



## **Strategic Plan Progress**

*Planning the work and working the plan...*

**March 19, 2021**

***...because kids can't wait!***

**Vision**

Connected and engaged communities supporting children for lifelong success.

**Mission**

The Forum collaboratively builds and supports systems to promote positive experiences and outcomes for young children.

**Guiding Principles:** Good public policy is informed by research. The use of sound research to increase awareness and advocacy on children's issues and the field of child care and early learning is fundamental. Our guiding principles, therefore, are informed by research and best practices:

- Parents are the primary educators of their children; yet some parents face barriers that seriously limit their ability to be effective parents. Proven programs and adequate resources must be available to assist parents in achieving the best possible outcomes for their children.
- The foundation for physical, social and emotional capabilities is largely set during children's first few years of life and is essential to their future cognitive and academic success as well as their ability to function well in society. Indeed, society is the eventual beneficiary of a strong foundation or the victim of a weak one.
- Children have the right to warm, responsive, and nurturing care from their parents and caregivers.
- Children are entitled to high quality early learning experiences including before and after school enrichment provided not only by their parents but by compassionate, knowledgeable, and trained practitioners as well.
- Families of children with disabilities and special health care needs have unique challenges and should have access to services and adequate resources designed to meet their needs and assistance to navigate systems that can help support them.
- Formal education and ongoing professional development for practitioners are critical to the optimum development of children given the correlation between practitioner knowledge, skills, and practices and improved child outcomes for later success.
- Compensation parity for early childhood and afterschool practitioners must be promoted to positively impact recruitment, retention, quality and commitment to the field.
- Collaboration with other local, state, and national organizations/agencies is the most effective strategy for supporting children, families, and practitioners to achieve shared goals.
- Professionalism, accountability, honesty, respect, integrity and excellence are minimum expectations for Forum staff and members of the board of directors.

*Adopted as edited by the board of directors, October 2010 Reviewed and affirmed by the board of directors, December 2012, March 2014, October 2014, December 2016, March 2017, September 2019, September 2020, March 2021*

**STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS 2019-20**

**Goal 1:** The Forum will provide support, professional development, and innovative and responsive assistance to educators, stakeholders, and families at the local, state, and national levels.

Objectives	January - March 2021
<p>Serve as the hub to provide responsive guidance, professional development support, outreach, resources, technical and scholarship assistance to programs and educators in Miami-Dade County through the Early Learning Career Center.</p>	<p>The Early Learning Career Center (ELCC) continues to provide career advisement and scholarship supports to the workforce in Miami-Dade County. Despite Covid restrictions, the ELCC has continued to provide scholarship supports to the workforce, who have continued to requests professional development (PD) trainings. The ELCC is working diligently with vendors and institutions that provide PD supports to ensure continuity and ensure the efficacy of its trainings. Currently, the ELCC is actively collaborating with its funder, The Children’s Trust, and community partners to bring Social Equity training to Miami-Dade with a focus on long term sustainable goals towards encouraging &amp; supporting social and equitable opportunities for the community. To date, the ELCC has met 50% of its scholarship expenditures and is projected to spend 100% of its scholarship funds by Sept 2021. The ELCC will continue to seek out new PD opportunities for its workforce with the support of its staff. There are new course offerings being discussed with Miami Dade College and we are also getting ready to launch the DCF -Trauma Informed Care for Directors training in Spanish with Nova Southeastern University on March 23, 2021.</p>
<p>Provide scholarships to improve compensation, education, and retention in the field of early care and education through the Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Early Childhood® Scholarship Program. The results will be reported to policymakers and funders.</p>	<p><b>T.E.A.C.H. Program Update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Office of Early Learning just finished their annual monitoring of T.E.A.C.H.</li> <li>● We have now reimbursed for more than 819 computers.</li> <li>● The COVID-19 crisis has had an impact on our numbers, but we continue robust outreach to the field.</li> </ul>

