



Strategic Plan Progress

December 17, 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.
- Racism in any form is antithetical to the Forum's vision, mission, and values and not tolerated. Diversity, equity, and inclusion will be promoted. Respect for all individuals is paramount as evidenced in organizational policies, practices, and delivery of services to children, families, and the early learning & afterschool workforce.
- 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, June 2021.

STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS 2020-21

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	Oct - Dec 2021
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>The Early Learning Career Center continues to provide responsive guidance to the Early Childhood workforce in Miami-Dade County through intentional career advisement, technical assistance, as well as, provide resources and conduct outreach to inform the community of available supports. The Center began its 4th year of the 5 year funding cycle on Oct 1 and has a projected scholarship expenditure of more than \$166,000 for fall 2021/spring 2022 PD trainings. The Center is also continuing its equity work in Miami-Dade through collaboration with community organizations to hold focus groups and listening sessions for the African-American and Haitian-Creole communities in hopes to better serve their PD needs in addition to trying to dismantle the systemic barriers within the Miami-Dade's QIS system that affect those underrepresented and under resourced communities. Currently, the Center has an open position for 1 specialist, which it is actively seeking to fill. As projections are made for spring 2022, the Center is focused on continuous quality improvement of PD scholarships, outreach efforts to conduct outreach where gaps exist, collaborate with more system partners and community organizations around equity, and support the workforce with guidance and intentional trainings that will improve the quality of care being provided to children and families.</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	<p>T.E.A.C.H. Program Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> T.E.A.C.H has implemented a new and improved online application process.

Objectives	Oct - Dec 2021
policymakers and funders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current conditions including staffing shortages are having an impact on our numbers, and we are utilizing robust outreach to keep the field engaged. • We have now reimbursed for more than 1,267 computers. • We have spent 31% of our scholarship dollars. <p>Current T.E.A.C.H. data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,446 current active scholars • 315 current pending scholars • 1,472 applications have been received since July 1, 2021 • 5,109 web hits for November, 2021
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: September - November: 83 Applications processed</p> <p>Miami Dade Registry: Approximately 300 Thrive by 5 centers will begin the renewal process in January.</p>
Provide services under contract with the Department of Children and Families and Department of Education/Division of Early Learning 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>Gold Seal Updates</p> <p>Effective July 1, 2021, the Gold Seal Quality Care Program was transferred to the Department of Education (DOE) from the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The DOE's Division of Early Learning is currently working in collaboration with DCF and the Children's Forum to ensure a smooth transition.</p> <p>Gold Seal Quality Care Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility: 1,777 • Large Family Child Care Homes (LFCCH): 73 • Licensed Family Day Care Homes (LFDCH): 69 <p>Total: 1,919 Programs with a Gold Seal Designation</p> <p>Gold Seal Associations Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 Accrediting Associations approved for Gold Seal • Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) decided not to renew as a Gold Seal approved Association.

Objectives	Oct - Dec 2021
	<p>Their last day was October 31, 2021.</p> <p>Florida Child Care Professional Credential (FCCPC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 34 FCCPC training sites
Develop and deliver high quality training through summits, workshops, conferences, etc..	At this time, this is not a line of business directly for the Forum. We have determined that it is more expedient for the Forum to coordinate and support training efforts rather than provide them directly unless there is a direct need to do so.
Maintain the Forum's status as an Accredited Provider (AP) for International Association of Continuing Education and Training (IACET).	The Forum leadership has decided that this goal is recommended for deletion. Maintaining this designation is costly and we are not direct providers of training.

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

Objectives	Oct - Dec 2021
Disseminate relevant research studies and policy briefs to various audiences to include practitioners and policy makers to inform the field and improve practices.	The Forum acts as a pass through to our stakeholders for information regarding the happenings at the Federal and State level. Further, as important research briefs are disseminated, we continue to pass those on to the field.
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.	We have not actively responded to grant proposals this quarter that contain research and evaluation strategies. However, this is consistently included in all grants and contracts to test strategies and inform the field.

