



THE FLORIDA CENTER
FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

IMPACT REPORT
2019-2020



Comprehensive services that address the whole child and their family

Social-Emotional
Help

Early Education

Occupational
Therapy

Speech/
Language
Support

Family
Counseling

 **1 in 6** children in the U.S. have a mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder.

Dear Early Childhood Champion,

After seeing the sweet cover photo of this year's report, I was reminded of blowing bubbles with my children not that long ago. Do you remember doing this and watching your children or grandchildren giggle and chase the glistening orbs as they floated to the sky? Bubbles have long been associated with childhood, joy, and hope, but you may not know that blowing bubbles is also good for speech development, stress relief, and breath control.

This past year, we've heard a LOT about bubbles – though not the kind made from soapy water. No, these were the “social bubbles” we were encouraged to maintain, thanks to Covid-19. Living in a bubble is not fun, and it's been even more difficult for families who depend on others for needs like child care, medical services, or mental health support. Thanks to YOU, our children and families were able to access therapists and teachers through the toughest of times in 2020. Telephone calls, video conferencing, and socially distant visits provided a life line. While children and families still struggle with issues intensified by the pandemic, we are committed to their success.



In the pages of this report, you will see the impact of your generosity as we worked together to overcome obstacles of the past year. At The Florida Center, we are hopeful that soon, “bubbles” will no longer be about social limitations, but simply about joy, hope, and laughter.

Wishing you health and happiness,

Dr. Kristie Skoglund, CEO

Jeffrey Woodin, Board Chair

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3,500+ children and families served through our programs

ANDREW'S STORY



Andrew was around two years old when he went through a severe developmental regression. He stopped communicating and became socially distant. After being referred to the Florida Center by the family pediatrician, his parents, Ashley and Brian, enrolled him at Starfish Academy.

"I really can't express how much The Florida Center has changed our lives for the better."

At first, Andrew was non-verbal, without social skills and had intense difficulty regulating his emotions. At Starfish, Andrew had access to a full-time social-emotional consultant who helped him navigate his big feelings. In addition, he received onsite speech and occupational therapy throughout his day. His teacher, Ms. Debbie, worked with his therapists to create a personalized plan specifically for him and his family.

It's been two years and Andrew has made great progress. He speaks in complete sentences and uses words to express his wants and needs. Socially, he is cooperative and friendly. He and his classmates create whole cities with building blocks, Andrew's favorite toy.

Ashley notices more of his progress every day. Most recently, a developmental milestone occurred on the drive home from school. Andrew told his mom he felt "really, really happy." It was the first time she truly believed Andrew would grow up to be happy, independent and comfortable in his own skin, and it was all she ever wanted for him.

Pictured are Andrew and his teacher Ms. Debbie (left) and mom Ashley

873

children and families were provided mental health counseling services both in person and virtually.



450

children treated with developmental therapy sessions, including speech/ language, occupational and in-home services with 95% of all children demonstrating progress.



HOW WE NAVIGATED COVID



Starfish Academy Preschool

After closing in March, the school reopened two months later for children of essential workers. Since then, we gradually and safely increased the number of students to a class and plan to be at full capacity in fall.



Developmental Therapies

We provided 8,000 hours of therapy while finding new ways to connect. From providing activities for the family, to phone and video conferencing, our therapists stayed engaged during the crisis.



The Florida Center Training Institute

In addition to training nearly 300 professionals over the past year, the new institute produced free videos for parents and caregivers to help promote positive mental health during isolation.



Mental Health Therapy

Children and families received more than 9,000 hours of mental health therapy. Virtual options offered consistency and treatment that included tools to handle the stress of the pandemic.



Healthy Families

We provided more than 18,500 hours of help to new and expecting parents. Creative events, like drive-thru diaper distributions and holiday giveaways, keep families feeling supported.



Early Childhood Court

The crisis intensified the need for help, but despite struggles with isolation, food insecurity, and lost visitation, 27 children found forever homes and 36 are working toward permanency.



Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Clinic

With a virtual format, services across the state increased and proved to be highly effective. While in-person sessions have been phased in, virtual clinics remain a preferred format for families where travel might otherwise be a barrier.

A LEGACY OF LOVE & LIGHT

As a realtor in Sarasota for over 20 years, Sylvia Zimmerman had connections to people from all walks of life. As a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother, she also had a heart for the needs of young children.

Once introduced to The Florida Center in the 1990's, she never wavered in her support. From serving on the board of directors to spearheading the annual "Festival of Trees" fundraiser, Sylvia was a steadfast advocate with her husband George by her side. She brought new donors and sponsors to the organization, sharing the needs of young children with delays or disabilities. Sylvia's sudden passing in 2020 left a void in many hearts.

Cindy Malkin, another special champion for children, passed away in 2019. She was also a former board member and longtime supporter. Memorial contributions came from all over the country to honor these women – a testament to their impact on countless lives. Sylvia and Cindy shined bright as beacons of hope for children with special needs. Though no longer with us physically, their legacies live on at The Florida Center.



George & Sylvia Zimmerman



Cindy Malkin



The Goldstein Legacy Society was established to honor The Florida Center's founder, Dr. Norman Goldstein, and ensure his vision for children and families lives on forever. Legacy gifts to The Florida Center allow vulnerable children to continue receiving the specialized services they need to lead healthy, happy lives. Planned Giving options include:

- ✧ Bequest - Name The Florida Center for Early Childhood in your will or trust
- ✧ Life Insurance - Include us as a beneficiary
- ✧ Charitable Gift Annuity - Lifetime income for you; future donation to the organization

To learn more about leaving a legacy, call our Chief Development Officer, Kristen Theisen at 941-371-8820 x 1165. Planned giving information is available online at www.thefloridacenter.planned.gifts

593 families strengthened through our Healthy Families programs in Sarasota, DeSoto/ Hardee and Charlotte counties with a 99.8% success rate among those enrolled.