Objectives	January - March 2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have spent 58% of our scholarship dollars.</li> </ul> <p><b>Current T.E.A.C.H. data:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3,064 current active scholars</li> <li>• 365 current pending scholars</li> <li>• 3,356 applications have been received since July 1, 2020</li> <li>• 4,484 web hits for February, 2021</li> </ul>
Operate and manage the Palm Beach Registry Services for the Children’s Services Council and the Miami-Dade Registry for The Children’s Trust.	<p>Palm Beach Registry: New Practitioner Applications - 55</p> <p>Miami-Dade Registry: There are approximately 300 QIS centers going through our Portal process.</p>
Provide services under contract with the Department of Children and Families by (1) evaluating applications of recognized accreditation associations for inclusion in the state’s Gold Seal Quality Care program and maintain the Gold Seal database, and (2) evaluating applications of early childhood training providers for eligibility as Florida Child Care Professional Credential (FCCPC) training program providers.	<p><b>Gold Seal Quality Care Program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facility: 1754</li> <li>• Large Family Child Care Homes(LFCCH): 69</li> <li>• Large Family Day Care Home(LFDCH): 71</li> </ul> <p>Total: 1,894 Programs with a Gold Seal Designation.</p> <p><b>Gold Seal Associations Updates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 Accrediting Associations approved for Gold Seal</li> </ul> <p><b>Florida Child Care Professional Credential (FCCPC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 34 FCCPC training sites</li> </ul>
Develop and deliver high quality training through summits, workshops, conferences, etc..	The Forum is coordinating the registration, e-hosting, and promotion of three regional Florida Office of Early Learning

Objectives	January - March 2021
<p>Maintain the Forum’s status as an Accredited Provider (AP) for International Association of Continuing Education and Training (IACET).</p>	<p>Transition to Kindergarten Summits in April and May.</p> <p>The Forum continues its active status as an AP. However, we have not hosted any IACET training events in the last two years. The Forum developed a face to face Executive Leadership training , which was to be offered in 2020,; however, due to the pandemic, in person training was put on hold. A modified online version of the course has been drafted and final edits are being made. IACET CEU will be provided for successful completion of the asynchronous virtual training.</p> <p>Updates to the IACET page of the Children’s Forum website are needed in order to limit outside requests for CEU services that we are not authorized to provide per IACET guidelines (issuing CEU’s for external and non-Forum training events)</p>

**Goal 2: The Forum will generate and disseminate valid, reliable and current best practices, data, and research informing decision-making and measuring outcomes.**

Objectives	January - March 2021
<p>Disseminate relevant research studies and policy briefs to various audiences to include practitioners and policy makers to inform the field and improve practices.</p>	<p>Data investigating high school CTE programs as a viable pipeline to the ECE field were collected through the T.E.A.C.H. program. Presentations of findings from this study have been provided to various organizations and a policy paper is currently being developed.</p>
<p>Include research and evaluation components to test efficacy of proposed strategies and measure outcomes for early childhood educators and ultimately the children they serve in grant proposals.</p>	<p>Submitted preliminary proposal (non-competitive) to Devereux to examine the impact of two of their social-emotional training and coaching interventions for early childhood educators. Currently in discussions to refine the proposal details. Awaiting information on their available funding to conduct the study to determine feasibility and scale the project accordingly.</p>

**Goal 3: The Forum will provide collaborative leadership to promote effective policy advocacy for children and families.**

Objectives	January - March 2021
Facilitate, participate, and serve on various local, state, and national level leadership initiatives to promote effective public policy and best practice.	Forum staff serve on the Florida Afterschool Network Quality Committee, Florida’s HEROS Stakeholder Committee ( <i>Recognizing Healthy Environments for Reducing Obesity in FL</i> ).
Engage in advocacy efforts that promote the philosophy of the organization following applicable guidelines under state and federal regulations.	The Forum has developed and uploaded to our website new T.E.A.C.H. <a href="https://teach-fl.org/index.php/reports-publications/">https://teach-fl.org/index.php/reports-publications/</a> and HMG <a href="https://www.helpmegrowfl.org/reports/">https://www.helpmegrowfl.org/reports/</a> advocacy materials to encourage public participation in the current legislative session.
Present and display at local, state, and national conferences on relevant topics demonstrating the expertise of Forum staff and value of programs administered.	For T.E.A.C.H. and INCENTIVE\$ Programs, there has been no travel to conferences or other events as COVID-19 pandemic has limited many of these activities. We still provide resources and materials digitally and by mail as requested (ex. rack cards, flyers, brochures, promotional items). We expect programs to open for in-person conferences and events in the summer or fall. Outreach Team discussions underway of what presence our programs will serve at these events.
Support the board of director’s priority to effectively engage business leaders in early childhood policy in Florida.	There have been no direct activities regarding this objective. However, Children’s Week has invited Mark Wilson to speak at the Advocacy Reception.
Maintain and expand shared services agreements with partners such as FHSA.	We recently entered into an agreement to provide office space for Ladies Learning to Lead yielding approximately \$4K per year.

