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The Florida Center for Early Childhood Expands FASD Support in Pensacola

The Florida Center has been at the forefront of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders diagnosis and support in Florida since the inception of its Sarasota FASD clinic in 2005. It now offers specialized FASD diagnostic and treatment services to families in the Panhandle region.

(September 9, 2024) As Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Awareness Month is observed in September, The Florida Center for Early Childhood underscores its commitment to early diagnosis and intervention. In line with this commitment, the organization is pleased to announce the expansion of its FASD diagnostic services to the Panhandle region and is now offering comprehensive assessments in Pensacola. Launched in July 2024, this expansion is a critical part of the organization's ongoing effort to enhance FASD support across the Panhandle region, building on its legacy of comprehensive care that began in Sarasota and extended to Orlando.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders are among the leading preventable causes of intellectual and developmental disabilities, yet they often go undiagnosed and untreated. This is due to the subtle nature of symptoms, which can be misattributed to other behavioral or developmental issues, and a general lack of awareness about the condition. Without proper diagnosis and intervention, children with FASD may face

lifelong challenges, including learning disabilities, mental health issues, and difficulties with social integration.

Dr. Kristie Skoglund, CEO of the Florida Center, highlights the statewide impact of their FASD services, emphasizing their unique role in Florida.

“Since the inception of our pioneering Sarasota FASD clinic in 2005, we have been dedicated to advancing the diagnosis and support for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders,” Skoglund says. “Our Sarasota clinic was a groundbreaking initiative and, building on this success, we expanded to Orlando in 2022 through a partnership with Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children. This strategic expansion allows us to overcome geographical barriers and provide critical diagnostic and therapeutic services to communities across the entire state of Florida.” Skoglund adds that The Florida Center’s program represents the only statewide network dedicated to FASD, ensuring that every child and family has access to the care they need, regardless of their location.

Skoglund explains that a recent increase in funding from the Florida Legislature directly enabled The Florida Center to provide 10 scholarships to mental health clinicians in the Panhandle region, allowing them to receive training in the evidence-based Families Moving Forward (FMF) intervention model. Additionally, the FASD team, headed by Tamra Cajo, LCSW, the statewide director of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Services, will be able to contact clinicians to track treatment outcomes as part of the program's funding deliverables.

*For more information about The Florida Center’s FASD services and training opportunities, please contact: Tamra Cajo at tamra.cajo@thefloridacenter.org. **For***

***more information about The Florida Center for Early Childhood, visit
TheFloridaCenter.org.***

Photo caption: *Tamra Cajo, LCSW, statewide director of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) services, and Crissa Harman, LMHC, manager of FASD services in Sarasota, proudly stand in front of The Florida Center's Sarasota FASD Clinic, dedicated to supporting families and children affected by FASD.*

About The Florida Center for Early Childhood

For more than 45 years, The Florida Center for Early Childhood has been the leading provider of therapeutic services, early education, and healthy development for young children in southwest Florida, offering a seamless delivery of services for the whole child and their family. Today, the agency is nationally recognized for its early childhood expertise in various specialties. The Florida Center provides developmental therapies, mental health counseling, Starfish Academy preschool, the Healthy Families home-visiting program, and the state's only Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Clinic, with locations in Sarasota and Orlando. **For more information, visit TheFloridaCenter.org.**