



# Preparing Children for Kindergarten and Life

Great We Grow | 2021-2022 Community Impact Report



**GREAT WE GROW**  
Tampa Preschool Partnership

# 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, less than half of children in Hillsborough County are 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.



**GREAT WE GROW**

Tampa Preschool Partnership

# Tampa Preschool Partnership partners

## PROGRAM PARTNERS



## SYSTEM PARTNERS



## FUNDING PARTNERS





# What success looks like by May 2024

## A

### Improve the Quality of Early Learning Providers

- All partner centers will **meet or exceed the state-mandated CLASS score** of 4.0.
- 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**.
- 100% of all partner centers will be nationally accredited and involved in a minimum of one **Quality Early Education System 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** for the 2021-22 school year, reflecting significant growth from the previous year and exceeding program objectives.
- All partner centers have or are pursuing their **national accreditation and Gold Standard Quality Care** designation.
- 90% of teachers at partner centers have or are pursuing a **Child Development Associate** credential or higher, while 52% have or are actively pursuing an **AA/AS** or higher.
- All partner centers are participating in at least one **Quality Early Education System (QEES)** initiative to enhance educational quality.

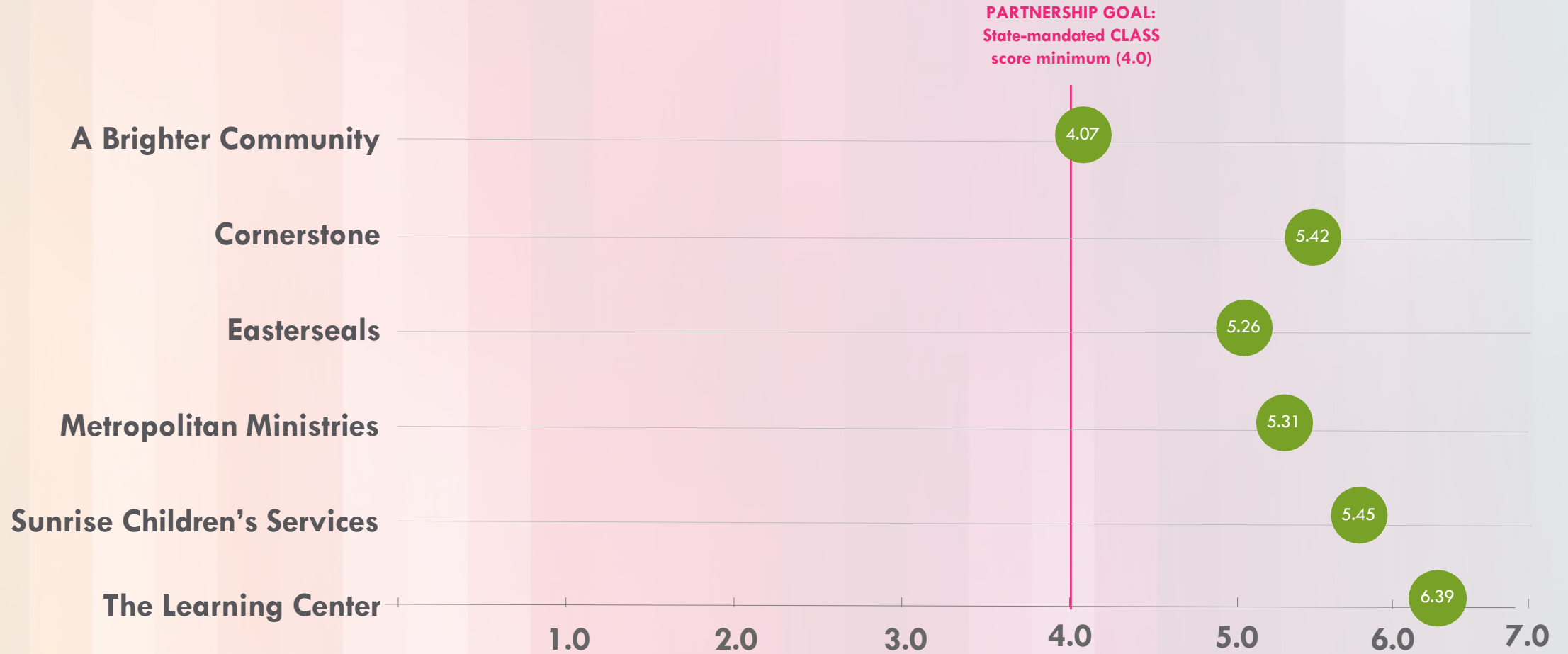
## ADVANCING STUDENT ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

- 70% or more of students at all partner centers that reported **VPK Assessment scores** met or exceeded standards in all four domains, meeting the partnership objective.
- 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.