**Goal 4: The Forum will maintain a sustainable marketing and outreach plan to educate stakeholders and the public about the value of high quality early learning, school age, and early intervention services.**

Objectives	January - March 2021
Assess the needs of the field and secure funding to support the mission of the organization on an ongoing basis.	We continue to collect data and research opportunities for additional funding.
Write and promote news, stories, and op-eds in various media throughout the state.	No articles were sent, but plans to write a letter to the editor on an issue or publication right before or during Children’s Week is planned.
Promote advocacy, effective policies and practices through the Forum communications.	<p>Advocacy and other policies are promoted on the Forum’s social media pages, e-newsletter, and in e-blasts.</p> <p>The <i>Avenues to Advocacy</i> workshops, which serve as a precursor to Children’s Week, have been well attended and feedback has been excellent.</p>
Engage the field through the Forum’s membership program.	<p>We continue to provide reduced pricing and 3 year membership options for early educators. A Forum membership fulfills the proof of membership requirement for the renewal of staff credentials. We also assist directors with fulfilling their Professional Contribution Requirement (PCR) for the renewal of their Director Credential. Members receive the Forum’s e-newsletter and email regarding advocacy, legislative news, program participant features, etc. Additionally, members receive a copy of the Forum’s printed annual report. Members are also able to access their membership details and certificates through the Forum’s Portal.</p> <p>From January 1, March 10, 2021, 175 people became members of or renewed their membership with the Children’s Forum.</p>

Objectives	January - March 2021
<p>Maintain a presence on social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube) to increase partnerships, build awareness of programs/services and receive online donations.</p>	<p>As of March 10, the Forum's social media pages include the following:</p> <p>Facebook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Children's Forum: 3,482 followers</li> <li>● T.E.A.C.H.: 3,100 followers</li> <li>● INCENTIVE\$: 500 followers</li> <li>● Early Learning Career Center: 700 followers</li> <li>● Children's Week: 2,179</li> <li>● Help Me Grow: 1945 followers</li> </ul> <p>Twitter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Children's Forum: 5,723 followers</li> <li>● Children's Week: 2,100 followers</li> <li>● Help Me Grow: 538 followers</li> </ul> <p>Instagram:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Children's Forum: 537 followers</li> <li>● Children's Week: 475 followers</li> <li>● T.E.A.C.H.: 58 followers</li> <li>● Help Me Grow: 1,737 followers</li> </ul> <p>The Forum's YouTube channel has 99 subscribers. The Children's Week YouTube channel has 24 subscribers.</p>
<p>Write and disseminate a quarterly newsletter to promote collaboration among providers of services for young children.</p>	<p>A Spring edition of the Forum's newsletter focusing on Children's Week, the Transition to Kindergarten Summits, and other events is planned for distribution in April.</p>
<p>Promote and expand professional development systems throughout the state to provide career pathways for early childhood and afterschool educators.</p>	<p>The Florida Afterschool Network is partnering with Prevent Child Abuse Florida in the dissemination and sharing of 'Resilience' with the Florida Recreation &amp; Park Association and the Florida Afterschool Alliance at their respective state-wide conferences. This training strengthens the Social Emotional Learning environment</p>



