



“Each of
us as citizens
has a role to play in
creating a better world
for our **children.**”

- Nelson Mandela

 Children's
FORUM
...because kids can't wait



Message from the **PRESIDENT**

As a former director of child care programs and Head Start centers, I know it takes a special kind of person to teach and shape the lives of young children. The days may be long, but the precious time they have to prepare children for success in school is short. Teachers of young children are the real rock stars and hold the keys to high-quality early learning experiences. I hope that paying them a living wage continues to be at the forefront of early education initiatives.

I would like to thank our state legislators who passed a sound budget during the 2018 session that benefits young children, their families, and the child care workforce. Funding for the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program more than doubled and helps early childhood educators gain the necessary skills to provide optimal outcomes for children. In addition, an increase of more than \$382,000 for Help Me Grow® Florida ensures that families have access to developmental screenings and early intervention services for their children when possible delays are detected.

I wrote the following poem many years ago at the beginning of my career to honor all of our state's early childhood educators. May they never forget the young lives they have touched along the way and how very much they are appreciated for the work they do in teaching the leaders of tomorrow.

TEACHER'S PRAYER

God grant that I might somehow see
The needs these children have of me.
Help me to nurture, love, and guide
These little people at my side.
Help me to add to the young child's day
Laughter and love along the way.
And when I feel the urge to shout
Give me the patience to wait it out.
Help me to laugh when I feel like crying
When milk is spilled and the paint's
not drying

When pants are wet and noses are runny
And the weather outside is all but sunny.
Help me touch the soul of each child today
And listen to what each has to say.
And for the child who doesn't take part
Let me be sensitive to the young
child's heart.
And when the day is nearly through
With hugs and kisses and bids adieu
With hair now tinted with finger paint
Let me be thankful for these little saints.

Phyllis Kalifeh, Ed.D.
President & CEO



Message from the **BOARD CHAIR**

Let's celebrate another year of progress! Congratulations to the Children's Forum as they continue to provide strong leadership and a clear, strong voice working toward improvements in early childhood classrooms. Some of these improvements include:

- ★ Increased funding (\$10 million) for the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program, which was approved during this year's legislative session. Those funds, administered by the Forum, provide critical training supports and scholarship dollars to improve the education, compensation, and retention of the child care workforce.
- ★ Expansion of Help Me Grow® Florida (HMGFL), which is currently available in 29 of Florida's 67 counties. The Children's Forum administers the HMGFL program, which provides early identification of developmental or behavioral concerns in children and links their families to community-based services and support.

The challenge of getting early childhood educators fair compensation and livable wages is gathering attention. The Forum has been selected to lead the Florida contingent of the "Moving the Needle on Compensation" national effort. I proudly serve on Florida's team, which is gathering the latest strategies on improving compensation for early childhood educators. In fact, the Forum recently received a contract to expand its Child Care WAGES® FLORIDA Program to Pinellas County, joining Miami-Dade and Broward Counties in providing wage supplements for the child care workforce. It is our hope that other counties will recognize the value of WAGES in improving and stabilizing child care providers, which directly benefits young children and their families.

I also continue to serve on the Florida Chamber Foundation Business Alliance for Pre-K, a group of Florida's business leaders who understand the importance of young children and their early years in addressing Florida's long-term economic success. The Florida Chamber has learned that this is not just a K-12 problem. The most important 5 years - birth to kindergarten - need more attention. Economists forecast that for every \$1 spent on high-quality early education programs, as much as \$17 can be saved in the long run. The benefits are children who are more likely to graduate from high school, attend college, and become contributing members of society. They are also less likely to repeat grades, become incarcerated, or qualify for government supports. This new focus on the early years is dramatically changing the business community's messaging. Trust me, this a good thing for Florida's young people and their families.

We are moving in the right direction, and I am proud to serve at the forefront with the Forum on improving our state's early care and education system. Stay tuned!

