At the new Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership offices.
WELCOME

HELLO FRIENDS, COLLEAGUES, CHAMPIONS OF CHILDREN,

Nearly ten years ago, the United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education opened in Miami, Florida. Our mission from day one: to provide all children access to the highest quality early care and education.

An article published in April 2016 by the Miami Herald underscores the importance of our efforts to reach children everywhere. The article focused on a study, conducted by Virginia Commonwealth University’s Center on Society Health, which showed significant gaps in life expectancy for babies born just a few miles apart in Miami-Dade. Relying on U.S. Census Bureau population data and Florida death rates, researchers found a child raised in Overtown will live an average of 71 years while a child brought up a few miles away on Brickell Key is expected to live until age 86 — an astonishing 15 additional years. Researchers are studying a number of factors, including access to public health, nutrition, and education, as well as crime, neighborhood and housing conditions to help explain what’s behind the troubling differences.

These glaring disparities in our own backyard remind us why our work here at the Center is so critical. It is essential that all children have the opportunity to do well in school, and live long, productive lives. And yet, to truly impact change we must “walk the walk.” In this past year, we are particularly proud of our partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Through a 5-year, $22.5 million federal grant, we are able to provide high quality early learning experiences to infants and toddlers in some of Miami-Dade’s highest-need communities, including Liberty City, Little Havana, Florida City and Coconut Grove.

We are steadfast in our belief that every child should have the opportunity to reach his or her potential. Working together with a host of like-minded organizations and individuals, we know we can truly impact the system of early education in our country.

HARVE A. MOGUL
President and CEO

ANNELIES DA COSTA GOMEZ
Chair, United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education
OUR FRAMEWORK

MISSION
TO ELEVATE THE QUALITY OF EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION IN MIAMI-DADE AND BEYOND.

VISION
THAT 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.
EDUCATE

ADVOCATE

DEMONSTRATE

MODEL EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

PLATFORM FOR POLICY CHANGE

EMPOWER INDIVIDUALS WORKING WITH CHILDREN
The logic is quite clear from an economic standpoint. We can invest early to close disparities and prevent achievement gaps, or we can pay to remediate disparities when they are harder and more expensive to close. Investing in the early years allows us to shape the future; investing later chains us to fixing the missed opportunities of the past.

JAMES HECKMAN
Henry Schultz Distinguished Service Professor of Economics, University of Chicago; a Nobel Memorial Prize winner in economics and an expert in the economic aspects of human development.
BEATING THE ODDS

WITHOUT HIGH-QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION, AT-RISK CHILDREN ARE:

- 25% MORE LIKELY TO DROP OUT OF SCHOOL
- 40% MORE LIKELY TO BECOME A TEEN PARENT
- 60% MORE LIKELY TO NEVER ATTEND COLLEGE
- 70% MORE LIKELY TO BE ARRESTED FOR A VIOLENT CRIME

EDUCATION

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IS CRITICAL

To ensure children receive the highest quality education and care, we believe that teachers and administrators must have access to the latest research and evidence-based practices. By working with universities, nationally and locally renowned experts, and community organizations, the Center provides professionals the opportunity to learn and grow.

COMMUNITY-WIDE TRAININGS

The Center coordinates an extensive network of early learning trainings at 47 locations across Miami-Dade County. Teachers and administrators learn evidence-based practices in early childhood education, including curriculum, learning environments, family engagement and inclusion. The sessions are taught in both English and Spanish, and funded by the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR’S INSTITUTE (ECPAI)

Since its inception in 2007, more than 570 early learning professionals have graduated from ECPAI – a comprehensive three-semester management and business leadership program, offered in English and Spanish. The courses’ books and all required materials are funded by The Children’s Trust.

COMCAST EARLY LEARNING TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

Now in its eighth year, more than 200 early learning professionals have learned how to integrate technology in their classroom through the Comcast Early Learning Technology Program. Through hands-on experiences with existing and emerging technology and digital media tools, participants learn instructional strategies, receive resources to share with colleagues, and immerse themselves in a supportive community of early childhood educators.
The trainings at the United Way Center for Excellence have given me the direction I needed to improve my business and ultimately, better serve children and families. Its wonderful to work alongside individuals in my same field, who can share ideas and help each other – that network of support is critical.