Objectives	January - March 2021
	for programs and providers allowing for stronger connections and supporting youth to thrive.
Bring positive recognition to the Forum for the quality and excellence of the work.	The work the Forum is doing to promote Children’s Week 2021 has solicited a great deal of positive recognition across the state and with key stakeholders. The <i>Avenues to Advocacy</i> workshops have been well attended and feedback has been excellent.
The Forum will serve as the organizing partner for Children’s Week to increase awareness and needs of children and youth in Florida.	<p>Planning and execution in process for the 26th Annual CWFL event to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Securing Partners (60 confirmed Partners as of March 2021) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Some partners will provide their company’s promotional materials for future in-person events and activities (ex. Storybook Village Walk-Thru scheduled for April 10)</li> <li>○ Materials received as of March 2021 from: Kaplan-Crayola, Colgate Bright Smiles/Bright Futures, and FDOH Environmental Tracking Program Creating and operating virtual events platform for Partners and attendees, which will run March 15 - April 12 (Whova online events)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● CWFL event registration launched on the website March 2 - 215 attendees registered as of March 11 (<a href="https://whova.com/portal/registration/cfstf_202102/">https://whova.com/portal/registration/cfstf_202102/</a>)</li> <li>● Confirmed In-person events (limited per COVID-19 pandemic) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Advocacy Reception &amp; Awards Ceremony (April 5 / 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm) at FSU Ballroom in Tallahassee, FL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ This year’s Chiles Advocacy and Youth Award winners will be</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Objectives	January - March 2021
	<p>announced at this event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Limited to 100 VIP guests</li> <li>○ Storybook Village Walk-Thru (April 10 / 12:00 pm -3:00 pm) at Cascades Park in Tallahassee, FL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Event planning coordinating by CWFL Partners, FINACIOUS, LLC and DOE/OEL</li> <li>■ Children’s Forum will have a booth/table to distribute materials</li> <li>■ Limited audience (must register) per county/city COVID safety guidelines</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Continued social media outreach for all upcoming CWFL events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Facebook: 1,877 likes / 2,179 follows</li> <li>○ Instagram: 475 followers</li> </ul> </li> <li>● CWFL promotional material design and orders in process including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Advocacy Toolkit (PDF)</li> <li>○ Local Events Toolkit (PDF)</li> <li>○ CWFL greeting/thank you cards</li> <li>○ CWFL Advocate lapel pins</li> <li>○ CWFL standing banner and tablecloth</li> <li>○ CWFL tote bags (to be distributed at Storybook Village and Advocacy Awards Reception)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Goal 5: The Forum will increase awareness of compensation disparities for the early care and education workforce.**

Objectives	January - March 2021
Provide wage and salary stipends through the successful implementation of the Early Childhood Educator INCENTIVE\$ Florida Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Active participants: 2,174</li> <li>● Participating child care programs: 823</li> <li>● 742 INCENTIVE\$ financial payments were issued</li> </ul>

Objectives	January - March 2021
	<p>during this time period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 4,296 financial payments (\$2.2 million) have been issued since March 2020 at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> <li>● Six-month supplement average: \$536.00, the average six-month incentive is equivalent to at least \$.52 cent an hour</li> </ul>
Maintain an active website and other communications strategies for the public on the salary and compensation issues of the ECE workforce.	The INCENTIVE\$ webpage and communications shared through Forum distribution channels continue to highlight the plight of the ECE workforce and the poor wages.

**Goal 6: The Forum will provide collaborative leadership to improve systems of care, education, and healthy development for children.**

Objectives	January - March 2021
Enhance the Professional Development Registry to serve as a resource for training and scholarship management, and to inform decision-making.	The Registry continues to be used by the Forum programs to manage data and generate informative research reports for the Miami-Dade workforce.
Maintain websites that will serve as the information and resource hub for the early learning field.	The Forum has developed and uploaded to our website new T.E.A.C.H. <a href="https://teach-fl.org/index.php/reports-publications/">https://teach-fl.org/index.php/reports-publications/</a> and HMG <a href="https://www.helpmegrowfl.org/reports/">https://www.helpmegrowfl.org/reports/</a> advocacy materials to encourage public participation in the current legislative session.

Objectives	January - March 2021
<p>Provide leadership and administration of the Help Me Grow Florida project to increase the access and availability of services for children and families.</p>	<p><b>Meetings and outreach by the State Coordinating Office (SCO) to promote the work of the Children’s Forum and HMGF as well as to advocate for the children and families in Florida include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participating in quarterly/monthly Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) workgroup meetings including an ECCS Social-Emotional Development workgroup, ECCS Data workgroup, ECCS Policy workgroup, ECCS State Improvement team meetings, and ECCS State Advisory team meetings</li> <li>- Pilot project discussions with Reach Out and Read with HMG Lake county.</li> <li>- Outreach materials partnerships with Reach Out and Read, the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions, and the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program (MIECHV)</li> <li>- Coordinating professional development opportunities for HMGF staff, including a trauma training (“Caring for Those who Care”) and the Annual Meeting</li> </ul> <p><b>Data Summary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Received <b>3,286</b> calls (7/1/20-1/30/21- receive call data monthly)</li> <li>- Served <b>2,618</b> children (7/1/20-3/8/21)</li> <li>- Served <b>2,361</b> families (7/1/20-3/8/21)</li> <li>- Conducted <b>4,644</b> screenings (7/1/20-3/8/21)</li> <li>- Made <b>2,563</b> referrals (7/1/20-3/8/21)</li> <li>- Held <b>291</b> family and community events (7/1/20-3/8/21)</li> <li>- Held <b>990</b> healthcare provider events (7/1/20-3/8/21)</li> </ul>
<p>Support diversity in the early learning and afterschool workforce.</p>	<p>The Early Learning Career Center has been in discussions with training institutions to make anti-bias/equity training available to early childhood leaders and</p>

