



GULF REGIONAL **Early Childhood Services**

2020 – 2021 ANNUAL REPORT





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LETTER FROM PRESIDENT CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

It seems that every decade or so, child care and early childhood education in general becomes a national focus - from the White House to the Waffle House! Child care services, we learned again during this health crisis are critical to a stable workforce, including essential workers. We also confirmed that the benefits of early childhood education for our youngest children will have long-term positive impacts for our world. Only now, the pandemic spotlight has glaringly exposed what has become a fragile system. We see more clearly than ever before that more resources will be needed to maintain our labor intensive, highly regulated, and complicated early care and education system.

Could this be the opportunity for challenging what has been? If so, there is work to be done because the expectations will be high. Early learning facilities will need to be enhanced, staff will be asked to reach higher levels of professional development, and we will have more public oversight. All of these things will challenge our early care and education community. Our programs and support for them will be here to help.

As I reflect back on 2021, I think now that what felt sometimes like a whirlwind, was, in reality, a transformation process for our organization that is a precursor for the future. It was and is still a time of managing growth, while integrating new programs into our organizational foundation and developing new strategies to accomplish our goals.

Even as we were kept very busy responding to the disruptions and meeting the challenges caused by the pandemic, our staff, our volunteers and our partners moved forward with unwavering dedication. We also prepared for a new work environment in anticipation of our office relocation and we started on a renovation project for what will be our new Early Learning Center Mid-City - all while keeping pace with our program implementation responsibilities. We stayed true to our mission to create a brighter future for our children and to ensuring that the early childhood services and programs essential to our community would not fail. So, it is with a sense of pride and accomplishment that we begin our 30th Anniversary Year! You are invited to come along with us...It's going to be pretty exciting.

Sincerely,

Wendy McEarchern

” IF WE ARE TO CREATE PEACE IN OUR WORLD,
WE MUST BEGIN WITH OUR CHILDREN.

- Mahatma Gandhi

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES



Head Start and Early Head Start

Comprehensive services for infants, toddlers, and preschool children of families who live in poverty in Mobile, Baldwin, Clarke and Escambia counties

Early Childhood Education Professional Development Programs

Face-to-face workshops and training events; Online and distance learning courses for CEU credit; Quarterly newsletters; Reproducible resources for parents and Early Childhood Education professional.

The Resource Place

A lending library of developmentally appropriate materials, teacher workroom and reusable resource materials

PNC Grow Up Great

In partnership with PNC Foundation, this program uses professional development along with the distribution of learning materials and information to engage families and enrich the time parents and children spend together

Early Learning Literacy Initiative

Providing developmentally appropriate books and resources to children in early learning programs throughout a seven county region



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Alexandra K Garrett, J.D.
Chairman

Linda Steele
Vice-Chairman

Abigail Baxter, Ph. D.
Treasurer

Suzy Hardy
Secretary

Carolyn Douglas

Gloria Hill

John Marshall, LCC, NCC

Paula Reese, M. Ed.

Katrina Trammell, M.D.

Micah Wheeler, C.P. A.

GRECS Partner Agencies

Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education

- Pre-K Program

Alabama Department of Human Resources

- Child Care Division

Alabama Department of Public Health

- Healthy Child Care Alabama

Alabama Early Intervention

Alabama Public Television

Child Care Aware

Children's Trust Fund of Alabama

EAP Lifestyle Management

International Association of Continuing Education and Training

Lifelines

Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families

PNC Grow Up Great Foundation

United Way of Southwest Alabama

University of Alabama Infant/Toddler Network Program

University of Mobile

Shine Early Learning

Senior Leadership

Wendy McEarchern

*President/Chief Executive Officer &
Executive Head Start/Early Head Start
Director*

Ruth Vollmer

*Executive Vice President/Chief Financial
Officer of Finance & Administration*

Kym Carroll

*Vice President of Research, Policy &
Programs*

Catherine Kreger

*Head Start/Early Head Start for Baldwin,
Clarke & Escambia Counties' Programs*

Sarah McKay

Operations Director

Sallie Martin

*Community Connections Coordinator &
AL Early Head Start Child Care Partner-
ship Program Manager*

