

High Quality Early Education for Dependent Youth

Vision: All zero- to five-year-old dependent youth in Hillsborough County will receive a high quality early education.

Mission: Through strategic collaboration, we will identify the barriers to achieving our vision, design solutions to overcome those barriers, and implement those solutions for our zero- to five-year-old dependent youth.

Collaborative Members:

- Judge Essrig (Chief Dependency Judge of the 13th Judicial Circuit); L. David Shear Children's Law Center of Bay Area Legal Services, Inc. (Attorneys ad Litem); Guardian ad Litem Program; Office of Regional Counsel Social Worker (Parents' Attorneys)
- Hillsborough County Family Partnership Association and Kinship Care Program
- Early Learning Coalition, School Readiness, Head Start, and Early Head Start
- Department of Children and Families and Eckerd Community Alternatives
- Florida's Children First, Early Childhood Council, Early Steps, Children's Board
- University of South Florida Experts

Projects:

- Raise awareness on import of quality early childhood.
- Enhance capacity of caregivers, care managers, GALs, and AALs to assess the quality of a given day care.
- Increase awareness about how to search for a quality day care placement for dependent youth in Hillsborough County.
- Decrease cost of quality early education enrollment to caregivers and community-based providers.
- Encourage providers serving dependent children to enhance their overall quality with a special focus on meeting the unique needs of our dependent children.
- Bring the quality of a dependent child's early education experience into the case discussion.
- Enhance capacity of caregivers to support early learning for their dependent children.
- Enhance the stability of a quality early educational setting for a child.

Accomplishments:

- ✓ Facilitated QPI Training Video by Dr. James McHale, "The Importance of Quality Early Education in the Child Welfare System"
<http://centervideo.forest.usf.edu/qpi/qualityearlyed/qualityearlyed.html>
- ✓ Researched availability/average cost of quality child care programs in high-needs areas

Fact: Overall only 22% of our dependent children enrolled in School Readiness were attending a quality (Gold Seal Accredited or Quality Counts for Kids) School Readiness provider.

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- ✓ Spurred creation of the first-ever trauma-informed training for child care providers in Hillsborough County put on by the Early Childhood Council: “Johnny’s Invisible Suitcase”
- ✓ Created a pamphlet to assist caregivers to find quality child care for their dependent youth:
http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/Circuit/circuit13/ResourceGuideFC_ChildCare.pdf
- ✓ Spawned creation of a booklet produced by the Early Learning Coalition that lists the high quality child care providers by zip code for use by child welfare staff and caregivers:
<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/Circuit/circuit13/ChildCareBookletJuly2015.pdf>
- ✓ Created dependency-specific checklist to assist caregivers, GALs, AALs, or case managers to assess the quality of a given provider:
<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/Circuit/circuit13/InsertForQualityChecklist.pdf>
- ✓ Developed a visual aid to enforce the importance of quality early education for children in care: <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/Circuit/circuit13/YoungChSafetyChecklist.pdf>
- ✓ Designed a chart for child welfare stakeholders to understand the structure of the early education community for young children in care:
<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/Circuit/circuit13/EarlyEdSystemHillsborough.pdf>
- ✓ Encouraged creation of education-specific website to house resources for folks in the child welfare system to find quality child care:
<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/Circuit/Circuit13ESC.shtml>
- ✓ Trained case management organizations; Guardian ad Litem program; Office of the Attorney General and Office of Regional Counsel; and Family Reunification Team (working with reunifying biological parents). Presented at Dependency Court Improvement and Community Alliance meetings.

Next Project: Bring the quality of a dependent child’s early education experience into the case discussion.

Why incorporate the quality of a child's early education experience into the case discussion ?

Purpose of Chapter 39: "To provide for the care, safety, and protection of children in an environment that fosters healthy social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development ... "
Fla. Stat. 39.001(1)

Many of our children attend child care and/or have early education service needs.
Rilya Wilson Act amended this year to 0-5 year olds. Fla. Stat. 39.604(3).

State is recognizing import of quality care for dependent children.
Florida Administrative Code 65C-13.030(2)(d) amended to require licensed foster parents to first seek Gold Seal Accredited providers or providers participating in other quality rating programs (i.e. QCFK).

High Quality Early Education for Dependent Youth

We can equip our dependent children to significantly reduce the likelihood of poor academic outcomes

Dependent students are ...	At-risk participants of high quality early education programs are ...
more likely to perform below grade level on tests. ¹	better prepared for kindergarten, with higher math and literacy skills. ⁴ more likely to score higher in math and reading throughout their school careers. ⁴
more likely to repeat a grade. ¹	less likely to repeat a grade. ⁴
more likely to have behavioral problems, including arrests for juvenile delinquency. ²	less likely to have a juvenile delinquency record. ⁵
more likely to be referred to special education. ¹	less likely to be referred to special education. ⁶
more likely to drop out of school. ³	more likely to graduate high school. ⁵

1. Cynthia Godsoe, Caught Between? Two systems: How Exceptional Children in Out-of-Home Care are Denied Equality in Education, 19 Yale L. & Pol'y Rev. 81-89-104(2000)
2. Wendy Whiting Blome, What Happens to Foster Kids: Educational Experiences of a random Sample of Foster Care Youth and a Matched Group Non-Foster Care Youth, Child and Adolescent Soc. Work J., Feb. 1997, at 41, 47.
3. Casey Family Programs, Foster Care by the Numbers (2010), <http://www.casey.org/numbers>
4. Katherine A. Magnuson, et al., Inequality in Preschool Education and School Readiness, American Educational Research Journal, Spring 2004 at 137-141.
5. Arthur J. Reynolds, et al., Paths of Effects of Early Childhood Intervention on Educational Attainment and Delinquency: A Confirmatory Analysis of the Chicago Child-Parent Centers, Child Development Sep. - Oct. 2004, at 1299, 1306-7.
6. Liza M. Conyers, The Effect of Early Childhood Intervention and Subsequent Special Education Services: Findings from the Chicago Child-Parent Centers, Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, October 2010, at 70, 89, 9.

We can equip our dependent children to significantly reduce the likelihood of poor life outcomes

Adults who were dependent children are ...	At age 40, at-risk participants of high quality early education programs are ...
more likely to be unemployed. ¹	significantly wealthier. ²
more likely to be reliant on public assistance. ¹	significantly less likely to be reliant on public assistance. ²
more likely to be homeless. ¹	significantly healthier. ²
more likely to spend time in prison. ¹	less likely to be incarcerated. ²

1. Casey Family Programs, Foster Care by the Numbers (2010), <http://www.casey.org/numbers>; Judith M. Gerber & Sherif Dicker, Children Admit: Addressing the Educational Needs of New York's Foster Children, 69 Alb. L. Rev. 1, 4-8 (2005)
2. . Milagros Norez et al., Updating the Economic Impacts of the High/Scope Perry Preschool Program, Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, Autumn 2005, at 245, 245-251.