**8\_2\_22\_For Immediate Release: Bishop-Parker Grant Provides Funding for Children in Foster Care**

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SARASOTA -- The Florida Center for Early Childhood recently received a $50,000 grant from the Bishop Parker Foundation for its Early Childhood Court, or ECC, program. The grant funded the purchase of a transit vehicle to take families to and from their required appointments, and helped provide additional mental health therapy and parenting classes.

Providing transportation to families offers a safe and more efficient way for them to travel. With reliable transportation and reduced maintenance costs, the ECC model can be even more effective.

"Many of the families do not have reliable vehicles to attend visitations, medical appointments, meetings and court proceedings," said Dr. Kristie Skoglund, CEO of The Florida Center. "We are so grateful to the Bishop-Parker Foundation for improving access to these services and funding a van, which will lessen some of the barriers that can jeopardize the success and completion of the program."

To address the high numbers in foster care locally, The Florida Center facilitates the specialized court program in conjunction with the Safe Children Coalition and the 12th judicial District, to help children under five years old reach permanency more quickly. The purpose of ECC is to change the experience and outcomes of the child welfare system by providing a two-generational therapeutic approach to heal trauma and repair or establish a parent/child relationship when possible.

"The Trustees of the Bishop Parker Foundation are pleased to support the Early Childhood Court program, as part of our Human Services focus," said Adell Erozer, Executive Director of the Bishop Parker Foundation. "Not only do children and families get a chance to build a stronger relationship today, but they get the mental health therapy needed to help break the multi-generational cycle of neglect, abuse, and poverty."

The grant from the Bishop Parker Foundation is helping to provide an added layer to the safety net for vulnerable children and families. With the support of caring community partners, The Florida Center hopes to continue to reduce the amount of time children are in the welfare system, ensuring more children have a permanent, stable home in less than 12 months.

For more information on early childhood court, visit <https://www.thefloridacenter.org/what-we-do/early-childhood-court/>

SUGGESTED SOCIAL MEDIA POST: Congratulations to @TheFloridaCenter for receiving a $50,000 grant from the Bishop Parker Foundation for its Early Childhood Court program. The grant funded the purchase of a transit vehicle to take families to and from their required appointments, and helped provide additional mental health therapy and parenting classes! More info: <https://www.thefloridacenter.org/bishop-parker-grant-provides-funding-for-children-in-foster-care/>