Allison Goff

Early Learning Career Center Director

Ann Sands

Soaring Eagles Center Director

Niki Thompson

Education Services Coordinator



HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START LOCATIONS



Nina Nicks Joseph Child Development Center

209 S Washington Ave.
Mobile, AL 36602
251-441-0840

Soaring Eagles Child Development Center

1655-B Eagle Dr.
Mobile, AL 36605
251-470-8603

Small Wonders Childcare Center

11100 AL-188
Grand Bay, AL 36541
251-865-9595

Starlight Daycare Center

22017 US-43
Mt. Vernon, AL 36560
251-829-9555

Watch Me Grow Child Development Center

1809 Wolf Ridge Rd.
Mobile, AL 36618
251-344-9792

The Clever Caterpillar Early Head Start

2663 Dawes Rd,
Mobile, AL, 36695
251-459-0959

Dearborn YMCA Daycare

321 N Warren St
Mobile, AL 36660

Jubilee Early Head Start / Head Start

24044 US Highway 98
Fairhope, AL 36532

Little Crusaders

9023 Lawson Road
Daphne, AL 36526

Lighthouse Academy of Excellence & Achievement

1829 South US Highway 31
Bay Minette, AL 36507
251-937-4179

Jackson Head Start

131 Mayton Drive
Jackson, AL 36545

Thomasville Head Start

559 W Front St. N
Thomasville, AL 36784

Atmore Early Head Start / Head Start @ Rachel Patterson Elementary School

1102 W Craig Street
Atmore, AL 36502

Brewton Early Head Start / Head Start

1207 Belleville Avenue
Brewton, AL 36426

Mt. Ararat Learning Development Center

7172 Old Military Rd.
Theodore, AL 36582
251-653-6201

Highpoint Christian School and Daycare

2421 Lott Rd.
Eight Mile, AL 36613
251-452-4601 Ext.110

Lighthouse Academy #3

218 S. Wilson Ave
Prichard, AL 36610
251-725-0246



The Impact of Head Start and Early Head Start

Supporting families is a cornerstone of the program. Each family is assigned a Family Advocate (FA) who helps them set goals for themselves and their family. Families are helped with information, resources and encouraging support.

Our Parents' Stories

Lindsey, mother of two children (a 2 year- old and an infant 11 months old) enrolled in our EHS program shared with her FA that she was discouraged by being stuck in a low-paying job that required too many weekend and late hours - taking time away from her children and complicating her child care arrangements.

Ashley, her FA, was able to explore options with her, based on Lindsey's interest in health care. Ashley found a free training program in phlebotomy (drawing blood) that the mom completed. Lindsey is now working at a local hospital, has much improved income and job security and she loves it! Her schedule allows more time at home on weekends, too.

Alexandria, a single mother of three, has been a part of our EHS program for two years. When she began working with our Family Advocate at her child care center she developed a plan to find secure housing for her family. Alexandria and her children had been experiencing homelessness for the past several years. She would often speak of the stress that she felt not being able to provide a secure place to live for her children. Parents should not have to carry the burden of raising a family alone. With the assistance of our Family Advocate, Alexandria was able to find resources she didn't know were available to her and secure permanent housing for her family. Since then Alexandria has enrolled in nursing school and plans to graduate in the upcoming year.



"Luckily, with great challenges, also came greater blessings and opportunities. Meeting Ms. Ashley and enrolling my babies in HeadStart at Soaring Eagles definitely took my life to another level."

- Lindsey



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

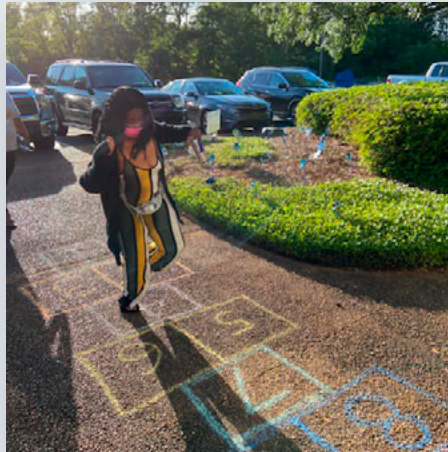
GRECS is dedicated to supporting the continuum of quality across all areas of learning, by increasing the quality of early childhood education programs and of the secondary education programs that educate our workforce. Our professional development opportunities are designed to help educators master content, hone teaching skills and

address challenges faced in the classroom all in accordance with developmentally appropriate practices. GRECS' educational programs meet the highest standards for continuing education and training, earning our agency the distinction of being awarded Accredited Provider status by the International Association of Continuing Education and Training, the accrediting organization for Continuing Education Training credit (CEU).



