

Head Start 2020 Annual Report



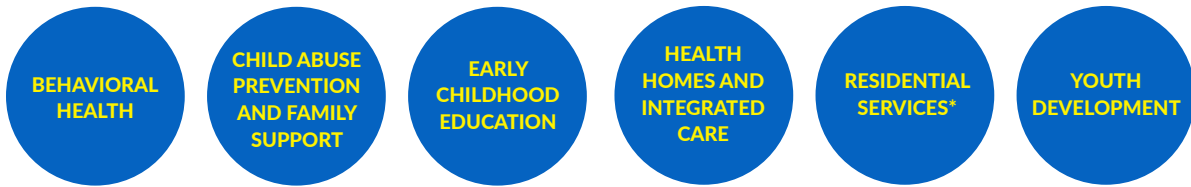
**THE CHILD
CENTER OF NY**

Strengthening Family. Building Community.

Who We Are



The Child Center of NY strengthens children and families with skills, opportunities, and emotional support to build healthy, successful lives. Founded in 1953 as a children's counseling center, The Child Center has become a powerful community presence throughout NYC and Long Island, annually serving 40,000 children and families in under-resourced neighborhoods through 100 programs. We work in six program areas:



Our Approach

The Child Center is community-based. We provide services community members tell us they need, in the places where they live.

We take a holistic approach. If a child is failing to meet developmental milestones, we address more than just the category being measured — we get to know the child's family and environment so we can address all of the family's interrelated needs.

Our approach is data-driven. We measure and track our progress, using methods proven to make a difference.

We believe in Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EDIB). We work to break out of systems rooted in systemic racism — on the client, community, and organizational level.

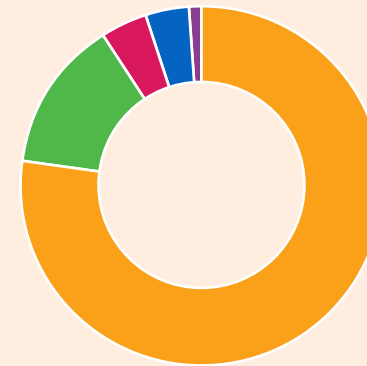
We are staff-driven. Many of our 1,000+ team members come from the neighborhoods they serve. Our team collectively speaks two dozen languages and is a unique group of highly trained professionals who work with skill, heart, and innovation.

Our Early Head Start and Head Start programs are an integral part of our work. In the communities we serve, children are up against incredible challenges from birth. Parents often work long hours, do not speak or read English, and struggle with extreme poverty. Our dedicated and qualified staff — most of whom are from the communities we serve — understand these challenges. Drawing on their extensive training, experience, and firsthand knowledge, our educators ensure the children in our care are developmentally on track — academically, socially, and emotionally.

2019-20 Program Overview

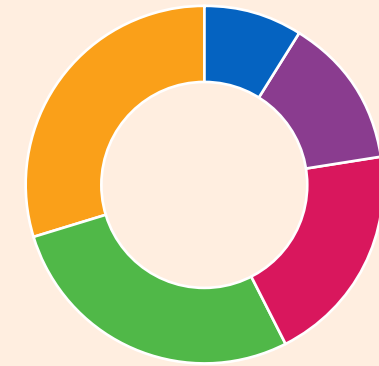
In the 2019-2020 school year, The Child Center of NY operated **three home-based Early Head Start programs in Astoria, Corona, and Woodside in Queens**, and **three center-based Head Start programs in Manhattan and Corona and Woodside, Queens**. All programs had a remarkably successful year, despite roadblocks created by the COVID-19 pandemic, providing 501 children with high-quality, emotionally responsive early education and support services (209 children in Early Head Start, 292 in Head Start).