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

Objectives	Oct - Dec 2021
Facilitate, participate, and serve on various local, state, and national level leadership initiatives to promote effective public policy and best practice.	Help Me Grow Florida continues to participate in quarterly/monthly workgroup meetings including the Early Steps Child Find workgroup, the FL ECCS Social-Emotional Development workgroup, the ECCS Data workgroup, and the ECCS Policy workgroup.
Engage in advocacy efforts that promote the philosophy of the organization following applicable guidelines under state and federal regulations.	As the organizing partner of Children's Week, the Forum is busy planning efforts for the in-person 2022 event January 30-February 4 .
Present and display at local, state, and national conferences on relevant topics demonstrating the expertise of Forum staff and value of programs administered.	Continue to work with our Statewide Ambassadors to promote TEACH at the local and regional level.
Support the board of director's priority to effectively engage business leaders in early childhood policy in Florida.	There has been no specific activities this quarter.
Maintain and expand shared services agreements with partners such as FHSA.	We continue to support FHSA and FAN. We are also sharing space with Ladies Learning to Lead, a local nonprofit as well as the Children's Movement.

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	Oct - Dec 2021
Assess the needs of the field and secure funding to support the mission of the organization on an ongoing basis.	We are continuing to follow the early childhood field and monitoring the state's plan in using the federal resources that have been allocated. Consistent with other industries, finding individuals to work in the ECE field is one of the major needs

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	at this point. We are also working to promote INCENTIVE\$ as one strategy to enhance retention..
Write and promote news, stories, and op-eds in various media throughout the state.	No stories or op-eds this quarter.
Promote advocacy, effective policies and practices through the Forum communications.	Advocacy and other policies are promoted on the Forum's social media pages, e-newsletter, and through e-blasts.
Engage the field through the Forum's membership program.	<p>We continue to provide affordable 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.</p> <p>From October 1 through December 8, 2021, 127 people became members of or renewed their membership with the Children's Forum.</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>Help Me Grow Florida social media platforms are active and receive engagement from followers. HMG has 1746 likes on Facebook, 1826 followers on Instagram, and 558 followers on Twitter.</p> <p>As of December 8, the Forum's social media pages include the following:</p> <p>Facebook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Forum: 3,039 likes and 3,568 followers • T.E.A.C.H.: 2,927 likes and 3,217 followers • INCENTIVE\$: 473 likes and 530 followers • Early Learning Career Center: 627 likes and 707 followers • Children's Week: 1,938 likes and 2,331 followers <p>Twitter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Forum: 5,666 followers • Children's Week: 1,178 followers

Objectives	Oct - Dec 2021
	<p>Instagram:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Forum: 590 followers • Children's Week: 598 followers • T.E.A.C.H.: 85 followers <p>YouTube:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Forum: 121 followers • Children's Week: 31 followers <p>LinkedIn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Forum: 195 followers
Write and disseminate a quarterly newsletter to promote collaboration among providers of services for young children.	A Winter edition of the Forum's newsletter is planned for January.
Promote and expand professional development systems throughout the state to provide career pathways for early childhood and afterschool educators.	We continue to promote the availability of professional development resources through social media and the Forum's supported partner work.
Bring positive recognition to the Forum for the quality and excellence of the work.	The Children's Forum coordinated a statewide Joint Referral Collaboration (JRC) Summit for referral agency staff and care coordinators through an opportunity provided by the Division of Early Learning on August 12, 2021. Referral staff from statewide organizations and agencies collaborated to discuss best practices and ways to improve local referral processes. The Children's Forum was granted an additional opportunity to host a second Summit in-person this Spring.
The Forum will serve as the organizing partner for Children's Week to increase awareness and needs of children and youth in Florida.	<p>The 2022 in-person Children's Week is January 30 - February 4. Events include an Advocacy Dinner and Awards Ceremony (Jan 31), Celebration of the Hands (hung in Capitol Rotunda Jan 30- Feb 4), and Children's Day activities (Feb. 1 includes Storybook Village, Teen Town Hall, entertainment, partner booths, and a press conference).</p> <p>As of December 8, we have a total of 34 paid Partners for a total of \$68,000 and a number of in-kind Partner support as well.</p>

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

Objectives	Oct - Dec 2021
<p>Provide wage and salary stipends through the successful implementation of the Early Childhood Educator INCENTIVE\$ Florida Program.</p>	<p>Participating Counties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Broward o Hillsborough o Miami-Dade <p>Total participants: 1,174 Total child care programs: 782</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 360 INCENTIVE\$ financial payments were issued during this time period • Average six-month incentive payment: 703.00, the average six-month incentive is equivalent to at least \$.67 cent an hour
<p>Maintain an active website and other communications strategies for the public on the salary and compensation issues of the ECE workforce.</p>	<p>October:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level up outreach email (Outreach Team) • T.E.A.C.H. scholarship announcement (Outreach Team) <p>November:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Portal confirmation announcement • T.E.A.C.H. scholarship referrals <p>December:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Portal confirmation announcement • TEACH scholarships for NCDA or higher email recruitment