437

Technical Assistance visits
in Early Learning Programs



"Enjoyed her class. Gained some useful information in classroom. Made class fun engaging Thank you!"



"I enjoyed this class and im looking forward to more! Awesome lesson!"



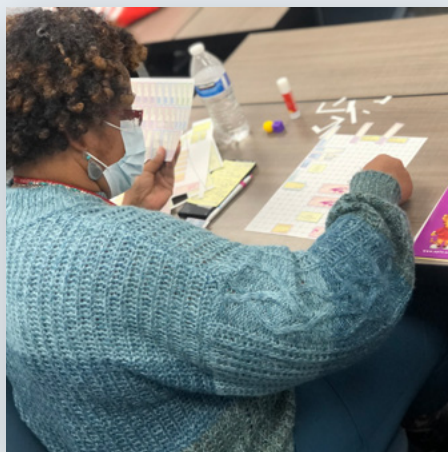
575

Credit Hours Offered



2256

People that Attended
Trainings



"I feel more prepared and equipped to implement the information presented through this training. "

“

The presenter did a great job! Very engaging and kept the session entertaining. I really enjoyed it and I would recommend my other teachers and friends to attend.

”



+4500

ISSUES OF
“EARLY LEARNING NEWS”
NEWS-LETTERS
DISTRIBUTED

BRIGHT BEGINNINGS PROJECT LET'S' PLAY AND LEARN!



Funded by the PNC Grow Up Great Foundation, the Bright Beginnings Project reaches the parents and teachers of over 300 children, ages birth to 40 months, in Mobile and Baldwin County communities. New books, early learning play items, activity suggestions and parenting tips go home with the children each quarter, encouraging parent-child interaction that supports normal child development and school readiness. Teachers also receive the same materials for their classrooms. GRECS staff trains the teachers to use the materials with the children in their classroom, and prepares them to model activities and engage parents in their child's early learning experiences.



The Bright Beginnings Project families and children are enrolled in the comprehensive center based early learning programs provided in the GRECS Early Head Start classrooms. In addition, families of children enrolled in other infant-toddler classrooms at our child care center partner centers are also invited to participate. Many thanks to our friends at PNC, to all of the families for their enthusiastic response, and to the staff for their part in making this project such a success!

There are 3 goals set for this project:

Goal 1 - Families of infant and toddler (birth to 36 months) will be engaged in activities that support their child's healthy development and early school readiness

Goal 2 - Family engagement activities are strength based and support the child's parents/family as their most important advocate and teacher.

Goal 3 - By sharing activities they do at home with Teachers and with Family Engagement Staff, parents/families gain closer connection to their child's educational experience!



In the first distribution of materials we served over 300 children including 79 infants and 255 toddlers. They all received books and manipulatives and an information card with tips and age appropriate activities. EHS and private classroom teachers were fully trained on the material given so they could teach the parent about what they received



THE RESOURCE PLACE

The Resource Place is home to GRECS' Lending Library, which serves as a place for early childhood professionals and families of children to borrow books and learning materials to use in the classroom or at home with their child.

Our comprehensive library and workroom is filled with children's books, teacher resource books, outdoor play materials, manipulatives, puzzles, puppets, big books, laminating machine, bulletin board paper and many more materials for children, teachers and parents!

GRECS is developing a portal on our website and soon parents will be able to check out materials and books online! They will be able to schedule a pick up date and time convenient for them between the hours of 9am to 4pm Tuesday through Thursday. These materials will be ready for them to pick up and take with them!

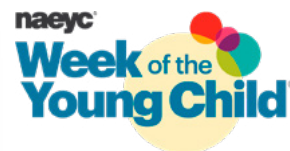




United Way
of Southwest Alabama

DAY OF CARING

Members from the United Way of Southwest Alabama (UWSWA) Emerging Leaders group partnered with Gulf Regional Early Childhood Services (GRECS) on the Day of Caring, April 23, 2021. Allison Leavitt (UWSWA), Mary Clare Hagood (UWSWA), Nancy Manlangit (Mobile County District Attorney's Office) & Haley Buchanan (Liberty Learning) did an amazing job working with our staff that day!



WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD

Jubilee Staff and children pose to take pictures for WOYC! The Week of the Young Child™ is an annual celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The purpose of the Week of the Young Child™ is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.