Bob Buesing, J.D.
Board Chair

PROGRAMS OF THE CHILDREN'S FORUM 2017-2018



Child Care Evaluation Services

Now in its 11th contract year, the Child Care Evaluation Services unit provides the following accreditation management and educational support services for the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) Office of Child Care Regulation:

- ★ 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 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

Accomplishments

- ★ An average of 1,889 early childhood programs maintained a Gold Seal designation
- ★ One FCCPC newsletter and two publications for DCF were produced

Impact

- ★ Teachers who participated in high-quality training programs were better equipped to prepare children for school than providers with no training or education
- ★ Child care programs that achieved a Gold Seal designation met the quality standards of an approved accrediting association and may provide higher-quality services to children and families than programs without the Gold Seal designation



Early Learning Career Center

Operated by the Children's Forum and funded by The Children's Trust (TCT), the Early Learning Career Center (CC) offers professional development services to all early learning programs and educators in Miami-Dade County. The CC, which is part of the Miami-Dade Early Learning Quality Improvement System (QIS), provides career advising and TCT educator scholarships for college courses, trainings and document translation with bilingual options to support a diverse workforce. The CC also connects early childhood educators to other professional development supports such as Child Care WAGES® (also funded by TCT in Miami-Dade) and the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program.

Accomplishments

- ★ 78 percent of QIS educators who did not have a Florida Staff Credential upon entry into the QIS now have obtained one
- ★ 71 percent of QIS educators have accepted TCT scholarships and/or Child Care WAGES® supplements

- ★ Of educators participating in the QIS for a sustained period of time (at least six years):

- 95 percent hold a Florida Staff Credential
- 92 percent accepted TCT scholarships and/or Child Care WAGES® supplements

Impact

- ★ QIS educators have higher quality interactions with the children in their classrooms when they hold degrees, accept more scholarships, and receive Child Care WAGES supplements
- ★ QIS educators who hold a degree make \$2.27 more an hour on average than those not holding a degree
- ★ Holding a degree and developing their English language skills buys QIS educators an additional \$3.76 more an hour; equivalent to a salary increase of about \$8,000 annually



Help Me Grow® Florida

Help Me Grow® Florida (HMGFL) promotes the healthy development for all children by providing access to developmental and behavioral screenings. By building cross-sector collaboration among community agencies, child healthcare professionals, and early childhood educators, HMGFL addresses the critical importance of early detection and intervention. HMGFL provides a centralized access point that supports families when they have developmental or behavioral concerns about their children. Families receive information, referral services, and available community resources, and HMGFL stays engaged until the family's needs have been met.

Accomplishments

- ★ From 2017-2018, the HMGFL State Coordinating Office contracted with nine affiliate sites to implement Help Me Grow. in their communities. With the two locally funded sites in Hillsborough and Miami-Dade counties, HMGFL served Florida children and their families in 29 of 67 counties
- ★ 2,018 of the 5,160 children served by HMGFL were children in a home setting and not attending any type of childcare or school environment
- ★ 5,060 screenings were completed using the ASQ, ASQ SE/SE-2, PSC, or M-CHAT tools. Of these screenings, 52 percent resulted in at least one concern or need for additional monitoring, services, or interventions
- ★ Of the 5,060 screenings completed, 655 screenings were completed during our Books, Balls, and Blocks Community Screening events. 989 families attended these screening events and 132 volunteers participated from the community
- ★ 4,569 referrals were made to community services and programs
- ★ The HMGFL State Coordinating Office completed its second year of the Learn the Signs. Act Early.-Systems Grant (LTSAE-SG). This \$10,000 grant was awarded to support our community screening initiatives and outreach efforts and to increase awareness of LTSAE
- ★ Alexandra Goldberg, HMGFL Program and Training Manager, was named the "Learn the Signs. Act Early" Ambassador for Florida by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD). A stipend of \$4,000 was awarded to promote developmental monitoring and screening in Florida
- ★ A grant of \$13,047 was awarded by the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions for HMGFL to be an implementation partner in the Early Childhood Comprehensive System Impact project

Impact

- ★ HMGFL produces a cost savings of \$2,300 per child when it provides screening instead of a physician office. By identifying only those children who truly need help, HMGFL eliminates costly and unnecessary services
- ★ HMGFL saves the taxpayers money and helps leverage the greatest value from state spending
- ★ Through cross-sector collaboration, HMGFL is able to facilitate communication and streamline services for families
- ★ HMGFL screens children that may need early detection/intervention services prior to starting school



Registries

The Children's Forum maintains two 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 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.

Accomplishments

- ★ Approximately 5,900 early childhood educators in Palm Beach County and 4,000 early childhood educators in Miami-Dade County are active participants in the Registry.