Our early childhood education programs serve children ages newborn-5 years old who are low-income and face other barriers to school success. Below is a snapshot of participant demographics in the 2019-20 school year:



CHILD RACE/ETHNICITY

- 78.2% Hispanic/Latino/a
- 14.4% Asian
- 4.0% Black/African American
- 3.0% Did Not Disclose
- .4% Other



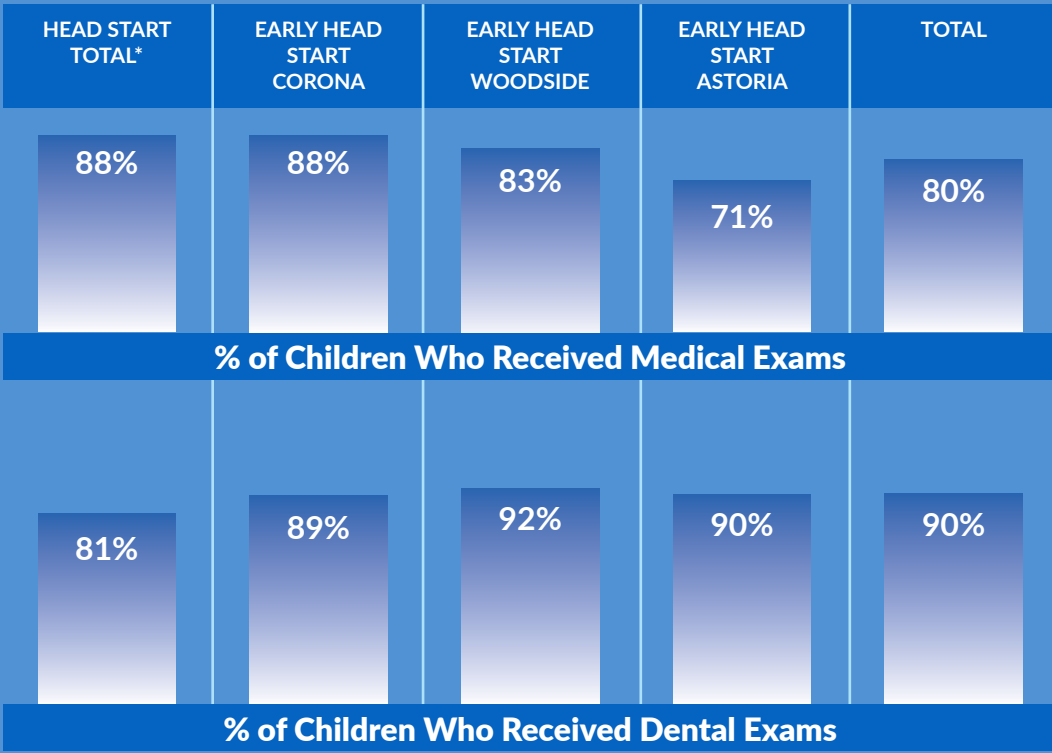
CHILD AGE AT INTAKE

- 29.9% Pre-K (4+)
- 28.3% 3-4 Years Old
- 19.4% 2-3 Years Old
- 13.8% 1-2 Years Old
- 8.6% 0-1 Years Old

The Whole Child and Entire Family



Melinda, pictured here with her children Emely, 12, and Erick, one year, tragically lost her husband to COVID-19 early in the pandemic. Read her story about how The Child Center was there to support her: childcenterny.org/la-historia-de-melinda/



The children we serve are often significantly behind developmentally and may suffer from problems like family violence, malnutrition, and trauma. The Child Center plays a pivotal role in promoting growth across all developmental domains (physical, social, emotional, and cognitive) and providing the support families need and deserve. We accomplished this in FY 2020 by creating stimulating learning environments through the research-based Creative Curriculum in our classrooms; the new Growing Great Kids curriculum in home-based programs; evidence-based Emotionally Responsive Practice; and the following enhancements:

Literacy: Most children arrive at our centers with limited vocabularies and ability to speak English. Classes were bilingual, and we made literacy a central part of routines and activities. Objects in the classroom were labeled in English as well as in students' native languages; learning centers where children engage in self-directed play were outfitted with topical books (e.g. architecture books in the building center); teachers read aloud books aligned with learning themes; and lending libraries were available for families to check out books. All families received Cool Culture cards, giving them free access to over 90 cultural institutions like museums and zoos. Children 16 months-3 years also benefit from the award-winning **ParentChild+** curriculum, an evidence-based literacy and parenting model that provides free books and toys and guides parents in building school readiness where it starts: in the home.

We also hosted several special literacy events. An annual tradition in our Head Start centers is participating in the national Read for the Record marathon sponsored by Jump Start. Parents were invited to our classrooms to read aloud the book *Evelyn Del Rey Is Moving Away* by Meg Median to children in English, Spanish, and any other languages spoken in the home. Afterwards, families participated in activities relevant to the book's plot and themes (what it feels like going to a new place and making new friends).



