



Preparing Children for Kindergarten and Life

Great We Grow | 2020-2021 Community Impact Report



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Quality birth-to-five early childhood education for disadvantaged children can simultaneously reduce inequality and boost productivity in America.

— James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in Economics

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In this report



Program overview

- Purpose
- Partners
- Objectives
- Strategies



Results and findings

- Improve quality of early learning providers
- Advance student academic outcomes
- Strengthen educational pathways



Future implications

Appendix



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Purpose | Partners | Objectives | Strategies

Children who are ready for school are ready for life.

Too many of our children are unprepared. Together, we must change that.

- Education starts at birth. About **90% of all brain development occurs before age 3**, making caregiver engagement and early childhood education programs essential.
- Studies show early childhood education results in **higher IQs, future academic and economic achievement, and better health** in adulthood.
- Children who are ready for kindergarten and can read proficiently in third grade are **more likely to graduate from high school and** earn more during their lifetime.
- Today, half of our children in Hillsborough County are not prepared for kindergarten. **Together, we can change that.**

Sources: Boys & Girls Clubs, Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County, Hillsborough County Public Schools, "The Life Cycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program" (2016)

Working together to prepare children for lifelong success

The Tampa Preschool Partnership brings together early education center leaders to better educate and advocate for Tampa's youngest children and their families. By sharing resources and expertise across the community, we work collectively to **increase kindergarten readiness and improve kindergarten transition**, so every child has the chance to succeed from day one — in the classroom and in life.



Tampa Preschool Partnership partners

PROGRAM PARTNERS



SYSTEM PARTNERS



FUNDING PARTNERS



What success looks like by the 2024-25 school year

A

Improve Quality of Early Learning Providers

- All partner centers will achieve a **CLASS score at or above the state-mandated requirement** (current score is 3.5 for 2020-21).
- 100% of all teachers will have or be pursuing a minimum of a **Child Development Associate credential**, with 50% having or pursuing an **Associate in Arts or Science degree or higher**.
- All partner centers will be involved in a minimum of one **Quality Early Education System (QEES) initiative** to improve staff and center quality.

B

Advance Student Academic Outcomes

- **Improve VPK Assessment scores** for students at all partner centers, with 70% of students meeting or exceeding standards in all four domains.
- All partner centers will meet state requirements for **kindergarten readiness** (currently 60% ready) based on the STAR assessment.
- All partner center leaders will participate in a state- or nationally-recognized **early childhood advocacy group**.

C

Strengthen Educational Pathways

- 70% of children at partner centers will **transition to elementary schools rated B or higher**.

Our strategic road map





RESULTS & FINDINGS

Improving the
quality of early
learning providers

Advancing
student academic
outcomes

Strengthening
educational
pathways

Executive summary

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EARLY LEARNING PROVIDERS

- All partner centers **achieved a CLASS score above 4** during spring 2021 — reflecting significant growth from the previous year and exceeding program objectives (minimum score of 3.5 by spring 2025).
- All partner centers for which data is available have or are pursuing their **national accreditation and Gold Standard Quality Care** designation. Additionally, 96% of teachers at partner centers have or are pursuing a **Child Development Associate** credential or higher, while 49% have or are actively pursuing an **AA/AS** or higher.
- All partner centers for which data is available are participating in at least one **Quality Early Education System (QEES)** initiative to enhance educational quality.

