$1,063,973
Early Childhood Educator INCENTIVE\$ Florida	\$1,649,971	\$1,666,224
Assessment and Coaching Services Unit	\$921,925	\$842,365
Child Care Evaluation Services	\$205,893	\$190,699
Early Education and Care Workforce Study	\$188,827	\$145,139
Other	\$578,973	\$363,666
TOTAL	\$16,213,462	\$15,899,194



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Coalition of Hillsborough County, Inc.



Early Learning Career Center
The Children's Forum is funded
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in Miami-Dade County