DANISH WILLIAMS
Williams is a recent graduate of Early Childhood Program Administrators Institute (ECPAI) and also participated in the Comcast Early Learning Technology Program at the Center.
OUR WORK

EDUCATE
COLLABORATION IS CRUCIAL
United Way Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership

2014: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) awarded United Way of Miami-Dade a 5-year, $22.5 million federal grant.

Goal: raise the quality of early care and education for infants and toddlers in Miami-Dade’s high-need communities.

In the first year, United Way Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership invested $4.5 million to raise the quality of early care and education for 320 children at 17 early education sites.

SERVICES
The Partnership provides its Early Head Start centers and family child care homes with a broad range of services to address the needs of children and their families, including:

- an annual reimbursement of up to $8,500 per child at a center and $6,600 per child at a family child care home;
- early, continuous, intensive and comprehensive child development and family support services;
- health, developmental and behavioral screenings for the infants and toddlers;
- parenting skills and basic child development trainings to support families;
- and increased professional development opportunities for teachers, staff and administrators.

PARTNERS
United Way Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership works with like-minded organizations to connect families to a web of services that address their needs. Partner organizations include Branches; Fruity Veggie Nutrition; The Nest: An Emotional Wellness Center; Hearing and Speech Center of Florida; Early Steps; The Children’s Forum; University of Miami; and Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS).
SPOTLIGHT

SCHOOL WITHIN A SCHOOL:
United Way Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership at Ethel Beckford/Richmond Elementary

When Glenda Argueta arrived in the United States two years ago from her native Nicaragua, life was more difficult than she ever imagined.

“I have no family here and so I was home alone all day with the children,” said Glenda, speaking in Spanish. “The children's father works long hours and I didn’t drive so even getting groceries was hard since I would need to take the four kids on the bus with me.”

Last summer a principal at her two older daughters’ school told Glenda about a new program for infants opening at Ethel Beckford/Richmond Elementary School. Glenda called not knowing what to expect. She was pleasantly surprised.

“From the first phone call here I felt as if God and the program were opening doors for me,” she said. Glenda enrolled her two youngest children at the United Way Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership at Ethel Beckford/Richmond Elementary. The program’s family engagement specialist then helped Glenda connect with additional services and supports, including food vouchers and counseling.

“I first thought it was just a daycare, and then I realized it was so much more than that. This is a place where my children learn from professionals who care for them just as I would at home, and where I can also come to get support and help,” she said.

With all four children enrolled in school this past year, Glenda did not waste time – she took a driver’s education course and got her license, and then signed up for English classes at Miami Dade College. Slowly she says her life is coming together, and she credits the family engagement specialists at the program with helping her put the pieces together.

“This school is my second family. I know all of the people here support us and want us to succeed. The program and the people have been such a blessing for my entire family. It is as if a window opened and the sun came shining through.”

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ABOUT OUR WORK  In September 2015 United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education and Miami-Dade County Public Schools joined forces to offer an Early Head Start program at Ethel Beckford/Richmond Elementary, a repurposed elementary school in Perrine. Unlike other Early Head Start partners, at this site, United Way runs day-to-day operations at the school, and offers quality early care and education to 48 infants and toddlers. Supporting families and connecting them with essential services is an important part of the program as well.
Through the United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education Dolphin Digital Media Demonstration School, Educare Miami-Dade, the Center demonstrates how to improve the quality of services and programs available to young children by serving as a model for observation and implementation of evidenced-based practices.

**KEY PRACTICES MODELED AT THE DEMONSTRATION SCHOOL INCLUDE:**

- **Meaningful Environments:** When setting up the classroom, teachers at the Demonstration School intentionally create an environment that enables children to develop relationships with the world around them, themselves and each other.

- **Continuity of Care:** With an emphasis on continuity of care, children enrolled in the Demonstration School are grouped utilizing the concept of “families”, where a child has the same group for his/her first three years of life.

- **Dual Language Learning:** Strategies are introduced to help families increase their understanding of the importance of communicating in the home language, while they support their child in the process of learning a second language.

- **Early Literacy:** At the Demonstration School, an emphasis is placed on exploring and playing with books, singing nursery rhymes, listening to stories, recognizing words, scribbling, and the art of storytelling.

- **Family Engagement:** The family engagement staff works with families to promote and enhance the family-child relationship.

- **Inquiry-Based Learning:** This is an approach to learning guided by an investigation or questions posed by children.

- **Scientific and Mathematical Thinking:** The garden in the Demonstration School’s backyard provides a living laboratory for children birth to 5 while serving as a model for early care and education professionals.

