



## **Strategic Plan Progress**

**September 11, 2020**

***...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*

**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	July – September 2020
<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 ELCC was able to provide PD supports to the workforce in Miami-Dade County through the pandemic and successfully met our contract with expenditures of the scholarship funds within a \$2,000 difference. The Specialists utilized virtual platforms to provide ongoing to support. Additionally, The Children’s Trust approved flexibility with employment eligibility, so that educators can continue to participate in trainings even if they were unemployed or had changes to employment status. As a result, the ELCC successfully met contractual goals with the support from partners and our funder. The ELCC has begun FY 20-21 on a positive note and is currently coordinating multiple cohorts of PD for multiple programs. Our Specialists continue to provide assistance in hopes that soon educators will be able to attend live courses.</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>T.E.A.C.H. Program Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T.E.A.C.H. spent all of the scholarship dollars available for the 19/20 fiscal year.</li> <li>• T.E.A.C.H. has sought and received permission to reimburse scholars for computers up to \$500.00 as an essential tool for distance learning. To date we have been able to reimburse 483 scholars.</li> <li>• We are starting to work on a redesign of our online T.E.A.C.H. application process. This will also require a new process for processing and approving the application. We are</li> </ul>

Objectives	July - September 2020
	<p>hoping to have this done by December.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have spent 7% of our scholarship dollars for the 20/21 fiscal year.</li> </ul> <p>Current T.E.A.C.H. data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3,504 current active scholars</li> <li>• 404 current pending scholars</li> <li>• 299 applications have been received since July 1, 2020</li> <li>• 5,777 web hits for July, 2020</li> </ul>
<p>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>	<p>Palm Beach Registry: 86 applications processed this quarter</p> <p>Miami Registry: Approximately 4000 active participants</p>
<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>	<p><b>Gold Seal Quality Care Program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facility: 1,732</li> <li>• Large Family Child Care Homes(LFCCH): 67</li> <li>• Large Family Day Care Home(LFDCH): 70</li> </ul> <p>Total: 1,869 Programs with a Gold Seal Designation.</p> <p><b>Gold Seal Associations Updates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 Accrediting Associations approved for Gold Seal</li> </ul>

Objectives	July - September 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA) is no longer a Gold Seal Association as of June 4, 2020.</li> <li>· The Association of Independent Schools of Florida (AISF) was approved on May 22, 2020 as a Gold Seal Association.</li> <li>· Florida Catholic Conference (FCC) was approved on August 14, 2020 as a Gold Seal Association.</li> </ul> <p><b>Florida Child Care Professional Credential (FCCPC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· 32 FCCPC training sites</li> <li>· 1 program is currently inactive at this time</li> </ul>
Develop and deliver high quality training through summits, workshops, conferences, etc..	<p>The Forum hosted a Summer series of COVID-19 informational webinars (legal considerations, program operations, and teacher insights) with guest panelists in July and August.</p> <p>Planning for a 15-20 hour F2F Director's Leadership course to be piloted in late Fall 2020 to a small group (pilot requirement for future IACET eligibility). The content has been developed with consultants and is currently being converted into an online format.</p>
Maintain the Forum's status as an authorized provider for International Association of Continuing Education and Training (IACET).	IACET Annual Report submission is in process. It is due October 31, 2020 but will be completed and submitted by mid-September.

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

Objectives	July - September 2020
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 continues to share appropriate research to various audiences to include social media outlets and via email distributions through newsletters and websites.
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.	The most recent submission of the EEIC grant includes an evaluation component to test the strategies proposed. If funded, the results would have a positive impact on the ECE field pursuing higher education at Florida's colleges and universities.

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

Objectives	July - September 2020
Facilitate, participate, and serve on various local, state, and national level leadership initiatives to promote effective public policy and best practice.	The Forum is the organizing partner for Children's Week 2021! The 2021 conference will be April 4-9 and will include a hybrid platform of virtual and in-person events.
Engage in advocacy efforts that promote the philosophy of the organization following applicable guidelines under state and federal regulations.	The Forum has responded to policy input to promote the shared goals through the National Women's Law Center and the National Association for the Education of Young Children's advocacy. There has been much activity regarding the funding availability through the COVID CARES funding.
Present and display at local, state, and national conferences on relevant topics demonstrating the expertise of Forum staff and value of programs administered.	A number of Spring and Summer 2020 ECE conferences were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however T.E.A.C.H. and INCENTIVE\$ Counselors, along with Help Me Grow and Professional Development Registry staff, continue to provide program information to interested individuals by phone,

Objectives	July - September 2020
	email, webinars and through social media.
Support the board of director's priority to effectively engage business leaders in early childhood policy in Florida.	The Forum participates in Chamber of Commerce online events and training. Staff met with Michael Williams, the Prosperity 2030 chair through the Florida Chamber earlier to discuss Forum's programs and Chamber goals.
Maintain and expand shared services agreements with partners such as FHSA.	We continue to manage the accounting system for FHSA. The expansion of services to the Florida Afterschool Network also represents an opportunity to share services through the Forum's infrastructure.