## STRENGTHENING EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

- Most children at partner schools went to a C-rated school or higher, with work still to be done in this area

# All partner centers achieved a CLASS score above 4.0 for the 2021-22 school year





**90% of teachers at partner centers have or are pursuing a CDA or higher, while 52% have or are actively pursuing an AA/AS or higher**

DEGREE	A Brighter Community	Cornerstone	Easterseals	Metropolitan Ministries	Sunrise Children's	The Learning Center	PARTNERSHIP TOTAL
BA/BS	1	4	4	1	1	2	13
Pursuing BA/BS		2			1		3
AA/AS		3		3	2	1	9
Pursuing AA/AS	1	2		3			6
CDA Only	4	0	9		2	6	21
Pursuing CDA		0	1			1	2
45 Hours Only	0	4	2				6
<b>Total Teachers</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Total pursuing AA or higher</b>	<b>33% (2)</b>	<b>73% (11)</b>	<b>25% (4)</b>	<b>100% (7)</b>	<b>67% (4)</b>	<b>30% (3)</b>	<b>52% (31)</b>
<b>2024-2025 goal of AA or higher</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>TOTAL pursuing CDA or higher</b>	<b>100% (6)</b>	<b>73% (11)</b>	<b>88% (14)</b>	<b>100% (7)</b>	<b>100% (6)</b>	<b>100% (10)</b>	<b>90% (54)</b>
<b>2024-2025 goal of CDA or higher</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 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
<b>Accreditation</b>	NAEYC Award dates 12/2017 to 06/2023	NAC Award dates 07/2022 to 07/2026	NAC Award dates 07/2019 to 07/2023	NECPA Award dates 05/2021 to 05/2024	NAC Award dates 08/2022 to 08/2026	Self-Study Phase
<b>Gold Seal</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

- 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 23 in the appendix for more details)

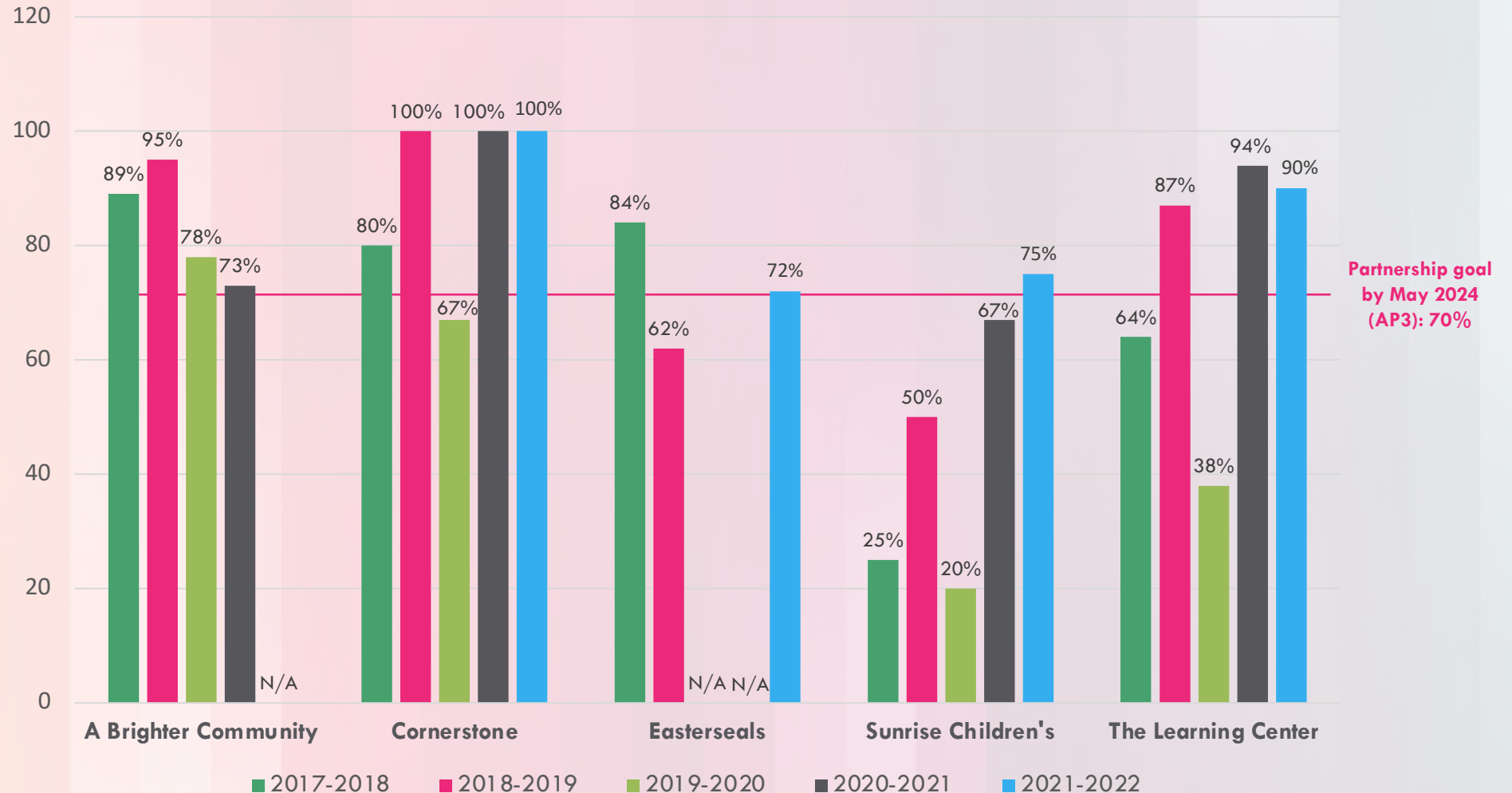
**All partner centers are participating in professional development, including at least one QEES initiative, to enhance educational quality**