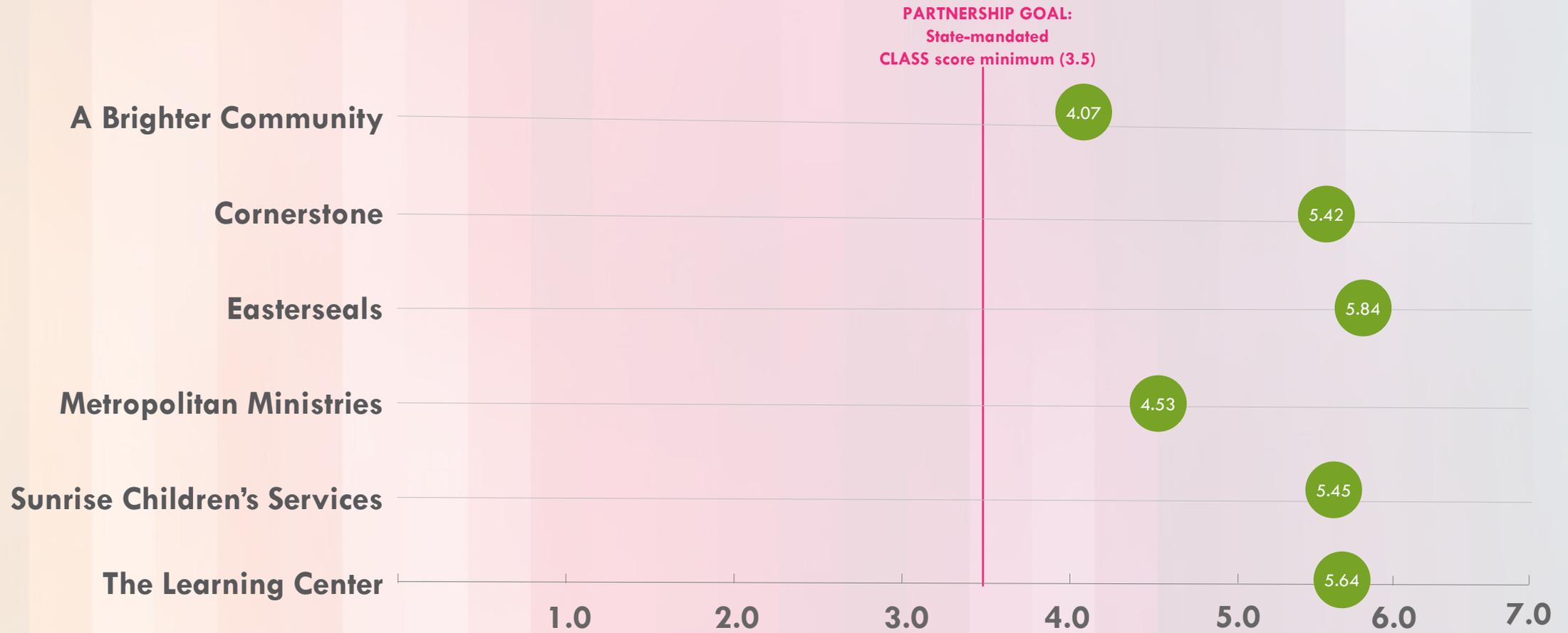
ADVANCING STUDENT ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

- At 3 of the 5 partner schools that offer VPK, 70% or more of students **met or exceeded VPK Assessment standards** in all four domains. After scores dropped significantly in fall 2020 due to COVID-19, 3 of the 5 partner centers saw significant improvements from the previous year.
- Partner centers have not received STAR **kindergarten readiness** assessment scores since fall 2019. At that time, all partner centers met state requirements, with more than 60% of children ready for kindergarten. We continue to await scores to benchmark continued progress.

STRENGTHENING EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

- Only 1 in 5 partner schools had children 70% or more of children transition to a **B-rated school or higher** for kindergarten, with a concerning reduction overall in children transitioning to schools with a grade C or higher.

All partner centers achieved a CLASS score above 4 in spring of 2021, demonstrating significant growth from the previous year



THIS CHART REFLECTS THE CLASS SCORES RECEIVED BY EACH PARTNER CENTER DURING SPRING 2021.

Every partner center has or is pursuing their national accreditation and Gold Seal Quality Care designation

QUALITY RATINGS	A Brighter Community	Cornerstone	Easterseals	Metropolitan Ministries	Sunrise Children's	The Learning Center
Accreditation	NAEYC	NAC	NAC	NECPA	NAC	Plans to pursue
Gold Seal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Plans to pursue				

- **NAC:** National Accreditation Commission — Association for Early Learners
- **NAEYC:** National Association for the Education of Young Children
- **NECPA:** National Early Childhood Program Accreditation
- **Gold Seal Quality Care Program** (see page 25 in the appendix for more details)

50% have or are actively pursuing an AA/AS or higher 95% of teachers at partner centers have or are pursuing a CDA or higher