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

Objectives	Oct - Dec 2021
Enhance the Professional Development Registry to serve as a resource for training and scholarship management, and to inform decision-making.	The Registries maintained by the Forum serve as a tool for the ECE field (Miami and Palm Beach). We have not actively promoted the registry due to the lack of developer capacity.
Maintain websites that will serve as the information and resource hub for the early learning field.	The Forum maintains several websites primarily targeting our programs and services to ensure ease of access (Children's Week, Children's Forum, Help Me Grow Florida, Florida Afterschool Network, T.E.A.C.H., INCENTIVE\$, and Early Learning Career Center.
Provide leadership and administration of the Help Me Grow Florida project to increase the access and availability of services for children and families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Help Me Grow Florida State Coordinating Office at the Children's Forum continues to provide oversight of the HMGF system statewide. HMG continues to help families better understand their child's development and help them access local resources by guiding them through developmental screenings, providing child development information, referring families to child development and human services, and following up with families to ensure successful connection to resources. ● Recent activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beginning Year 2 of Act Early/COVID-19 Response Teams Grant, awarded by the Association of University Center on Disabilities (AUCD) and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) to promote developmental monitoring and support COVID-19 resilience in families. ○ Development of a new HMG initiative, "Stories and Screenings" for children and families ○ Participation in RFP process with the Children's Trust of Alachua to begin HMG implementation in Alachua county. ○ Continued participation in the Division of Early Learning's Joint Referral Collaboration project. ● HMGF Data Summary:

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received 1,973 calls (7/1/21-10/31/21- receive call data monthly) Served 2,261 children (7/1/21-12/6/21) Served 2,098 families (7/1/21-12/6/21) Conducted 3,330 screenings (7/1/21-12/6/21) Made 1,648 referrals (7/1/21-12/6/21) Held 348 family and community events (7/1/21-12/6/21) Held 808 healthcare provider events (7/1/21-12/6/21)
Support diversity in the early learning and afterschool workforce.	Outreach Coordinator has completed an extensive training program in diversity and inclusion awareness.
The Florida Afterschool Network will provide collaborative leadership, policy advocacy, and awareness of needs affecting the afterschool population throughout the state.	The FAN Director resigned. Larry Pintacuda is acting as interim executive director until another ED is hired. In the interim, FAN is continuing in its role to provide leadership and policy advocacy for the field.

- **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	Oct - Dec 2021
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	The Forum applied for and received the Statewide Workforce Study contract from the Division of Early Learning. We continue to seek out opportunities to provide our expertise to projects related to early learning.
Increase unrestricted revenue.	The Program Assessment and Coaching Unit has continued to conduct CLASS assessments actively during this quarter. The Forum has seen an increase of 3 Purchase Orders (POs) for this contract year from 11 ELCs, RCMA, and Head Start agencies for a total of 1,076 assessments. At least 7 ELCs and Head Start agencies have indicated they plan to submit POs to contract with us for assessments beginning later in FY 21-22. We currently have 54 approved assessors throughout the state and will

Objectives	Oct - Dec 2021
	<p>continue to recruit more assessors, especially those individuals who are bilingual. We are also looking ahead to the next fiscal year in which VPK classrooms will also need to be observed with the passage of HB 419.</p> <p>We started the VIQI coaching project in July with MEF Associates and things are progressing well with the two coaches we hired in the central Florida area in which the work is taking place.</p>
Provide monthly financial reports to the Board ensuring board members are informed on the financial status of the Forum.	This has been done routinely.
Maintain positive audit results and monitoring reports that reflect the quality of our work.	We are in the process of completing our annual financial audit. The results are due to our funders by 12/31/21. They will be presented at the next board meeting.
Maintain quality assurance practices to ensure the ongoing quality improvement of services.	The Forum continues to evaluate our own practices as well as embed evaluation strategies into all of our contracted responsibilities to receive feedback from our stakeholders.
Strengthen the internal culture of the Forum through staff recognition and professional development opportunities.	Morale Committee: A voluntary Secret Santa exchange and a Holiday Spirit Week (wearing pajamas to work, wearing an ugly sweater, etc.) is planned in our Tallahassee office. The Forum is having a holiday party for all employees on December 15.