UNITED WAY CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN EARLY EDUCATION • 2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT

United Way

Dear friends, colleagues and champions of children:

We did it. The United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. Sure, age is just a number… but this anniversary is significant. It represents 10 years of **advocating for investment in high-quality early education.** Ten years **ensuring early education professionals have the resources and skills they need to best teach children.** Ten years working to change **the system of early education in Miami-Dade and beyond.**

Together with educators, business leaders, passionate volunteers and a host of committed partners, we opened the Center in 2007 with one clear and unwavering vision: all children will have access to the highest quality early care and education, so that they can have the best possible start in school and in life. We've been proud to witness the growing momentum for investments in early education at the state and national level, coupled with the increasing public awareness of the long-term benefits of high-quality early education.

We are buoyed by the results of the recently released Educare Implementation Study, of which our Center's Demonstration School is one of 21 Educare sites across the country. The results demonstrate with hard evidence the positive impact that high-quality early education has on young minds.

We know we are on the right track, and yet, there is still much work to be done. We continue on this journey together.

Thank you for joining us.

Annelies Da Costa Gomez
Chair, United Way Center for
Excellence in Early Education

Harve A. Mogul
President and CEO
United Way of Miami-Dade

OUR APPROACH

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
Engage and empower individuals working with children

DEMONSTRATE
Model evidence-based practices

ADVOCATE
Be a platform for policy change

Ten Years Championing Children

Since 2007, the United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education has:

offered **20,476 hours of trainings to 32,525 early care and education professionals,** who have in turn influenced the lives of nearly **15,000** children

worked with **1,280 local early education centers and family child care homes** to enhance their services

partnered with dozens of organizations and advocated successfully for state policy and budget issues resulting in the **passage of seven early education bills and over $100 million in early childhood funding increases.**

M.V.P.

RESEARCH

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 700 new neural connections per second during the first two years of life. 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 four, 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% chance of developmental delays occurs when children experience significant adversity.

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

Early investments pay 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.

Children who receive high-quality early education are[2]:

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

Our United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education, Demonstration School is part of the Educare Learning Network, which is a partnership between the Ounce of Prevention Fund, the Buffet Early Childhood Fund, other national philanthropies and public-private partners.

New research into the benefits of the Educare model

Researchers at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill found that the high-quality, center-based early childhood education offered at Educare sites have a positive impact on the development of low-income infant and toddlers. The study, which has tracked children through age five, found that after one year of enrollment, at approximately age two, Educare children had:

- Significantly higher English language skills;
- Fewer parent reports of problem behaviors; and
- More positive parent-child interactions than children who did not attend Educare.

Sources:

1. Center on the Developing Child (2009). *Five Numbers to Remember About Early Childhood Development* (Brief). Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu

2. Schweinhart, L. J., Montie, J., Xiang, Z., Barnett, W. S., Belfield, C. R., & Nores, M. (2005). *Lifetime effects: The HighScope Perry Preschool study through age 40.* (Monographs of the HighScope Educational Research Foundation, 14). Ypsilanti, MI: HighScope Press.

EDUCATE

The Center equips early childhood professionals, families, community leaders and others, with the skills, knowledge, and resources to understand and deliver high-quality early care and education.

Last year, the Center provided **2,682 hours of professional learning,** to **2,938 educators** that in turned influenced the lives of thousands of children in **369 programs** across the county.

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP)

"I enjoy going above and beyond for the families that we work with because as a child, I remember members of the community volunteering, giving back and pushing hard on our behalf. I, along with my eight siblings, are living proof that with some help, hard work and the belief that things could change, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE."

- Arkayla Ancrum, United Way (EHS-CCP) Family Engagement Specialist, Ethel F. Beckford/Richmond

Growing up in South Dade, Arkayla attended Ethel Beckford/Richmond Elementary. The former foster child is proud to be back in her own community, helping neighborhood families access services through United Way's EHS-CCP. Under the EHS-CCP, we've joined forces with Miami-Dade County Public Schools to improve access to high-quality early education in underserved communities across Miami-Dade. Ethel Beckford/Richmond is one of 17 sites funded through a five-year federal grant.

Quality Counts Neighborhood Learning Network

"Our family had a great experience with the help and support we received from our mental health consultant to better manage our daughter's behavioral issues. Our mental health consultant was caring, understanding and supportive."

– Brenda, mother of a young child

Brenda's daughter benefited from therapy sessions provided through the Quality Counts Neighborhood Learning Network program. Launched in 2015, the program is the result of an innovative partnership between our Center, the Children's Forum and Citrus Health Network. Together, we coordinate and deliver comprehensive supports and services to assist families and early learning professionals. The goal is to promote quality improvement and enhance professional capacity in an efficient and effective manner across Miami-Dade.

Community Wide Trainings

"Professional learning programs stretch the boundaries of early childhood education and allow educators to see what is beyond the classroom doors. Through the programs of the Center, I've been able to grow professionally and become much more observant and engaged when interacting with students and parents."

– Saira Mir, teacher, iPrep Academy, Miami-Dade Public Schools (M-DCPS)

Saira joined our United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education in 2010 and two years later accepted a teaching position with M-DCPS. In 2013, she was honored as the district's "Rookie Teacher of the Year," and this year received the Excellence in Early Childhood Education award from M-DCPS Early Childhood department. She continues to attend trainings at the Center.

In order to elevate the quality of early education, the Center believes teachers and administrators must have access to the latest research and evidence-based practices, and parents and caregivers must also learn the best ways to care and nurture young children. Through partnerships with universities, nationally and locally renowned experts and community organizations, the Center offers a wide-range of professional learning opportunities.