DEGREE	A Brighter Community	Cornerstone	Easterseals	Metropolitan Ministries	Sunrise Children's	The Learning Center	PARTNERSHIP TOTAL
BA/BS	1	5	5	1	1	3	16
Pursuing BA/BS		1			1		2
AA/AS	2	2		1	3		8
Pursuing AA/AS		1		3			4
CDA Only		2	12		1	7	22
Pursuing CDA	1	1			1	2	5
45 Hours Only	1	2					3
Total Teachers	5	14	17	5	7	12	60
Total pursuing AA or higher	3 (60%)	9 (64%)	5 (29%)	5 (100%)	5 (71%)	3 (25%)	30 (50%)
2024-25 goal of AA or higher	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
TOTAL pursuing CDA or higher	4 (80%)	12 (86%)	17 (100%)	5 (100%)	7 (100%)	12 (100%)	57(95%)
2024-25 goal of CDA or higher	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

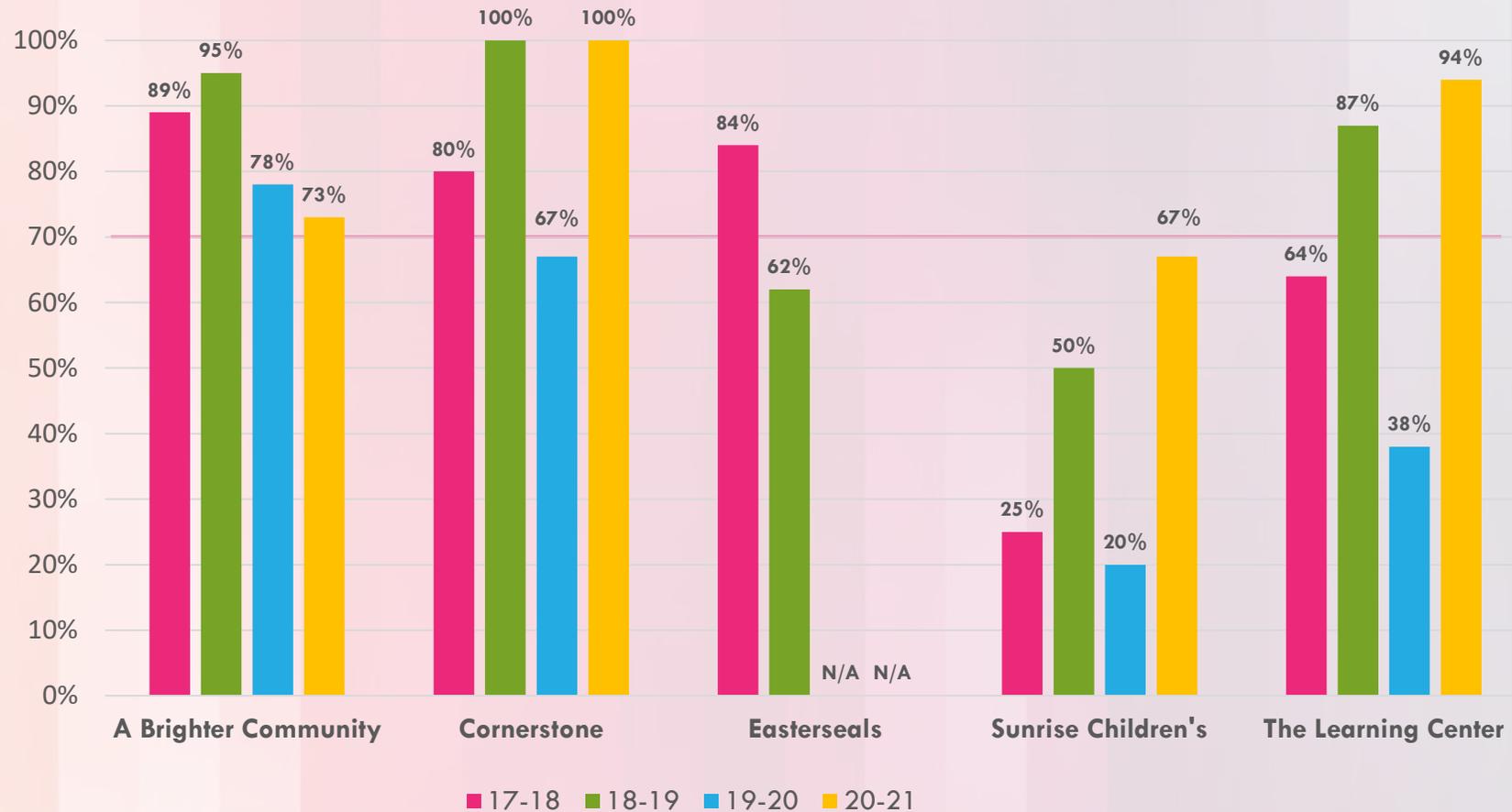
All partner centers are participating in professional development, including at least one QEES initiative, to enhance educational quality