**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	July - September 2020
Assess the needs of the field and secure funding to support the mission of the organization on an ongoing basis.	Assessing the needs during this COVID environment led to the creation of the summer webinar series to address the challenges. We continue to participate in needs assessments to better respond to the challenges that children, families, and communities are facing.
Write and promote news, stories, and op-eds in various media throughout the state.	We have primarily used social media and the Forum's newsletters to promote news, stories, and updates to the field.
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 e-blasts.
Engage the field through the Forum's membership program.	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

Objectives	July - September 2020
	<p>Forum's printed annual report and discounts on our partner services and products. Members are also able to access their membership details and certificates through the Forum's Portal. From June 1- August 27, 190 people became members of or renewed their membership with the Children's Forum.</p> <p>We produced a membership video to include on social media and in an e-blast and plan to do a membership promotion the week of August 31.</p>
<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>HMGF social media platforms are active and receive engagement from followers. HMG has 1806 followers on Facebook, 1646 followers on Instagram, and 516 followers on Twitter.</p> <p>The Forum has social media sites on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.</p> <p>As of August 27, the Forum's social media pages include the following:</p> <p>Facebook pages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Children's Forum: 2,874 followers</li> <li>● T.E.A.C.H.: 2,727 followers</li> <li>● INCENTIVE\$: 408 followers</li> <li>● Early Learning Career Center: 609 followers</li> </ul> <p>The Forum's Twitter page has 5,724 followers  The Forum's Instagram page has 409 followers  The Forum's YouTube channel has 86 subscribers</p>
<p>Write and disseminate a quarterly newsletter to promote collaboration among providers of services for young children.</p>	<p>The Summer edition of the Children's Forum newsletter was distributed on July 1. It will included the status of child care and the effects of the pandemic in Florida, a "voice" of an early childhood director through the pandemic lens, the Forum's move to our new building, information on the Forum's legal considerations for child care programs and COVID-19 webinar, the early educators are essential and thank you video we produced, T.E.A.C.H. providing computers to scholars/resources for additional discounts, an INCENTIVE\$ spotlight, and a welcome to FAN coming</p>



Objectives	July - September 2020
	in-house to the Forum.
Promote and expand professional development systems throughout the state to provide career pathways for early childhood and afterschool educators.	The Forum has entered into an agreement with the University of North Florida for the second phase of the Professional Development Task Force with specific deliverables anticipated by December 2020. The Forum's subcontract is for \$120K. This work will include development of a plan to integrate the key standards and competencies into higher education and training frameworks as well as develop criteria for approval of specializations for the ECE workforce.
Bring positive recognition to the Forum for the quality and excellence of the work.	<p>The Forum Summer Series of webinars were well received by audiences with over 200 attendees for the July webinars and 100 for the one in August.</p> <p>T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship mailed over 5,000 appreciation letters and "I Am Essential" stickers to active scholars and owners/directors.</p>
The Forum will serve as the organizing partner for Children's Week to increase awareness and needs of children and youth in Florida.	As of July, the Forum has taken Children's Week in house under an agreement with United Way of Florida and Capital Events. They have relinquished rights to the event and the Forum is organizing activities. An internal / external steering committee has been formed to plan for the event this year and move forward beyond this year. Jinan As-Siddiq will serve as the Coordinator at the Forum.

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

Objectives	July - September 2020
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: 2,446</li> <li>● Participating child care programs: 850</li> <li>● 444 INCENTIVE\$ financial payments were issued during this time period. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Six-month incentive average: \$503.00, the average</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Objectives	July - September 2020
	<p>six-month incentive is equivalent to at least \$.48 cent an hour.</p> <p>1,197 financial payments have been issued to participants since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>
<p>Maintain an active website and other communications strategies for the public on the salary and compensation issues of the ECE workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to COVID-19 no conferences were attended</li> <li>• We kept communications open with our program recipients through email blasts and social media program recruitment</li> </ul>