Impact

- ★ Workforce trends from the Registries can be used to make policy-informed decisions to improve early care and education (ECE) programs



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 helping to establish a well-qualified, fairly-compensated and stable workforce for Florida's children. Funded by the Florida Office of Early Learning and operated by the Children's Forum, T.E.A.C.H. provides scholarships for early childhood educators to work towards an Associate, Bachelor, or Master's Degree in early childhood education, a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential, a Florida Staff Credential, a Director Credential, or credential renewals.

T.E.A.C.H. maintains a three-way partnership in which the early childhood educator, the sponsoring program (the participant'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 at their sponsoring program.

Accomplishments

- ★ 3,516 scholars participated in T.E.A.C.H.
- ★ 17,689 credit hours were taken by T.E.A.C.H. scholars
- ★ T.E.A.C.H. scholars attended 63 approved training programs, colleges and universities
- ★ 1,711 licensed child care programs in Florida had at least one employee who participated in T.E.A.C.H.
- ★ The turnover rate was 6 percent, significantly lower than the national turnover rate of 30-40 percent
- ★ 99 percent of T.E.A.C.H. scholars and sponsors would recommend this type of scholarship program to other early childhood educators
- ★ 93 percent of directors from child care centers saw positive changes such as increased early childhood knowledge and improved quality of teaching in their early childhood educators who participated in T.E.A.C.H.

Impact

- ★ The average GPA for T.E.A.C.H. scholars was 3.33, helping to create an educated early learning workforce that knows how to nurture the growing minds of children



Child Care WAGES® FLORIDA Program

The Child Care WAGES® FLORIDA Program rewards early childhood educators with salary supplements based on their education and continuity of employment. By increasing the retention of the early care and education workforce, Child Care WAGES provides children with more stable relationships and better-educated teachers. Child Care WAGES® addresses individual professional development efforts and low wages, but does not affect budgets, regular wages, or parent fees within child care programs.

Accomplishments

- ★ 1,240 early childhood educators received at least one salary supplement check through Child Care WAGES®
- ★ 343 child care programs participated, serving more than 25,000 children throughout the state
- ★ The average six-month salary supplement payment was \$594 which is equivalent to at least \$0.57 per hour added to regular wages

Impact

- ★ The turnover rate of Child Care WAGES® participants was 11 percent, compared to the national average turnover rate of 30-40 percent
- ★ The average rate of pay for a Child Care WAGES® recipient per hour was \$11.09 compared to Florida's state minimum wage of \$8.10 per hour
- ★ 62 percent of participants sought additional education which leads to high-quality care for children
- ★ 99 percent of Child Care WAGES® participants are satisfied with the program

Administered through the Children's Forum, Child Care WAGES® is funded by local Early Learning Coalitions and The Children's Trust. Child Care WAGES® is currently available in Broward and Miami-Dade Counties. WAGES will also be available in targeted high-need communities in Pinellas County beginning December 1, 2018.



Newsworthy Notes

Forum Receives Family Friendly Workplace Recognition

The Children's Forum was recognized this year as a Family Friendly Workplace by the City of Tallahassee. As part of Tallahassee Mayor Andrew Gillum's Family First Initiative, this distinction is awarded to businesses that go above and beyond legal requirements to provide notable incentives for their employees. The Forum provides flexible work schedules, parental leave, paid time off, family health insurance, flexible spending accounts, livable wages, opportunities for professional development, and employee recognitions/celebratory events. Forum employees Denise Bishop and Lisa Roberts were pleased to serve on the Mayor's Family Friendly Employers and Culture Task Force.

Forum Partners With Florida Early Learning Disaster Relief (FELDR) to Provide Assistance to Child Care Programs Impacted by Disaster

Have you ever wondered what would happen if a child care center could not open for business due to a disaster? Parents wouldn't be able to work, child care teachers and owners wouldn't get paid, and children would be confused by the loss of their routines. Recovery is difficult when a majority of child care centers and family child care homes that children rely on as safe havens suffer disaster-related damage and are unable to operate. The Florida Early Learning Disaster Relief (FELDR) was created with these issues in mind. Its purpose is to assist child care centers, Head Start programs, and family child care homes that are in danger of closing, temporarily or permanently, due to a natural disaster. Through a collaboration of state and national partners, FELDR provides small grants to child care programs in need of repair so they can open their doors to children and families as soon as possible. "The Children's Forum is a proud partner of FELDR that provides hope, help, and healing to child care programs as they restore, renew, and rebuild," said Phyllis Kalifeh, President and CEO of the Children's Forum. To learn more about FELDR or to make a financial contribution, visit www.fldisasterrelief.org.