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Cornerstone	Easterseals	Metropolitan Ministries	Sunrise Children's	The Learning Center
Lastinger/Flamingo Early Learning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
DCF Trainings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Cox Campus	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
QEES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
MMCI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
CALM/ELM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
CCFP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
VPK/Curriculum Trainings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
HCC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

DATA WAS NOT AVAILABLE FOR A BRIGHTER COMMUNITY.

Children at 3 in 5 partner centers that offer VPK saw significant improvements in their VPK Assessment scores from 2020 to 2021

% OF STUDENTS MEETING OR EXCEEDING STANDARDS ON THE LAST VPK ASSESSMENT ACROSS ALL FOUR DOMAINS BY SCHOOL YEAR



2019 is the last year partners received kindergarten readiness scores, which were above the District average based on the STAR assessment

Partner School	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021
A Brighter Community	75%	68%	76%	No data	Awaiting data
Cornerstone	63%	29%	75%	No data	Awaiting data
Easterseals (not a VPK provider)	-	-	-	-	-
Sunrise Children's Services	50%	20%	Too few students to count in readiness rate	No data	Awaiting data
The Learning Center	65%	44%	69%	No data	Awaiting data
Hillsborough County Public Schools DISTRICT AVERAGE	-	53%	54%	52%	48%

THIS CHART SHOWS THE PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN WHO WERE READY FOR KINDERGARTEN BASED ON THE STAR ASSESSMENT BY SCHOOL AND BY YEAR SINCE FALL 2017.

All partner center leaders are participating in a state- or nationally-recognized early childhood advocacy group based on available data

ADVOCACY GROUP	A Brighter Community	Cornerstone	Easterseals	Metropolitan Ministries	Sunrise Children's	The Learning Center
Florida Association for the Education of Young Children	Data unavailable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Florida Association for Child Care Management	Data unavailable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Florida Children's Council	Data unavailable			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Only 1 in 5 partner schools had 70% or more of children transition to a B-rated school or higher for kindergarten, with a concerning reduction overall

Students Who Transitioned to A or B Schools	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021
A Brighter Community	31%	63%	Data not available
Cornerstone	36%	36%	9%
Easterseals	12%	37%	23%
Sunrise Children's Services, Inc.	0%	100%	33%
The Learning Center	38%	69%	75%

Students Who Transitioned to A, B or C Schools	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021
A Brighter Community	56%	63%	Data not available
Cornerstone	63%	63%	64%
Easterseals	24%	100%*	69%
Sunrise Children's Services, Inc.	0%	100%	50%
The Learning Center	76%	100%	25%

*THE PERCENTAGE FOR EASTERSEALS REPRESENTS ONLY 27 OF THE 63 ENROLLED CHILDREN DUE TO COVID-19 CLOSING THE HEAD START PROGRAM, MAKING TRACKING DIFFICULT. SCHOOL GRADES ARE BASED ON THE 2018-19 SCHOOL YEAR DUE TO COVID-19.

Shaping a model for the future

FROM

TO

Early childhood learning starts at age 3



Education begins at birth

Schools working independently



All schools and stakeholders working together

Uncertainty about where preschool students are going to kindergarten



Preschools work with parents to select the right elementary school for every child

Too many children are unprepared for kindergarten



More children are ready for kindergarten and graduate from high school



FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

The plan forward



Improve Kindergarten Readiness

- Continue **bringing partners together** to improve kindergarten readiness scores, including private 4-year-old teachers and senior trainers from the Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County.

Strengthen Educational Pathways

- Engage preschool teachers to **discuss elementary school choices with families** to influence the best decision for each child.
- Implement **“Navigating the Journey from Preschool to Kindergarten”** for 4- and 5-year-olds to engage and educate preschool parents about elementary school choices.
- **Support caregivers** throughout their child’s VPK school year to ensure a smooth and thoughtful kindergarten placement.