*Since our Head Start centers are recipients of one single grant, their numbers are reported together.

The Whole Child and Entire Family (CONT)



Nurse Fran oversees a developmental screening.

Mental Health and Well-being: The Child Center began as a children’s counseling center, and a commitment to mental health is at the heart of everything we do. The Child Center is the sole Queens provider in New York City’s Early Childhood Mental Health Network, and we offer a robust 0-5 Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative through which families with children 0-5 who have mental health needs can access therapy and other mental health services targeted to this age group. Our early childhood centers in Woodside and Corona house embedded mental health clinics through this initiative. In addition, our early childhood program staff includes on-site licensed social workers and social work interns, as well as family workers who get to know our families and are trained in recognizing family needs that range

from nutritional assistance to family counseling. Family workers screen each child and family for risk using the research-evaluated Protective Factors Survey (PFS) and our internally developed Child Center Health and Well-being Questionnaire (CC-HWQ). We provide follow-up, referrals, and/or case management based on the unique risk factors of each child and/or family member.

In FY 2020, of 396 children screened, 144 showed a need for counseling; 63 of those referred successfully connected to counseling. Not all families consent to mental health treatment; those that do not still benefit from our emotionally responsive classrooms.

Of 373 parents screened, 37 showed a need for counseling; 22 of those referred successfully engaged in counseling.

Screenings also revealed that 45 families were experiencing domestic violence. Links to intervention and support services were provided to all 45 families. Through a private grant from Child Welfare Fund, we additionally provided 25 parent-child dyads with intensive Child-Parent Psychotherapy targeting children under 3 who experienced early trauma. The Child Center includes robust behavioral health and family support divisions, and we are often able to provide these services internally, which makes a difference to families who have come to trust us as a provider.

In recognition of our contributions to mental health, New York State’s Office of Mental Health honored The Child Center with the 2020 OMH Community Cares Award for the NYC region.



Physical Health and Nutrition: The Child Center understands that a child cannot focus on the morning’s literacy lesson on an empty belly or with an undiagnosed chronic condition. That’s why we make physical health care an integral part of our program. An on-site nurse practitioner, affectionately known as Nurse Fran, provides health case management; health workshops; and consultations to address concerns and answer individual health care questions — a service that proved vital in the spring when the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

We also support children’s physical health through a unique collaboration with Northwell Health, New York’s largest health care provider. Northwell medical residents provide health check-ups including vision/hearing screenings and community health workshops. This year we also began offering virtual pediatric care through a partnership with Strong Children Wellness, a primary care practice that works with trusted community-based organizations like The Child Center to offer regular care to vulnerable populations.

In FY 2020, 28 children had chronic health issues; 90 had a disability; and we provided 165 families individual consultations about their children. All children also received explicit education in nutrition and exercise through participation in the Eat Well, Play Hard program and Farm-to-Table activities. In addition, we organized field trips to Farmers Markets where families are given “Health Bucks” to spend on fruits and vegetables.

New this year was the addition of an on-site nutritionist, Alexandra D’Elia, funded by the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation. Ms. D’Elia provided invaluable guidance in meal planning and education to families and staff on healthy eating and wellness. She held consultations with families and staff and created easy-to-read fliers, in English and Spanish, with recipes and wellness tips that will be used by The Child Center in perpetuity. When the pandemic began, she offered virtual nutrition workshops on topics based on community need, such as obesity prevention, food safety and sanitation, food allergies, and “eat the rainbow.” Her expertise helped improve children’s health and eating habits and families’ knowledge about healthy eating and exercise.

Parent Education and Family Activities: Recognizing that parents and other primary caregivers are children’s most important teachers, our programs offered dozens of educational classes and workshops, which 561 parents, caregivers, or other family members attended. We provided 215 unique offerings including Parent-Corps,* Bright Beginnings, and Personal Best parenting education sessions; Parenting Journey, a group counseling program; and Cornell Cooperative Extension and Eat Well Play Hard nutrition and exercise education programs. In partnership with Literacy Partners, we launched a new parent education program for Spanish-speaking caregivers called La Fuerza de Familias Latinas, based on a telenovela miniseries, to help parents boost their children’s early learning, social-emotional growth, and school readiness.