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

Objectives	July - September 2020
<p>Enhance the Professional Development Registry to serve as a resource for training and scholarship management, and to inform decision-making.</p>	<p>The Forum's registry continues to be utilized in Miami. The Registry in Palm Beach is proprietary and managed by Forum staff. The state's registry is now available through the Department of Children and Families. When that registry is further built out, we will determine the efficacy of maintaining the Forum's registry and the relationship to the state's registry.</p>
<p>Maintain websites that will serve as the information and resource hub for the early learning field.</p>	<p>The Forum maintains websites for all of the Forum's programs as well as for FAN and Children's Week. Forum IT staff also handles updates and rewrites as needed.</p>
<p>Provide leadership and administration of the Help</p>	<p>For FY20-21, HMGF currently serves 31 counties through</p>

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<p>Me Grow Florida project to increase the access and availability of services for children and families.</p>	<p>12 affiliate sites. ELC of Flagler-Volusia has recently replaced the United Way of Volusia-Flagler. ELC NWFL will become a HMG affiliate beginning October 1, with a funding award through the Office of Early Learning’s Hurricane Michael disaster relief grant.</p> <p>HMGF is currently participating in a number of projects that and initiatives to help better serve children and families this year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pilot project with Reach Out and Read and HMG Lake at the ELC</li> <li>● Participating in quarterly/monthly workgroup meetings including Florida ECCS Impact Grant workgroups</li> <li>● New feature to HMGF website (virtual Milestone Checklist)</li> <li>● New “HMG on the Go” drive-through outreach events</li> </ul> <p>Data summary for FY19-20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Received 7357 calls</li> <li>● Served 5943 children</li> <li>● Served 5316 families</li> <li>● Conducted 7621 screenings</li> <li>● Made 4198 referrals</li> <li>● Held 796 family and community events</li> <li>● Held 1227 healthcare provider events</li> </ul>
<p>Support diversity in the early learning and afterschool workforce.</p>	<p>The Forum’s recent submission in partnership with the University of North Florida and other institutions of higher education to the Early Educator Investment Collaborative provides an opportunity to increase resources to underserved communities through professional development / lead educator preparation programs. If funded, these resources will make system</p>

Objectives	July - September 2020
	improvements aimed at higher education for the early childhood teacher workforce.

**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	July - September 2020
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	Help Me Grow responded to a \$75K grant opportunity to expand access to Learn the Signs, Act Early initiative. Additionally, the Forum has entered into an agreement with the University of North Florida for the second phase of the Professional Development Task Force with specific deliverables anticipated by December 2020. The Forum's subcontract is for \$120K.
Increase unrestricted revenue.	<p>The Assessment and Coaching Services Unit stopped all CLASS program assessments per OEL in mid-March. As of July, OEL is now allowing ELCs to begin conducting program assessments, when they feel it is safe to do so. We have been in touch with the ELCs who we contracted with in the past and they have indicated they are interested in working with us again, and will contact us when they are ready to begin. Currently, we know of 4 ELCs who anticipate they will be ready to begin this Fall. In addition, we devised COVID-19 Safety Policies and Protocols for our assessors/coaches, an Assumption of Risk and Waiver Liability, and devised an email we will send to the child care program directors/FCCH's prior to our assessors' visits. We will be holding a webinar with all assessors to share this information prior to resuming assessments.</p> <p>We have also had two (2) Head Start grantees who are interested in contracting with us for program</p>

Objectives	July – September 2020
	<p>assessments and coaching in the Fall and the Spring. We continue to recruit additional assessors and coaches.</p> <p>The Forum developed a membership video that will be featured on our social media pages, through a Facebook boost, and in an e-blast to promote membership services and benefits. We are confident these measures will help to increase membership revenues. The subcontract with UNF will represent unrestricted revenue.</p>
<p>Provide monthly financial reports to the Board ensuring board members are informed on the financial status of the Forum.</p>	<p>Financial reports continue to be provided on a monthly basis to board members.</p>
<p>Maintain positive audit results and monitoring reports that reflect the quality of our work.</p>	<p>The Forum’s audits are being planned and monitoring visits for the upcoming year. Results of these audits will be shared with the board upon completion.</p>
<p>Maintain quality assurance practices to ensure the ongoing quality improvement of services.</p>	<p>Each of the Forum’s programs represent an opportunity to evaluate the programs and services. The data are then used to make program improvements as opportunities exist.</p>
<p>Strengthen the internal culture of the Forum through staff recognition and professional development opportunities.</p>	<p>Managers share positive comments/remarks sent by participants within their teams. Upper Management Team continues to distribute company-wide emails recognizing individual program accomplishments.</p> <p>Limited opportunities for internal activities or gatherings per COVID-19 but the Forum Morale Committee has provided “moments of fun” such as National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day (August 4) in which all staff received individually packaged cookies and encouraging notes.</p>