The Children's Trust Awards Contract to Forum to Provide Professional Development Services in Miami-Dade County

The Children's Forum was awarded 5-year contracts by The Children's Trust to make professional development supports available to all early learning programs in Miami-Dade County. This includes educator scholarships and income supplements administered by the Forum's Early Learning Career Center and the Child Care WAGES® FLORIDA Program. Contact the Early Learning Career Center to learn more and find out how to qualify at careercenter@thechildrensforum.com or 1-888-FL-CHILD.

Child Care WAGES® FLORIDA Program Now Offered in Pinellas County

The Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County has agreed to offer the Child Care WAGES® FLORIDA Program to early childhood educators in targeted high-need communities. Administered by the Children's Forum, WAGES® rewards early childhood educators with salary supplements based on their education and commitment to their employer. The program is designed to increase compensation, education, and retention, all of which improve quality in early education classrooms and provide a foundation for ongoing success.

Stronger Together: FLAEYC and the Forum Join Forces

The Florida Association for the Education of Young Children (FLAEYC) President, Pam Parmenter, and the Children's Forum President & CEO, Dr. Phyllis Kalifeh, were proud to announce the implementation of a shared services partnership. This partnership enables the Forum to be the administrative and program support arm for FLAEYC. Each organization remains independent, but the services shared strengthen each organization's collective impact. FLAEYC's headquarters are co-located with the Forum in Tallahassee.

Florida One of Two States Selected to Address Early Childhood Higher Education Barriers

Florida was one of two states selected by the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center to identify barriers within our state's early care and education (ECE) higher education system. The project is funded by the Alliance for Early Success and the Foundation for Child Development. The Children's Forum will facilitate the project in Florida. We will complete a landscape analysis of Florida's higher education system, develop a collaborative team with key stakeholders, and identify strategies that leverage the investments of T.E.A.C.H. scholarships to promote equity, access, and degree completion.



Children's Forum Staff

Phyllis Kalifeh, Ed.D.*** President and CEO	Sonia Corbo D'Amico, M.S.**	Courtney Hutcheson	Melissa Quinnell
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Melissa Clements, Ph.D.*	Lolita Hawkins	Qiana Peters, M.P.A.**	
Kerri Cloud, CPA**	Camisha Hodge	Tamara Price	

* 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 fortunate and proud of their commitment and dedication to our work and grateful for their generous service.

Phyllis Kalifeh, Ed.D.

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Funders & Clients

- Association for Maternal and Child Health Programs
- Brainheart Guidance, Inc.
- Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County
- The Children's Trust
- Citrus Health Network, Inc.
- ELC of Broward County
- ELC of Pasco and Hernando Counties
- ELC of Orange County
- ELC of Pinellas County
- ELC of Sarasota County
- ELC of Southwest Florida
- Florida Afterschool Network
- Florida Association for the Education of Young Children
- Florida Department of Children and Families
- Florida Family Child Care Home Association
- Florida Head Start Association
- Florida Head Start Collaborative Office
- Florida Office of Early Learning
- Mailman Center for Child Development
- Miami Children's Initiative
- National Workforce Registry Alliance
- United Way Center for Excellence
- United Way of Florida
- United Way of Miami-Dade County
- U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families-Office of Refugee Resettlement
- Volunteer Florida



Financial Report

2017-2018	Revenue	Expenditures
T.E.A.C.H. (Office of Early Learning & Private)	\$5,864,795	\$6,008,543
Help Me Grow	\$2,047,225	\$2,047,225
Professional Development/ Quality Initiatives	\$1,769,767	\$1,780,692
WAGES®	\$643,200	\$643,223
Program Assessment Center	\$540,397	\$532,354
Child Care Evaluation Services	\$187,807	\$187,807
Other	\$311,698	\$165,357
TOTAL	\$11,364,889	\$11,365,201



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