



Strategic Plan



Because All Children Are Our Children



Introduction

A strategic plan should be practical and goal oriented. It should be the product of input, discussion and consensus among those who will implement it and those who will be affected by it. A strategic plan should reflect the organization’s mission, vision and values, in order to set funding priorities that balance long-term ambitions with short-term needs.

A strategic plan, together with a budget allocated to achieve its objectives, should be bold enough to stake out a clear position and build on history. And, bolder still to recognize we live in a complex world where solutions may not be fully identified when the plan is put into action. We will measure what we do because the old saying is true that what gets measured gets done. Still, we should have the patience and fortitude to know that not everything we set out to do and measure will be accomplished or even prove necessary. Improving the lives of children and families demands that we recognize complex influences, muster a multidimensional effort and accept uncertainty.

This plan offers strong and achievable recommendations for the children and families of Miami-Dade County. It is grounded in the following four foundations for healthy child development that are at its core:



Social foundations

foster healthy relationships in the lives of children.



Educational foundations

promote high quality learning environments and health literacy.



Economic foundations

encourage prosperity and financial stability for all members of the community.



Environmental foundations

promote healthy environments and supportive services.

No single program or organization can secure these foundations on its own. That is why we commit to engaging other funders and the larger community of service providers and citizens in the collaborative effort to build them. We will convene leaders and recruit committed partners to increase alignment with a shared cause to improve the lives of children and families across our community.

Funding direct services continues as the centerpiece of our investment strategy, because children need resources





and support to develop, grow healthy, and contribute to the local economy. Likewise, for them to avoid the unhealthy consequences of hospitalization, substance abuse, poor mental health or even juvenile detention and prison, our youth must have access to health care, high quality early childhood education, loving and caring relationships at home and the skills to earn a living wage as they transition to adulthood. All of these fundamentals are essential for children to thrive and to ensure we will not need to rescue more children and their families from toxic, costly and often irreversibly poor life outcomes. And when it comes to service, we want there to be no wrong door. However, we must also recognize that children don't live in programs, but rather in families and communities. No matter how good programs might be, we cannot expect singular programs to lift children from circumstances that hold them down. Rather, we expect for all programs to work together to support families and communities in providing the foundations all children deserve.

While The Children's Trust will always be dedicated to the advancement of all children, we must offer additional resources to some. Indeed, The Children's Trust will maintain and strengthen its support and advocacy for children with special needs.

High quality and integrated services, supported by informative program evaluation, while central to our mission, will not produce the results we target unless our decisions are also guided by the experienced wisdom of those we serve. Residents are often best able to define specific neighborhood concerns, which is why we will engage the public in ongoing community dialogue to share responsibility for making planning decisions.

Cross-funder collaboration that builds awareness and shapes a shared policy and advocacy agenda will also be part of a strategy we believe will yield best results. In time, this collaboration will break down walls that unintentionally form as multiple organizations go about their business independently. Based on collaboration, community discussion and research, we will find opportunities to test creative and innovative strategies to learn more effective ways to forge and strengthen the foundations of successful child development.

While this strategic plan may evolve over time, we present it as a community call to action to achieve the best outcomes for the children of our community.





Mission: The Children's Trust partners with the community to plan, advocate for and fund strategic investments that improve the lives of all children and families in Miami-Dade County.

Vision: The Children's Trust envisions a community that works together to provide the essential foundations to enable children to achieve their full potential.

Core Values

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- Support the **whole child**
- Build on **strengths**, don't just focus on problem reduction
- Invest **early** and sustain investments **over time**
- Focus attention on **children with special needs**
- Advocate for and support increased availability of needed services **for all**

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

- Children don't grow up in programs, they grow up in **families and communities**
- Support a full range of **connected learning** opportunities, formal/ informal, in school and out
- Access and **improve quality, reach and impact** across all the places children spend their time
- Recruit, train and retain **good direct service staff**

LEADERSHIP

- See **youth and families as change agents**, in addition to program participants
- **Engage** all sectors and stakeholders
- **Coordinate** efforts, align resources
- **Inspire and inform** the public
- Work for **social justice and prosperity** for all





Priority Investments

Parenting

- Group parenting & advocacy
- Home visitation & individual parenting

Early Childhood Development

- Quality Counts child care quality improvement
- Early care & education slots
- Developmental screening, assessment & early intervention