A cornerstone of parent involvement in our Head Start programs is the Parent Policy Council, comprised of engaged parents who share in every aspect of decision-making. The council holds at least six meetings annually. Meetings include meaningful dialogue regarding program operations, plans, and policies, which require Council approval. This information is shared with The Child Center’s Board of Directors, informing of best practices and vice versa.

Singular events included a Breakfast with Dad experience (see photo, above) and a Fun with Feelings event, teaching families to talk about and cope with tough feelings, at Escalera; a trip to the pumpkin patch and a Planned Parenthood sexual health workshop series for adult family members at Corona; and a family picnic and free flu shot day for adult family members at Woodside. In our EHS programs, we hosted Closet Day for families to receive free clothing; turkey giveaways for Thanksgiving; a trip to a pumpkin patch; and a developmental milestones workshop.



Meeting the Times: The COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic hit our communities hard. Many of our families are headed by workers in the service industry: in restaurants, as house cleaners, manual laborers, or home health aides. They were the first to be let go from their jobs, and most likely to have no safety net. They struggled with the virus itself, as well as unemployment and food insecurity. Thankfully, our clients knew they could depend on us. Far from closing down, The Child Center scaled up and broadened the scope of what we do. We sprang into action to ensure families' basic needs were met and adjusted programming to ensure our services remained accessible. Here is a snapshot of how our early childhood programs shifted to meet the new reality from March to June 2020:

- In March 2020, our **Head Start and Early Head Start programs transitioned to remote learning** without missing a beat.
- **Staff delivered books and supplies** to Early Head Start families to use with their infants and toddlers. Learning materials such as paper, scissors, crayons, and glue were delivered to the homes of Head Start students so that families facing financial hardship wouldn't have to worry about how to afford the supplies their children needed for learning.
- **Teachers and home visitors maintained consistent virtual contact**, seeing parents and children at flexible hours, considering the need for parents to support their school-aged children. In the home-based programs, instead of a weekly 90-minute visit, parents were seen twice weekly.



- **Socializations were scheduled** more flexibly and remotely. Attendance increased, since families were eager to connect with each other, and the program staff made it as easy as possible. Preschool families were seen virtually in groups (in addition to individually) so that the children could see their friends and their classrooms, which resulted in stronger connections.
- **The Child Center began offering pediatric primary care** virtual visits through a partnership with Strong Children Wellness (see page 7).
- **Behavioral health care continued uninterrupted.** The Child Center purchased, configured, and distributed more than 300 HIPAA-compliant Chromebooks, laptops, and smartphones to therapists and other behavioral health staff so that clients in therapy could continue their sessions virtually. Broken appointments decreased from 24% to 15%.

- **Our nurse practitioner met new and existing needs.** Nurse Fran (see page 6), already trusted by our families, helped parents and other caregivers understand COVID-19 and its symptoms, worked with family members who had been diagnosed with the virus, and provided emotional support and resources when, sadly, loved ones got sick or passed away.
- **Family workers played a crucial role.** Our family workers are trained to read physical and social-emotional cues and recognize needs that may require services, whether it be for a developmental delay, a mental health issue, or basic needs such as heat in the winter. They assist with referrals and support families every step of the way. During the pandemic, they responded to families by providing referrals to our Single Stop (now called Benefits Access) program, which assists families with benefits such as SNAP (food stamps) and health insurance; ensuring access to emergency food bags; and nominating them for ERF micro-grants (see below). Family workers also connected families to mental health services as a direct impact of the pandemic and losing loved ones. All team members pitched in to help in this endeavor, and our Single Stop Benefits Access program alone connected 1,389 people with services in the first three months of the pandemic.



Filling Gaps to Meet Essential Needs

- Early Childhood programs distributed:



113,988
diapers



199,840
wipes



1,946
engagement kits
with books and other
learning materials
through 2021.

- **We organized food banks.** In partnership with New York Common Pantry, Early Childhood sites distributed 4,428 bags of food to 1,912 families across divisions in the first year of the pandemic.
- **Emergency Response Funds (ERF), a cash assistance program, was created to support struggling families.** As of this printing in 2021, we have distributed \$799,500 to 1,515 families.