Deepen Caregiver Engagement

- Continue and grow **parent-engagement activities** at all center locations.
- Support the Talk Read Sing Tampa Bay and Talk With Me Baby **public awareness campaigns**.

“

The foundation for our children's lives — and our entire community — depends on their experiences during early childhood. Good experiences lead to better academic outcomes, employment opportunities, earning potential and health. The first five years of a child's life predict how the rest of it will turn out.

”

— Bob Buesing, board chair,
Conn Memorial Foundation



GREAT WE GROW
Tampa Preschool Partnership

For questions about
Great We Grow:

Sheff Crowder
Sheff@connfoundation.org
813-758-9403



APPENDIX

**Glossary
of terms**

**Strategy
details**

**Partner
information**

Navigating the data



GENERAL TERMS

- **VPK:** Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten — Free, state-funded pre-kindergarten program for 4- and 5-year-olds who reside in Florida; families must choose a half-day program for the school year or a full-day program for the summer
- **School Readiness:** A state-funded program that offers financial assistance to low-income families for early child education and care so families can become financially self-sufficient and young children can be successful in school
- **Achievement:** The percentage of students performing at or above the standard for their age or grade level
- **Economically disadvantaged:** Students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Program
- **CLASS:** An observational tool used to evaluate teachers' interactions with children from infancy through age 5
- **Quality:** Early learning standards that address academic, social-emotional and physical aspects to ensure children are growing in all the ways that enable them to be healthy and ready for school
- **Gold Seal:** In 1996, the Florida Legislature established the Gold Seal Quality Care program to acknowledge childcare facilities and family day care homes that have gone above the required minimum licensing standards to become accredited by recognized agencies whose standard reflects quality in the level of care and supervision provided to children. The Gold Seal is not an accreditation, but a voluntary designation.



Navigating the data

ASSESSMENTS & ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

- **VPK Assessment:** A state-required assessment all private and public VPK providers must administer to children at the beginning and end of a VPK program. The assessment includes progress monitoring measures in the areas of print knowledge, phonological awareness, mathematics and oral language/vocabulary that are aligned with the standards for 4-year-olds
- **STAR:** The state-mandated assessment that evaluates kindergarten readiness for all children entering public schools
- **Gains:** Students who show one year's worth of growth based on standardized academic assessments for their grade level
- **Kindergarten readiness:** Percent of students demonstrating readiness for kindergarten based on county (i-Ready) and state (STAR) assessments

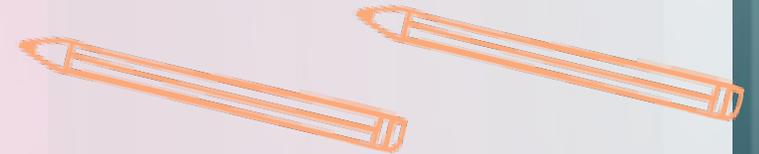


Navigating the data



ACRONYMS

- **AA/AS:** Associate in Arts/Associate in Science (two-year degrees)
- **AP:** Assessment period
- **BA/BS:** Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science (four-year degrees)
- **CCFP:** Child Care Food Program
- **CDA:** Child Development Associate
- **ELCHC:** Early Childhood Coalition of Hillsborough County
- **FCCPC:** Florida Child Care Professional Credential
- **FLAECYC:** Florida Association for the Education of Young Children
- **HCPS:** Hillsborough County Public Schools
- **NAC:** National Accreditation Commission — Association for Early Learners
- **NAEYC:** National Association for the Education of Young Children
- **NECPA:** National Early Childhood Program Accreditation
- **VPK:** Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten
- **QEES:** Quality Early Education System



Strategy #1: Provide high-quality early childhood education

- Use nationally-recognized, **evidence-based curriculum**
- Utilize **assessment results to inform instruction** and drive lesson planning; encourage provider participation in the VPK/STAR pilot
- Work with Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) to **establish connections between partner centers and HCPS educators** to share educational and developmental targets that strengthen kindergarten readiness and transition
- Explore **technology/virtual platforms** to strengthen parent/teacher involvement
- Emphasize **social-emotional learning**
- Maintain **national accreditation**