<b>PROFESIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>A Brighter Community</b>	<b>Cornerstone</b>	<b>Easterseals</b>	<b>Metropolitan Ministries</b>	<b>Sunrise Children's</b>	<b>The Learning Center</b>
CCFP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Cox Campus			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DCF Trainings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
QEES – advocacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
HCC quality/training	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Lastinger/Flamingo Early Learning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
MMCI		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
School Wide PBS	<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"/>



# 70% or more of students at all partner centers that reported VPK Assessment scores met or exceeded standards in all four domains, meeting the partnership objective

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



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

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

## Most children at partner schools went to a C-rated school or higher, with work still to be done in this area

Students Who Transitioned to A or B Schools	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022
A Brighter Community	31%	63%	Data not available	16%
Cornerstone	36%	36%	9%	64%
Easterseals	12%	37%	23%	18%
Sunrise Children's	0%	100%	33%	67%
The Learning Center	38%	69%	75%	99%

Students Who Transitioned to A, B or C Schools	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022
A Brighter Community	56%	63%	Data not available	25%
Cornerstone	63%	63%	100%	100%
Easterseals	24%	100%*	69%	100%
Sunrise Children's	0%	100%	50%	100%
The Learning Center	76%	100%	25%	100%



# 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 for and graduate from high school



# FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

# The plan forward



## Improve the Quality of Early Learning Providers

- Each partner school will focus on ensuring all teachers have or are pursuing a minimum of a Child Development Associate credential, encouraging an Associate in Arts or Science degree or higher.

## Advance Student Academic Outcomes

- Continue **bringing partners together** to improve kindergarten readiness scores.

## 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.
- Continue and grow **parent-engagement activities** at all center locations.



“

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, 201-22 board chair, Conn Memorial Foundation



**GREAT WE GROW**  
Tampa Preschool Partnership

For questions about  
Great We Grow:

Sheff Crowder  
[sheff@connfoundation.org](mailto: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 a teacher's 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 for an accredited agency.



# 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 state (STAR) assessments



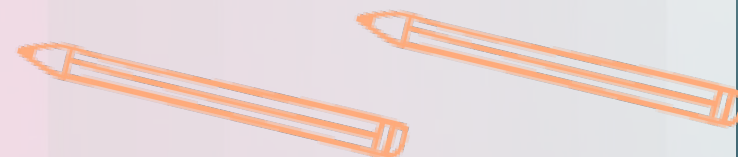


# Navigating the data



## 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 Learning 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 learning that helps children **manage emotions and social interactions**
- Maintain (or obtain) **national accreditation**

## Strategy #2: Support family engagement in education

- Continue **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, early intervention, 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: 30 children (accredited to serve 70 children)
- 100% of children qualify for free or reduced lunch
- Address: 1613 North Marion Street, Tampa, FL 33602
- Executive director: Rosette Dupree
- Website: [abrightercommunity.com](http://abrightercommunity.com)

*“My child 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: 62 children (accredited to serve 72 children)
- 80% 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](http://cornerstonefamilyministries.org)

*“ Two-year-old twins, G and R, came to “Rosa” non-verbal and unable to socialize. Their teacher quickly referred them for testing and began working with the boys in her one-year-old classroom. In only a couple of months of using positive behavior support strategies, quality developmentally appropriate programming and a coordinated approach between home and school, both boys started talking and playing with their new friends.”*

# 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
- Associate VP programs: Jenn Sifferman; Center director: Janine Stewart
- Website: [www.easterseals.com/florida](http://www.easterseals.com/florida)

*“My oldest learned a lot while enrolled in the center, and it helped him when he transitioned to Kindergarten. My youngest children are still there, and they are learning and growing a lot. The teachers take their time with my children and have helped them reach milestones.”*