Getting Ready for Kindergarten

quality of our programs, the efficacy of our family engagement efforts, the close relationships staff built with children and parents, and the resiliency of our families themselves.

Creative Curriculum. Our Head Start programs use the Creative Curriculum, supported by units of study. This year, those units included age-appropriate detailed study of themes such as light and rocks, introducing children to the wonders of academic inquiry and, equally important, getting them excited about school.

Focus on Literacy. Our programs build book awareness throughout the year, as described in previous sections of this report. With robust collections of reading materials, labeled objects throughout each center, daily readings by teachers, special events with guest readers, and a staff trained in teaching dual language learners, our pre-schoolers develop a love of reading from day one.

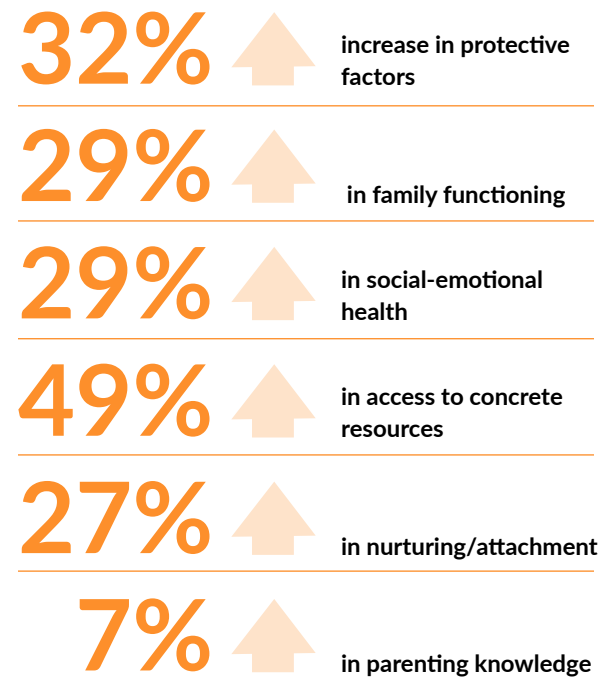
Staff development. Topics covered included literacy, observations of children, and intentional planning.

Transition workshop. Head Start programs participated in a virtual Transition to Kindergarten workshop that focused on self-help skills, becoming independent, and language development.

Assessments. Our programs traditionally use Teaching Strategies GOLD, aligned with the New York State Pre-Kindergarten Learning Standards and New York State Early Learning Guidelines, to assess children's progress in all developmental domains. Students usually are assessed three times during the year, but the pandemic precluded us from conducting our final assessment in the spring. In lieu of these results, we would like to share what we consider a great success during the pandemic: Close to 100% of our families remained engaged in their program, and we enrolled several new families. Considering the great difficulty our families experienced putting food on the table, let alone coordinating the early education of their children, we find this a great testament to the

As discussed on page 6, The Child Center prioritizes getting children ready for kindergarten socially and emotionally, in addition to academically. On our internally developed Child Center Health and Well-being Questionnaire (CC-HWQ) to assess social determinants of health, out of 301 questionnaires, 188 families – 63% of all those surveyed – demonstrated additional needs that we then could help them address.

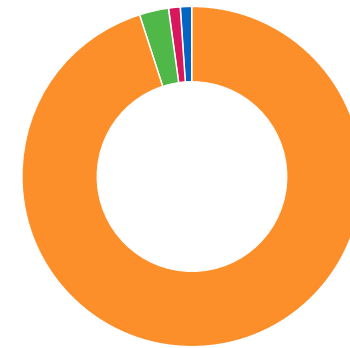
Using the Protective Factors Survey (PFS), which we administered at both the beginning and end of the year, families showed the following results:



These results are particularly remarkable considering post-assessments were compared with assessments administered pre-pandemic.