Strategy #2: Support family engagement in education

- Introduce **community-wide initiatives** *Talk Read Sing Tampa Bay* and *Talk With Me Baby* into preschool programming to encourage family participation in their child's education, starting at birth
- **Inform families of the benefits** connected to consistent attendance and academic success
- Educate and assist families in understanding **kindergarten transition and school choice**; develop *Ready for Kindergarten* materials and programming

Strategy #3: Strengthen the system of care for children and families

- Improve **access to services** (e.g., speech, occupational, behavioral, etc.) for underserved children and families
- **Share local, state and national updates** regarding early childhood education, assessments, funding and legislative changes
- **Advocate for early childhood education** to increase awareness, alignment and funding in collaboration with providers, system partners, government and businesses

More about our partners



- A Brighter Community
- Cornerstone Rosa Valdez Early Childhood Learning Center and Lab School
- Easterseals
- Metropolitan Ministries (PromiseLand and Head Start)
- Sunrise Children's Services
- The Learning Center

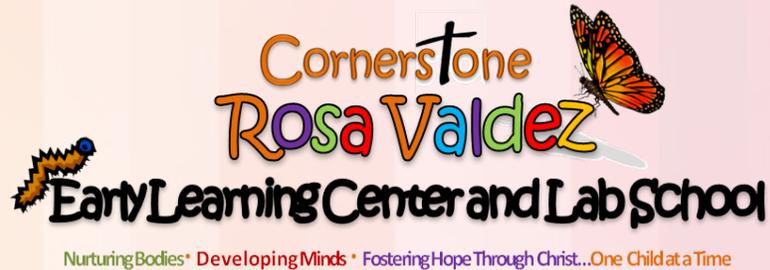
A Brighter Community



- Founded in 1922
- Serves 3- to 5-year-olds
- Average enrollment: 60 children (accredited to serve 70 children)
- 100% of children qualify for free or reduced lunch
- Address: 1613 North Marion Street, Tampa, FL 33602
- Interim executive director: Rosette Dupree
- Website: abrightercommunity.org

“Fortunately for me, I have A Brighter Community in my life. Not only do I know that my baby is safe and learning fruitfully every day, but she is in an environment that is patient with me, even when I’m not able to afford their very affordable tuition.”

Cornerstone Rosa Valdez Early Learning Center and Lab School



- Founded in 1892
- Serves children ages 6 weeks to 5 years
- Average enrollment: 60 children (accredited to serve 72 children)
- 91% of children qualify for free or reduced lunch
- Address: 1802 North Albany Avenue, Tampa, FL 33607
- Executive director: Cathy Capo Stone; director of children's services: Vanessa Mitchell
- Website: cornerstonefamilyministries.org

“The Rosa Valdez Center is like a family. I had some health problems this year, and they gave my granddaughter and me extra support. During the pandemic, my granddaughter continued learning online and attended chapel. She also enjoyed the grab-and-go meals that were sent home.”

Easterseals



- Founded in 1948; early childhood education program started in 1988
- Serves children ages 1 to 5 years
- Average enrollment: 55 children
- 100% of children qualify for free or reduced lunch
- Address: 2401 East Henry Avenue, Tampa, FL 33610
- Center director: Janine Stewart
- Website: www.easterseals.com/florida

“As a parent of two children who attend Easterseals Murray Child Development Center, I am very thankful for this program because it allows me to maintain employment and keep my boys active and engaged. I feel at ease leaving my children with the teachers and staff.”

Metropolitan Ministries



- Founded in 1972; early childhood education program started in 1991
- Serves children birth to 12 years
- Average enrollment: PromiseLand: 50; Head Start: 75 (accredited to serve 93 children)
- Director of education support: Tommietta Green; associate director: Dequita Parker
- Address: 2010 North Florida Avenue, Tampa, FL 33602
- Website: www.metromin.org

“My daughter has excelled in her cognitive and motor skills so much at PromiseLand. They have an app called Himama that gives me updates throughout the day about when and what she eats, the activities she does and pictures and videos, so I don't feel like I'm missing anything while I'm at school and work. I love how supportive they are and how genuinely concerned they are about my daughter's well-being!”