The Early Childhood Program Administrator's Institute (ECPAI)

"The most important thing I took from ECPAI was meeting other directors in my area. We visit each other often, and we talk about the struggles in our community. I learned that we are not here to compete, but to serve our community."

- Maria Busto, owner, La Casita Daycare

A love of children and teaching led Maria to open La Casita Daycare in the same home where she grew up. In 2016, she joined our United Way Early Childhood Program Administrator's Institute (ECPAI) to learn more about high-quality early childhood programs as well as better manage her business. Currently in its 10th year, ECPAI is a comprehensive three-semester management and business leadership program, offered in English and Spanish. Since 2007, ECPAI has enhanced the skills of **578 early care and education administrators**, which improved the quality of **450 programs in our community**.

DEMONSTRATE

The United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education Dolphin Digital Media Demonstration School, Educare of Miami-Dade, serves as a model of observation and implementation of evidence-based early learning practices.

Reaching beyond

Since opening in 2007, our Center's Demonstration School has welcomed educators, administrators, community and business leaders from 19 of countries, and served more than 1,200 early learning centers in Miami-Dade and beyond.

Miami

"When I joined the Center's team I felt like I had arrived to my professional home, filled with many family members that helped me grow in my profession. All that I have learned fueled me in the design of my school. It gave me the conviction to pursue and develop a strong mission, vision and values that guide our teachers in offering the highest quality in early childhood. My goal is to foster these values to all the teachers that come through our doors. I hope that when they leave my school, they leave with the same conviction."

Silvia De Armas is the founder and director of the Bottega Child Development Center in Miami. Silvia was among the first teachers at the Center's Demonstration School. She opened her own school in 2013.

Houston

"From the moment I walked into the Center eight years ago everything changed. Why? Because my funder was with me and she was able to tangibly see the type of environment you can create for children. The Center's leadership was open, embracing, and intellectually generous. We returned to Houston and immediately began implementing many of the strategies demonstrated here within the program I manage, which encompasses 35 centers across the city. And that is the real beauty of the Center – it has a ripple effect across the country."

Marcela Clark is a senior manager with Collaborative for Children, a non-profit organization in Houston, Texas focused on early education. She is also a national trainer of the Brazelton Touchpoints approach.

our walls

Costa Rica

"The knowledge I gained at the United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education allowed me to become an entrepreneur. It impacted my life beyond the classroom and it has allowed me to impact the lives of others. Most of the pedagogical strategies I learned at the Center have now being passed on to my 15 teachers. I like to think of it as the continuation of the Center's impact and my responsibility to multiply what I received. At Bellelli we also have an open door policy for other private schools and an internship program for young teachers. The Center taught me that education is about giving and sharing to all. The best thing that can happen to me is to get good competition because that means that we would have raised the bar of quality in early education in Costa Rica."

Karla Staton is the co-founder and director of Bellelli Educacion, an early learning center in San José, Costa Rica. Karla was a teacher at the Center's Demonstration School for seven years, before deciding to open her own center in 2014. She is scheduled to open a second school in Costa Rica this summer.

ADVOCATE

Voices for Change

The United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education sparks the conversation and raises the awareness of the importance of early childhood education.

ReadingPals

"I've always believed in 'the sooner, the better' in terms of education, and beginning this program in Pre-K is wonderful. The real truth is that when children learn to read, they can learn anything they want."

– Al Blake is a five-year ReadingPals volunteer at Treasure Island Elementary. Al has recruited more than 10 volunteers to the program.

Now in its fifth year, our ReadingPals program brings together community volunteers to help young children improve their literacy skills. We are one of 15 United Ways in Florida participating in the initiative, funded through a private grant from Carol Jenkins Barnett, philanthropist, and Barney Barnett, Publix vice chairman of Publix Super Markets Charities.

Impact Council

"I have a faith and philosophical belief. As it has often been stated, 'It takes a village to raise a child' and children collectively. I believe that I have a moral responsibility to do what I know is right for all children because it is the right thing to do. And by getting others involved, the possibilities are endless for children's holistic development."

– Sondra Wallace is a volunteer with United Way's Education I Impact Council and a longtime advocate for children. In her volunteer role, she helps to guide our investments in early education programs.

Speaking out

At a time when Florida is facing budget cuts to education, health and human services, we continue to use our voice to remind our legislators of the importance of investing in quality early care and education programs. During the 2017 Florida legislative session, our United Way participated in more than 150 meetings with state legislators, policy makers and partners. We advocated for quality early learning opportunities, health care and family supports to help Florida's children thrive. A $25 million increase for school readiness access plus $15.5 million in performance funding, and an additional $1.4 million in healthy kids dental services are among the wins in our state budget this year, when the Governor signs the final budget. We also joined 4,000 Florida children's advocates for Children's Week in the Capitol.

The annual "Hanging of the Hands" display in the Capitol Rotunda as part of Children's Week features thousands of "hand art" collected from early care and education programs and schools across the state

At the national level, 20 United Way Women Leaders traveled to Washington D.C. in May to advocate for early childhood programs including Head Start, child care and home visiting. During this trip, our Women Leaders met with Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos; U. S. Senators Marco Rubio and Bill Nelson; and U. S. Representatives Carlos Curbelo, Mario Diaz-Balart, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Frederica Wilson; as well as White House Director of Media Affairs Helen Aguirre Ferré, making the case for investing in these important early education initiatives.

United Way Women Leaders in front of the U. S. Department of Education before meeting with Secretary DeVos

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In the past ten years, the United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education has had the privilege of working alongside key partners who share in this vision and embody the spirit of collaboration. Together, we continue to elevate the quality of early care and education in Miami-Dade and beyond.

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