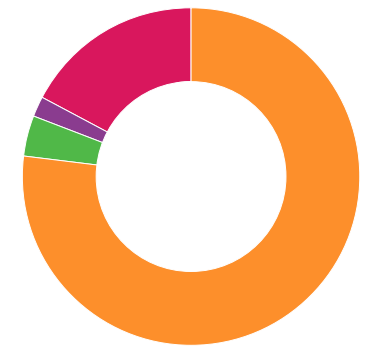
Who We Serve

Early Head Start Total Enrollment:



121/96.8% Income below 100% federal poverty line
 3/2.4% Public assistance such as TANF, SSI
 2/1% Foster child status
 0 Homeless status**
 1/0.8% Over income

Head Start and Child Care* Total Enrollment:



224/77.24% Income below 100% federal poverty line
 13/4.48% Public assistance such as TANF, SSI
 0 Foster child status
 4/1.38% Homeless status**
 49/16.89% Over income

Percentage of children with disabilities

Early Head Start
 17 children
 13.6%



Head Start
 63 children
 21.72%

* Chart includes 74 non-Head Start child care students.

**While only a small number of enrolled families identify as being homeless, there are many more who do not realize that they are considered homeless under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which defines homelessness as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence due to economic hardship. We refer to these families as "doubled up," with overcrowded living spaces and shared or limited access to the necessities of kitchen and bathroom usage. According to this definition, 22% of Head Start families and 77% of Early Head Start families are homeless.

Financials

	Head Start			Early Head Start		
	FY 2020 Budget	FY 2020 Expenses	**FY 2021 Budget	*FY 2020 Budget	*FY 2020 Expenses	FY 2021 Budget
Personnel	1,488,147	1,409,769	1,560,024	1,138,616	917,216	1,277,919
Fringe Benefits	491,937	396,415	519,476	382,975	259,597	434,492
Facilities	179,951	232,732	209,858	240,505	115,864	185,905
Travel	1,596	732	1,892	11,307	13,726	16,891
Supplies	22,574	15,563	29,038	45,079	107,604	36,712
Other	71,192	19,845	54,882	252,834	230,226	300,537
Total Direct Costs	2,255,397	2,075,056	2,375,170	2,071,316	1,644,233	2,252,456
Indirect Costs	270,648	259,382	296,896	236,030	190,127	248,670
In-Kind Expenses	631,511	622,165	668,017	576,836	458,590	557,580
Food Program	230,173	177,248	273,133	33,549	758	13,503
Head Start UPK	531,310	565,748	577,837	-	-	-
Head Start UPK Enhancement	162,241	122,272	162,241	-	-	-
Total Expenditures	4,081,280	3,821,871	4,353,294	2,917,731	2,293,708	3,072,209

FY 2020 Public vs. Private Funding

	Head Start	Early Head Start
Total Federal Funding	2,511,686	1,835,118
Public Non-Federal Expenses	688,020	195,250
Private Non-Federal Expenses	622,165	263,340
Total Non-Federal Expenses	1,310,185	458,590
Total Financial Support	3,821,871	2,293,708



Summary of Community Needs Assessments

Community Needs Assessments were updated in 2020 for our community districts: CD1, CD3, and CD2 in Queens and CD7 in Manhattan. Our programs continue to serve low-income families who struggle with poverty, unemployment, immigration, community violence, overcrowded housing, and inadequate access to social services. Affordable, adequate housing is the primary need for families in all districts, with an increase of children living in shelters. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these issues and created new ones: unemployment, sickness without accessible health care, food insecurity, and children with disabilities being suddenly left without access to the services they need. All districts have seen an increase in available child care services for UPK (universal pre-kindergarten) with the expansion of NYC Pre-K for All. The landscape of Head Start services throughout NYC is anticipated to experience significant changes, as NYC redesigns its model for birth-to-five early childhood programming.

Where You Can Find Us

Early Head Start, Astoria

37-34 29th Street
Astoria, NY 11101

Corona Early Childhood

Head Start Center and Early Head Start Home-Based Services
34-10 108 Street
Corona, NY 11368

Escalera Head Start*

169 West 87th Street
New York, NY 10024
212-799-2440

The Ficalora Family Foundation Head Start Center and Early Head Start**

60-02 Roosevelt Avenue
Woodside, NY 11377
718-943-2800

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Parent Policy Council Chairperson



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Our mission is to strengthen children and families with skills, opportunities, and emotional support to build healthy, successful lives. We hold ourselves accountable for our results, using methods that are proven to make a difference.

Our programs are located in the communities we serve, with staff who collectively speak two dozen languages and understand the challenges our clients face. Recognizing that children do not grow in isolation, we provide services to whole families and the larger community. We know that with the right opportunities and support, children of any background can reach their full potential.