Sunrise Children's Services



- Founded in 1953; early childhood education program started in 1992
- Serves children ages 6 weeks to 12 years
- Average enrollment: 35 children (accredited to serve 65 children)
- 95% of children qualify for free or reduced lunch
- Executive director: Laura White
- Address: 1114 W Sligh Avenue, Tampa, FL 33604
- Website: www.sunrisegroup.org/childrens-services

“Sunrise was exactly what my son needed to thrive and be the best version of himself, which was no easy task after being isolated due to the pandemic. We are confident that he will have a successful kindergarten experience because of his time at Sunrise Children’s Services.”

The Learning Center



- Founded in 1995
- Serves children 3 months to 5 years
- Average enrollment: 50 children (accredited to serve 60 children)
- 29% of children qualify for free or reduced lunch
- Executive director: Terri Fernandez
- Address: 4110 North MacDill Avenue, Tampa, FL 33607
- Website: www.tlctampa.org

“This was our first childcare experience, and we couldn’t have asked for a better one. Our daughter was in the infant room with amazing teachers. She loved going to them and they loved having her. They were invested in her well-being. I highly recommend this gem of a childcare facility.”

2020-21 partnership funding summary

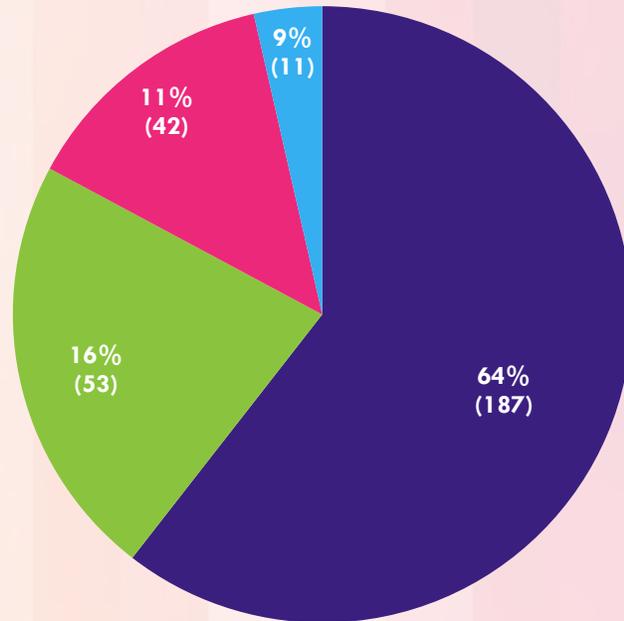
Funding Sources	A Brighter Community	Cornerstone	Easterseals	Metropolitan Ministries	Sunrise Children's	The Learning Center
School Readiness	X	X	X	X	X	X
VPK	X	X			X	X
Head Start		X	X	X		
Other Govt.	X	X	X	X	X	X
United Way	X			X	X	
Private Pay	X	X	X	X	X	X
Private Grants	X	X	X	X	X	X
Conn Memorial Foundation	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fundraising	X	X	X	X	X	X

4- and 5-year-old students at partner centers

Student Information	A Brighter Community	Cornerstone	Easterseals	Sunrise Children's	The Learning Center	Total
Total # of Students	11	11	13	6	16	57
Part-Time	unknown	0	0	0	1	1
Full-Time	unknown	11	13	6	15	45
First Year	unknown	10	6	0	4	20
Second Year	unknown	1	7	6	12	26
English as Second Language	unknown	0	0	0	5	5

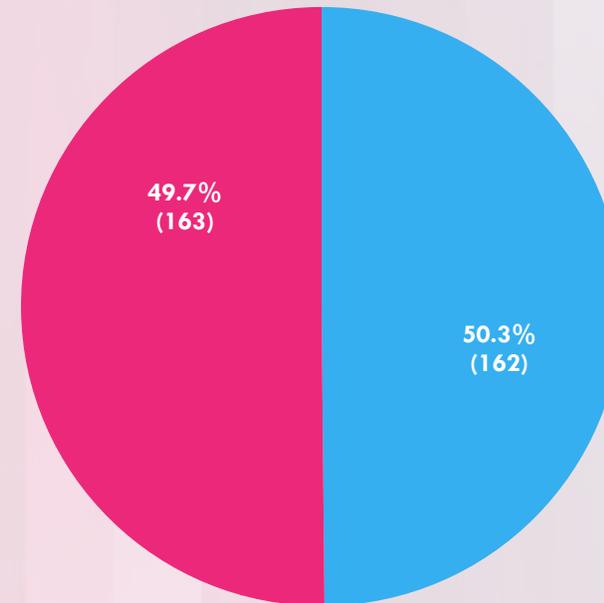
Demographics of children at partner centers