- **Social Emotional Development:** Teachers are trained using MindUP, an evidence-based curriculum that fosters social and emotional awareness.

- **Technology:** teachers and children use numerous technology tools in the classroom to enhance learning opportunities.
The students’ explorations are displayed at the Center, to help inspire and guide visiting educators in their own classrooms.
From the moment they are born, children are interested in knowing how the world works. In their pursuit of knowledge, children observe, poke, pull, taste, explore, ask questions and investigate, and by doing so, they learn.

The curriculum at the Demonstration School is designed to stimulate young minds and deepen children's investigation of the world around them, preparing them cognitively, physically and emotionally to enter school eager and ready to learn. Teachers encourage and pursue children's interests in everyday classroom experiences by providing them with time, space and materials to exercise their curiosity.

Throughout the year, teachers at the Demonstration School explore real-world topics through Project Approach. Over the course of several months, children discover new concepts and ideas, and let their imaginations soar.

“Children are full of wonder and I love to see them realize that they have the power to figure things out for themselves.”

ANITA GALBRAITH
Teacher, Demonstration School
THE ANTS GO MARCHING
A question about an ant inside the classroom led to an examination of how ants move, eat and live.

GREEN THUMB
Children as young as two, engage in a scientific process through the exploration of soil.

HEAD, SHOULDERS, KNEES & TOES
Children curious about why students were tall and others short, began investigating physical differences, parts of their bodies and the skeleton.

LETS MAKE SOME NOISE
Children began exploring sounds through instruments and recycled materials, and in the process made connections with music, rhythm and dancing.

ALL ROADS LEAD TO...DISCOVERY
A child mentioned the word “shortcut”, making reference to the road his dad took to bring him to school, sparking a conversation that lead children to sketch up maps, and explore the different types of roads and their infrastructure.
The United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education believes all children need access to high-quality early care and education, health and family support services. We work with 32 United Ways in Florida and other local and national early care and education partners to advocate for effective policies that improve the lives of children and their families.

**OUR 2016 FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE SUCCESSES:**

**Early Learning:** Funding for early learning programs increased by more than $27 million, including $10 million for the School Readiness program to serve additional children in high-poverty neighborhoods and an increase of $5.5 million in performance-based School Readiness funds to incentivize higher quality programs. An extra $5.5 million for the TEACH scholarship program will provide additional scholarships to early learning professionals to improve their qualifications.

**KidCare:** After seven years of advocacy by United Way and many state partners, the legislature finally eliminated the five-year ban for lawfully-residing immigrant children to enroll in the Florida KidCare program. With this change as many as 17,000 uninsured children statewide will have access to the health care they need. The legislature authorized $28 million in federal funds to pay for the expansion; no additional state revenue is required.

“By speaking together our voices were heard in Tallahassee this legislative session. United Way volunteers made a difference in achieving some important policy priorities that will improve the lives of young children and their families in Miami-Dade and throughout Florida.”

**ANNELIES DA COSTA GOMEZ**

*Chair, United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education*
READINGPALS PROMOTES EARLY LITERACY SKILLS
Now in its fourth year, ReadingPals continues to connect passionate, committed volunteers with preschoolers. For 30 minutes each week, more than 170 volunteers read to a small group of children in 45 classrooms across Miami-Dade County. Thanks to contributions from Assurant, Brightstar and Microsoft, ReadingPals is also providing 800 books for children’s home libraries.

PUBLIX’S CAROL JENKINS BARNETT HONORED
Carol Jenkins Barnett, president and chair of Publix Super Markets Charities, received the Women in Philanthropy Award at the 2015 United Way Women’s Leadership Summit in Dallas for her commitment to building better lives and stronger communities across Florida through programs like ReadingPals – a statewide early literacy initiative, funded by Carol and her husband Barney Barnett.

THE CENTER FEATURED AT EDUCARE LEARNING NETWORK ANNUAL MEETING
Vivyan Sanchez, Demonstration School master teacher, and Lisa White, program evaluator from the University of Miami, presented at the annual Educare Learning Network meeting, a gathering of more than 200 network members to discuss early learning strategies, reflect on evidence-based practices and share success stories of their work. Their topic: the Center’s focus on dual language learning.