Objectives	January - March 2021
	<p>educators in Miami-Dade County.</p> <p>The ELCC director was invited to submit an application to the national BUILD Initiative's Equity Leaders Action Network (ELAN) Fellowship program and has been selected for round two of the application process. Selection decisions will be made on 4/1/21. ELAN goals are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support leaders in developing the will and skill to question personal assumptions and institutional and structural policies and practices and work collaboratively to develop strategies that promote early childhood systems explicitly and measurably equitable and excellent for all children.</li> <li>● Build the capacity of members to critically examine, with racial equity processes, tools and concepts, institutional and structural policies and practices for distributing state and federal resources (e.g., funding and services).</li> <li>● Advance change through intentional actions that avoid further disadvantaging children and families of color and those in poverty and members of the early childhood workforce.</li> </ul> <p>The Florida Afterschool Network, with support from the STEM Next Foundation, has partnered with Florida 4-H to provide programs to high-quality STEM training informing youth of engaging STEM practice and connecting them to careers. This effort is focused on the Million Girls Moonshot, supporting females in the education and exploration of STEM field careers.</p>

Objectives	January - March 2021
<p>The Florida Afterschool Network will provide collaborative leadership, policy advocacy, and awareness of needs affecting the afterschool population throughout the state.</p>	<p>Utilizing the Children’s Week Platform, the Florida Afterschool Network led the Advocacy Workshop “Afterschool &amp; Beyond” with key partners including, CareerSource Florida, Consortium of Education Foundations and Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Advisory Board.</p> <p>This effective panel discussion addressed policy best practices and lifted up challenges in the school-age out of school time industry.</p>

**Goal 7: The Forum will be administered in a cost effective and efficient manner ensuring adequate resources are available to carry out the mission of the organization.**

Objectives	January - March 2021
<p>Respond to relevant Invitations To Negotiate or Request for Proposals that are consistent with the strategic plan goals. Assure that the potential revenue, social capital and/or return on investment justifies the allocation of resources</p>	<p>Submitted preliminary proposal (non-competitive) to Devereux to examine the impact of two of their social-emotional training and coaching interventions for early childhood educators. Currently in discussions to refine the proposal details. Awaiting information on their available funding to conduct the study to determine feasibility and scale the project according</p>
<p>Increase unrestricted revenue.</p>	<p>The Program Assessment and Coaching Unit (CLASS), has been actively conducting assessments during this quarter. The Forum has received Purchase Orders (POs) this contract year with 14 ELCs, RCMA, and Head Start agencies for a total of 1503 assessments. The Forum was awarded a contract with Episcopal Services Head Start Agency for 105 assessments and started the assessments at the beginning of March. We continue to anticipate increases in the number of assessments for some of those agencies and POs from at least four more ELCs. We currently have approximately 55 approved assessors</p>

Objectives	January - March 2021
	<p>throughout the state. We continually work to recruit more assessors, especially bilingual assessors. Our membership program continues to provide revenue for the Forum. We have seen an increase in growth, particularly with the Director option for membership.</p>
<p>Provide monthly financial reports to the Board ensuring board members are informed on the financial status of the Forum.</p>	<p>Monthly reports have been provided to the Board for January and February 2021.</p>
<p>Maintain positive audit results and monitoring reports that reflect the quality of our work.</p>	<p>The Office of Early Learning’s contractor, Thomas Howell Ferguson CPA, just completed their field work for their annual fiscal monitoring of the Children’s Forum. The draft report provided to the Children’s Forum on March 4 was very positive, with no identified issues.</p>
<p>Maintain quality assurance practices to ensure the ongoing quality improvement of services.</p>	<p>Quality assurance strategies are embedded in all of the Forum major programs to elicit feedback from audiences served and evaluate results for both formative and summative evaluation purposes.</p>
<p>Strengthen the internal culture of the Forum through staff recognition and professional development opportunities.</p>	<p>Feb 14: Forum Board provided fresh flowers for all staff / Morale Committee provided Valentines treat bags for all staff  March 5: Provided coffee and donuts for National Employee Appreciation Day (pre-wrapped food items per COVID-19 safety)  March 15-19: St. Patrick’s “lucky lollipops” Game planned</p>