STUDENT RACE/ETHNICITY



■ African American ■ Hispanic ■ White ■ Other

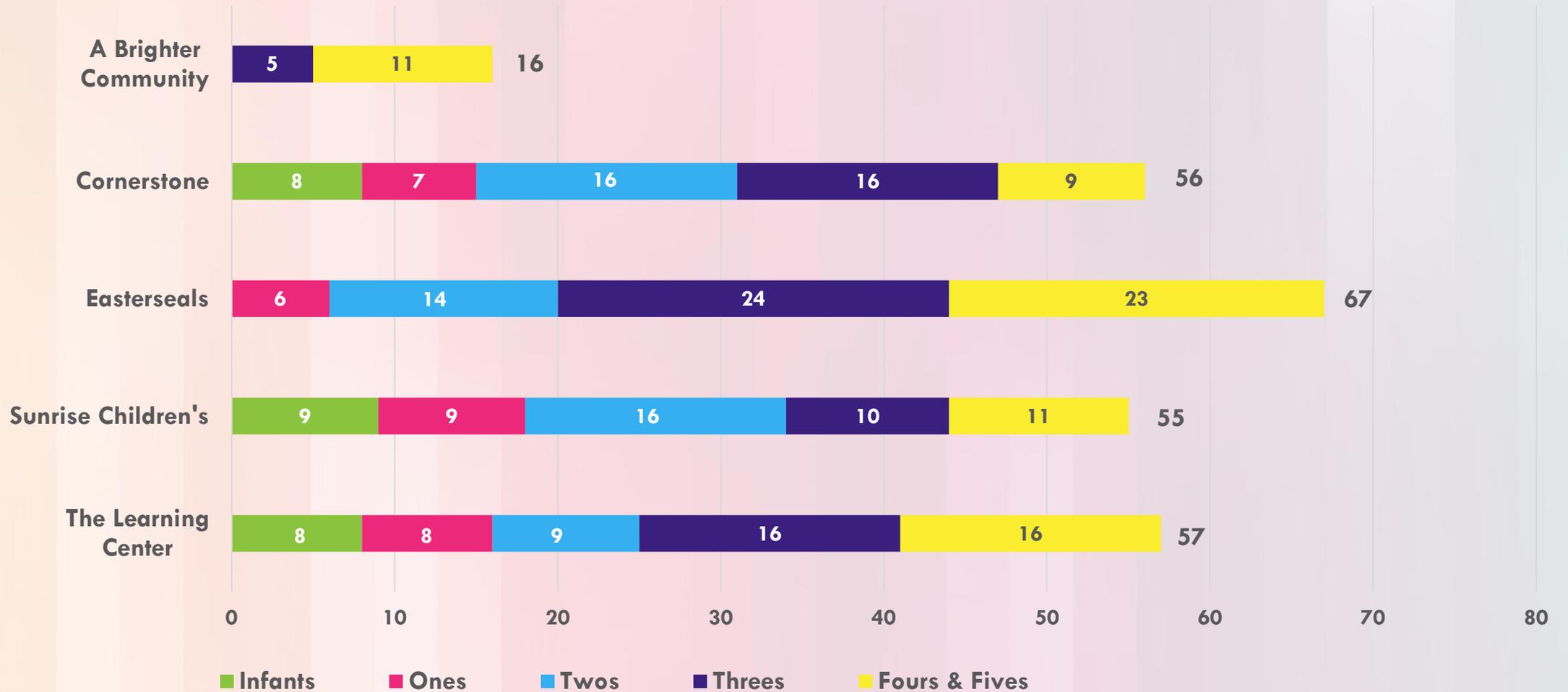
STUDENT GENDER



■ Male ■ Female

THESE CHARTS REFLECTS ALL PARTNERS EXCEPT FOR A BRIGHTER COMMUNITY, FOR WHICH DATA WAS NOT AVAILABLE.

Ages of children at partner centers



THIS CHART REFLECTS ALL PARTNERS EXCEPT FOR METROPOLITAN MINISTRIES.