Youth Development

- After-school programs
- Summer camps & reading enhancements
- Youth enrichment, employment & supports

Health and Wellness

- Comprehensive school-based health (including physical, behavioral, oral health & vision)
- Insurance enrollment
- Injury prevention education
- Food & nutrition (in daily programs)

Family & Neighborhood Supports

- Place-based service partnerships
- Countywide partnerships
- 211 Helpline

Community Awareness & Advocacy

- Promote public policy, advocacy & legislative agendas
- Public awareness & program promotion
- Promote citizen engagement & leadership
- Cross-funder collaboration of goals, strategies & resources

Program & Professional Development

- Supports for quality program implementation & fiscal/ administrative functions
- Program evaluation & community research
- Innovation Fund to pilot new strategies, methods, instruments & partnerships

Special Populations

The Children's Trust has always insisted upon making a sustained commitment to the support and advancement of children with special needs. As we define special needs, the scope of our commitment includes children with disabilities and those who are otherwise regularly identified as belonging to special populations, such as children in foster care, under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system, or homeless. Accordingly, it is our policy and practice to ensure special populations are welcomed into all our funded programs and served effectively with reasonable accommodations.





Headline Community Results

Our “Headline Community Results” are intentionally framed to model and lead a developing community consensus about how to best gauge improvement in the essential foundations provided by family and community supports that lead to child well-being. The Trust cannot accomplish any of these headline results on its own, which is why the word “Community” is a key part of the phrase. It will take the coordinated efforts of a community to achieve results worthy of headlines. No one organization can accomplish this task at the population level in our large county or reach all of the children and their families. Moreover, no single organization has the expertise and resources to address all of the complex reasons why Headline Community Results are not yet where we wish they would be across our vast population.

Therefore, for our organization and for our community, The Trust’s strategic plan must identify and measure community goals and conditions that would result in population level progress over time. We must do our best to assess the current baseline status of the supports and resources all children, including special populations, need. This will help guide our steps as a community to improve the circumstances and outcomes of children.

Community collaboration takes time because it requires strong, trusting relationships to develop among funding organizations, service providers and community members. This is why regular data development efforts will continually update and improve on the ways we evaluate children’s circumstances and guide interventions to improve the health and well-being of children and of the communities that create or limit their opportunities.

These are lofty goals that aim our work toward securing the necessary foundations for all children to thrive, no matter what neighborhood they live in. At the same time, we will focus The Trust’s programmatic investments on activities that can directly improve child and family well-being. We will continue to track our funded program activities and performance measures carefully to assess performance and return on our investments. We will be vigilant to utilize tax dollars to improve the lives of children and families. We will also tap the collective resources of this great community, with a focus on achieving sustainable results to make long term progress on our Headline Community Results.

In addition to the specification of broad Headline Community Results within this strategic plan, The Trust intends to publish annual reviews of the multiple indicators or current ways of measuring these results. These reports will provide snapshots of data trends, as well as comparisons to state and national progress when appropriate. Selection of exactly what to measure will be based on the goal to track a balanced set of indicators that: reflect child, family and community levels; include different ages and populations; incorporate objective (administrative) data and subjective (self-report) perception; ensure a positive, strengths-based view; are easily communicated; complement other community work; provide quality data on a timely basis; and parallel program performance measures when relevant.





Headline Community Results

Family and Community Supports

Children attend quality child care
Children regularly access medical, dental and behavioral health care services
Children are supported by nurturing and involved parents

ASSOCIATIONS WITH ESSENTIAL FOUNDATIONS			
Social Foundation	Educational Foundation	Economic Foundation	Environmental Foundation
X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X

Child Well-being

Children are ready for kindergarten
Students are succeeding academically
Children meet recommended levels of physical activity
Children behave appropriately in schools, homes and communities
Youth successfully transition to adulthood

X	X	X	
	X	X	
X	X		X
X	X		
	X	X	

Cross-cutting Factors That Influence Child Development and Well-being

There are a number of other factors that provide context for understanding our community. Numerous causes and factors contribute to how children are doing across the areas in this plan, according to both local community experience and scientific research. These cross-cutting factors must be taken into account as we make investments to support developmental foundations and child well-being:

- Where children live in Miami-Dade County
- Child age
- Diversity of children by race/ethnicity
- Children who are foreign born and/or with foreign born parent(s)
- Primary home language competencies
- Family type (two-parent/ single-parent homes)
- Family poverty status



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