SOARING EAGLES

Shout out to the hard-working professionals at Soaring Eagles CDC - they are now a STAR rated program! This rating represents the program's level of quality in all of the following Alabama Quality STARS components: Staff Qualifications and Professional Development, Management and Administrative Practices.

Congratulations and thank you for all you do for Alabama's children and families!

BREAKING GROUND AT EARLY LEARNING CENTER MID-CITY

It is important that families have convenient access to quality early education programs. Families in our community should not have to struggle to find and secure care for their children.



In 2021 GRECS broke ground on its newest facility, Early Learning Center Mid-City. Located off Downtowner Blvd, Early Learning Center Mid-City will provide a safe and convenient option for families. Ensuring that families in our community continue to have access to a quality early education program for many years to come.

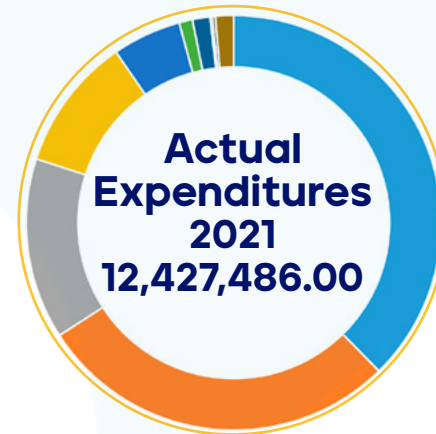
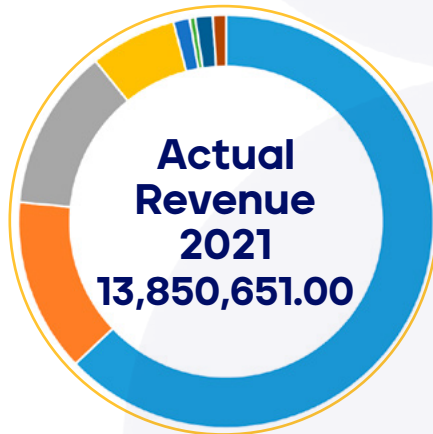


SUMMARY OF AUDITED FINANCIALS



REVENUE

Head Start/Early Head Start (Federal)	\$	8,712,908.00	63%
Early Head Start (State)	\$	1,883,052.00	14%
In-Kind	\$	1,754,957.00	13%
Quality	\$	933,625.00	6.7%
Registry	\$	176,125.00	1.3%
United Way	\$	62,000.00	0.4%
Office of School Readiness Pre-K	\$	187,000.00	1.4%
Other Contrib/Local Programs	\$	140,984.00	1.0%
Total Revenue	\$	13,850,651.00	100%



EXPENSES

Salaries & Benefits	\$	4,681,241.00	38%
Contractual	\$	3,504,687.00	28%
In-Kind	\$	1,754,957.00	14%
Supplies	\$	1,293,816.00	10.4%
Occupancy/Rent	\$	667,057.00	5.4%
Equipment	\$	128,984.00	1.0%
Professional Development	\$	169,345.00	1.4%
Professional Fees	\$	21,260.00	0.2%
Travel	\$	30,056.00	0.2%
Other	\$	176,083.00	1.4%
Total Expenses	\$	12,427,486.00	100%

REVENUE

Head Start/Early Head Start (Federal)	\$	7,243,017.00	56%
Early Head Start (State)	\$	2,264,520.00	18%
In-Kind	\$	1,754,957.00	14%
Quality	\$	933,625.00	7.2%
United Way	\$	62,000.00	0.5%
Office of School Readiness Pre-K	\$	355,000.00	2.7%
DHR Stabilizing Child Care Programs	\$	182,000.00	1.4%
Other Contrib/Local Programs	\$	121,000.00	0.9%
Total Revenue	\$	12,916,119.00	100%



EXPENSES

Salaries & Benefits	\$	4,681,241.00	37%
Contractual	\$	3,504,687.00	28%
In-Kind	\$	1,754,957.00	14%
Supplies	\$	1,293,816.00	10%
Occupancy/Rent	\$	667,057.00	5%
Equipment/Facilities	\$	252,000.00	2%
Professional Development	\$	169,345.00	1%
Professional Fees	\$	21,260.00	0%
Travel	\$	30,056.00	0%
Other	\$	176,083.00	1%
Total Expenses	\$	12,550,502.00	100%



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