THE CENTER SELECTED TO IMPLEMENT QUALITY COUNTS
The Children’s Trust awarded the Center a $1.3 million grant to implement the Quality Counts Program and Professional Development Network. The Center’s model will provide coordinated on-site technical assistance and career advising, director and practitioner communities of practice, and mental health supports to early care and education programs in the central region of Miami-Dade County.
UNITED WAY OF MIAMI-DADE OPENS A SECOND COMMUNITY CUPBOARD IN LIBERTY CITY
With a McCormick grant and the help of Pan-American Life Insurance Group (PALIG), United Way of Miami-Dade created a food pantry to benefit the 30-40 families whose children attend Liberty City’s A New World Academy. This is the second Community Cupboard United Way has created at a local early learning facility to provide qualifying families at the center with non-perishable food, personal, household and baby items. A New World Academy is one of 17 centers that are part of United Way’s Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership.

DEMONSTRATION SCHOOL CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL MUD DAY
For the third year, the Demonstration school celebrated International Mud Day, an initiative of the World Forum Foundation where children and early care and education professionals celebrate nature, outdoors, and play. International Mud Day started with 58 orphaned children in the small village of Panchkhal, Nepal with the idea of bringing children to learn about and love their environment and nature.

DEMONSTRATION SCHOOL PARENT RECEIVES FLORIDA EARLY HEAD START FATHER OF THE YEAR AWARD
Juan Muhamad received the Miami-Dade County, Florida Early Head Start Father of the Year Award. Juan, a parent at the Demonstration school, volunteers at least twice a week, often providing music therapy to the children.
THE CENTER HOSTS THE WHITE HOUSE REGIONAL SUMMIT ON DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNING

Seventy-two percent of Miami-Dade’s population speak a language other than English at home. The Center’s Demonstration School, Educare Miami-Dade meets the needs of our community by providing a high-quality dual-language program for children and their families. For its work with dual language learners, the Center was selected to host The White House Regional Summit meeting where, in partnership with Too Small to Fail, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, First Five Years Fund, Clinton Foundation and National Council of La Raza, it released a policy statement and toolkit on dual language learning.

UNITED WAY VOLUNTEERS PARTICIPATE IN READ FOR THE RECORD®

For the sixth consecutive year, United Way of Miami-Dade participated in Jumpstart’s Read for the Record — a nationwide campaign, where millions of adults read the same book to young children to raise awareness for early childhood literacy. Over 600 United Way volunteers read Not Norman: A Goldfish Story by Kelly Bennett to more than 300 children at the United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education, St. Alban’s Child Enrichment Center, The World of Learning Academy and the 20 ReadingPals locations.

UNITED WAY VOLUNTEERS BRIGHTEN THE HOLIDAYS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

With the help of United Way volunteers and corporate partners, the Center delivered boxes of non-perishable food items and fresh produce to 100 low-income families at the Demonstration School our Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program at Ethel Beckford Elementary and our home-based Early Head Start program.

In addition, the Center collected more than 1,200 toys and gifts, making the holidays a bit brighter for families at 20 early learning centers.
AERIN LAUDER READS TO PRE-K STUDENTS AT THE CENTER
After speaking to more than 1,000 women at the 15th Annual United Way Women's Leadership Breakfast, Aerin Lauder visited the Center to learn more about its mission to elevate the quality of early care and education. In addition to touring the Center, Lauder spent time reading to students in one of the preschool classrooms. To thank Aerin for her visit, Women Leadership created a lending library and family gathering space at St. Alban’s Child Enrichment Center, an Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program in Coconut Grove.

THE CENTER HOSTS FIRST BETTER BEGINNINGS BABY FAIR
The Center partnered with the Kiwanis Cubs, University of Florida/Miami-Dade County Extension, and the City of Miami Gardens to host the first-ever Better Beginnings Baby Fair at the Betty T. Ferguson Recreation Center in Miami Gardens. Families with children ages 0 - 3 had the opportunity to learn about child safety, early learning, positive parenting and healthy lifestyle through more than fifteen, 20-minute workshops. Through a partnership with the Healthy Start Coalition, 47 families were also able to take part of a car seat safety workshop and be provided with a brand new car seat at no cost.

COLLEGE STUDENTS CHOOSE SERVICE OVER SAND THROUGH ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK
Driven by a desire to affect community change, a group of 50 students from universities around the country joined “Maximum Impact: Deloitte’s Alternative Spring Break,” organized by Deloitte, United Way of Miami-Dade and United Way Worldwide. The program, matched students with 19 Deloitte professionals to learn more about the company and its philanthropic work in the community through United Way. The students also spent time in six Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership programs, revamping playgrounds at each, and taking part in the children’s everyday routines.
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