OTHER WAYS TO HELP

VOLUNTEER

Help in classrooms,
serve on a committee,
champion an event, or
lend a special talent!

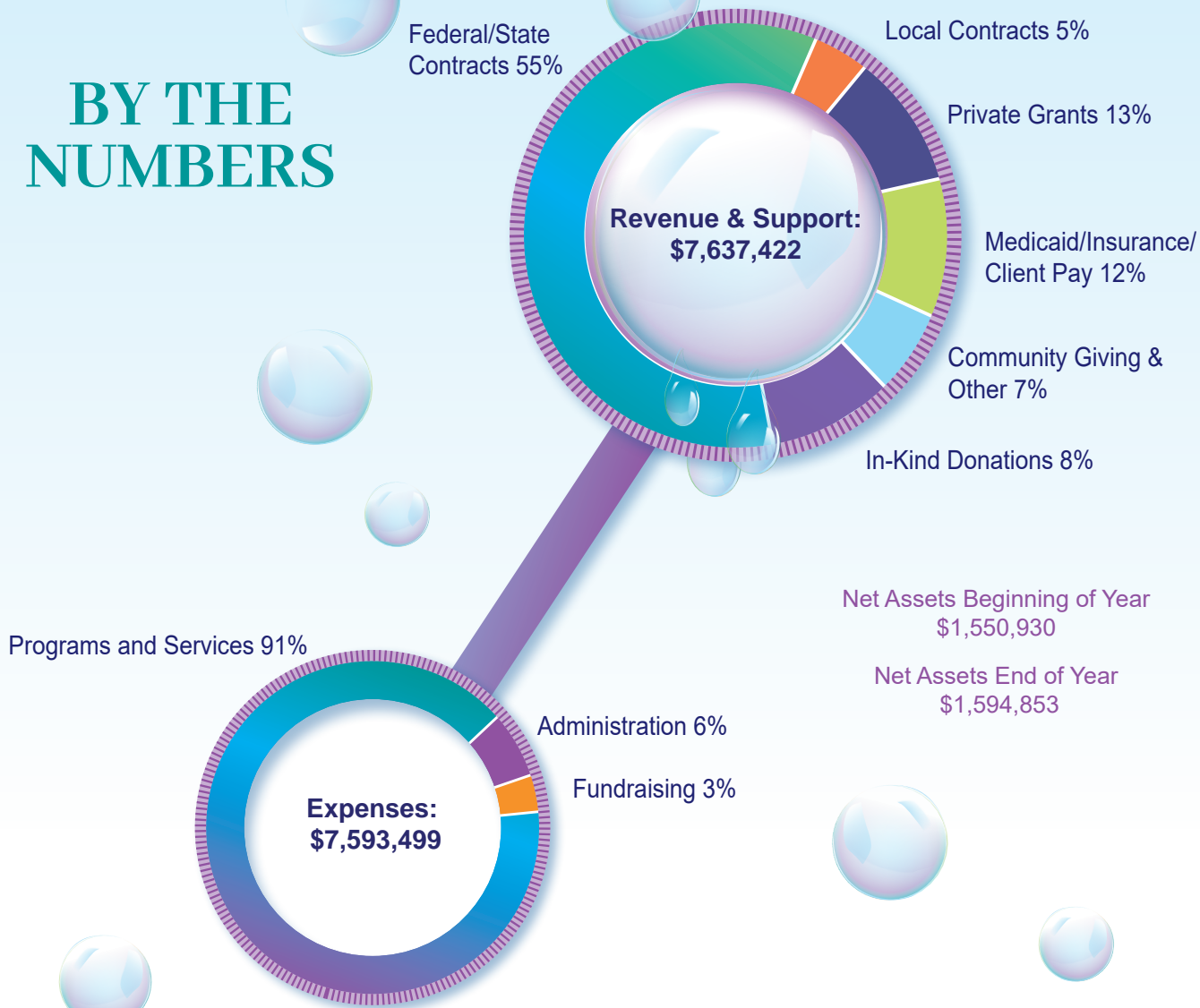
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We are grateful for
your support and
your customers will
appreciate your caring
contributions.

GROUP GIVING

Bring your staff or group
for rewarding team-
building activities or
service days.

BY THE NUMBERS



Fiscal information prepared from financial statements of The Florida Center for Early Childhood, Inc. as audited by Carr, Riggs, & Ingram, Certified Public Accountants. 7/01/2019 - 6/30/2020





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Thank you for investing in children and families!



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366 grade school students supported at elementary schools through our school-based mental health program.

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*Donations from 7/1/2019
through 6/30/2020
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Our Mission: To help build and foster strong families and expand the potential of young children. We envision a time when every child will be loved, nurtured, and encouraged to reach their full potential.



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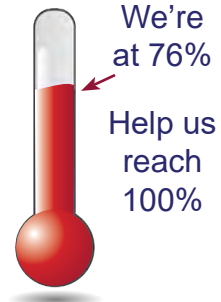
Helping just got
twice as nice!



Only \$12,185 left to meet this
match and **DOUBLE** your impact!

DOUBLE your impact for local children and families who need special support, thanks to an anonymous donor who will match new or increased donations – up to **\$50,000!**

The community as a whole benefits when we invest in early childhood. Please consider making a gift today, when your dollars can go even further.



Fill out and return the envelope provided or use your smartphone camera to scan this code and give online at www.thefloridacenter.org/donate