# Metropolitan Ministries



- Founded in 1972; early childhood education program started in 1991
- Serves children birth to 12 years
- Average enrollment: PromiseLand: 50 (accredited to serve 93 children); Head Start: 75
- 100% of children qualify for free or reduced lunch
- Director of children's programs: Rebeca Rodriguez; Associate director: Dequita Parker
- Address: 2010 North Florida Avenue, Tampa, FL 33602
- Website: [metromin.org](http://metromin.org)

*"First, I want to start by saying thank you. You all were apart of Luna's first experience of being away from us. I know it wasn't the easiest transition for her, but you all were very understanding and compassionate toward her and us as parents. I am so grateful for your center and for the care you provide all your families."*



# Sunrise Children's Services



- Founded in 1953; early childhood education program started in 1992
- Serves children ages 6 weeks to 12 years
- Average enrollment: 45 children (accredited to serve 65 children)
- 75% of children qualify for free or reduced lunch
- Executive director: Laura White
- Address: 1114 West Sligh Avenue, Tampa, FL 33604
- Website: [sunrisegroup.org/childrens-services](http://sunrisegroup.org/childrens-services)

*“My kids have attended this facility for two years and they love it. They are always happy to go, and the teachers are always so welcoming. My girls have excelled since I have enrolled them, and I would recommend to everyone in the area.”*

# The Learning Center



- Founded in 1995
- Serves children 3 months to 5 years
- Average enrollment: 50 children (accredited to serve 60 children)
- 36% of children qualify for free or reduced lunch
- Executive director: Terri Fernandez
- Address: 4110 North MacDill Avenue, Tampa, FL 33607
- Website: [tlctampa.org](http://tlctampa.org)

*“We want our son to grow to be an active, healthy person, who loves and cares for the outdoors and about and for people in his community. The Learning Center provides a foundation for those values in the context of his daily education, and we are grateful!”*

# 2021–2022 partnership funding summary

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

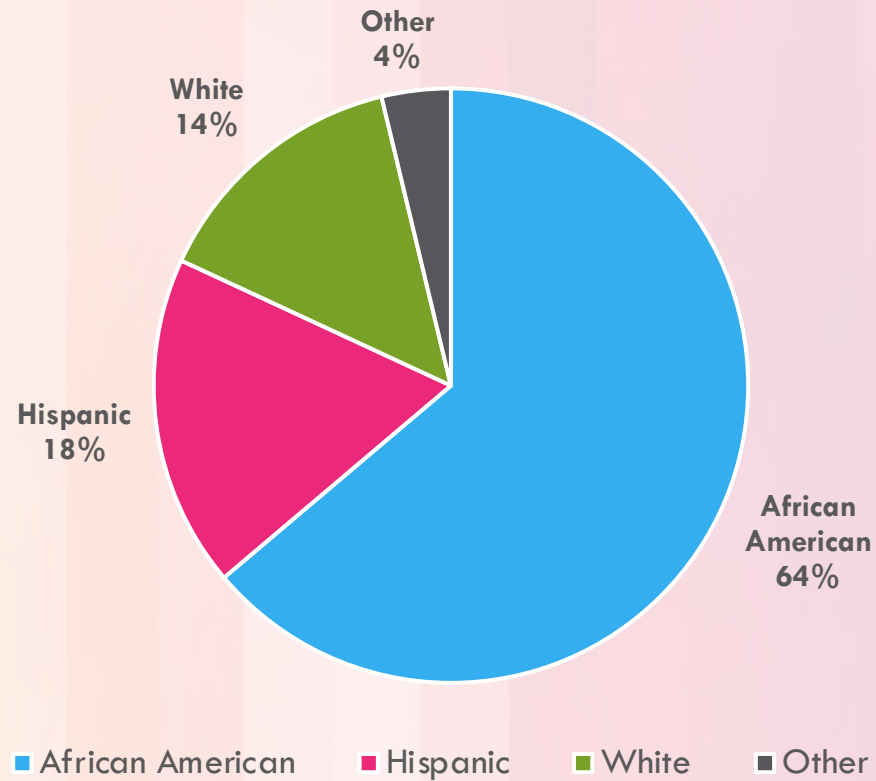
## 4- and 5-year-old students at partner centers

Student Information	A Brighter Community	Cornerstone	Easterseals	Sunrise Children's	The Learning Center	Total
<b>Total # of Students</b>	13	11	36	8	18	<b>86</b>
<b>Part-Time</b>	1	2	0	2	0	<b>5</b>
<b>Full-Time</b>	12	9	36	6	18	<b>81</b>
<b>First Year</b>	4	1	9	4	4	<b>22</b>
<b>Second Year</b>	9	10	27	4	14	<b>64</b>
<b>Dual Language Learners</b>	1	3	5	1	6	<b>16</b>

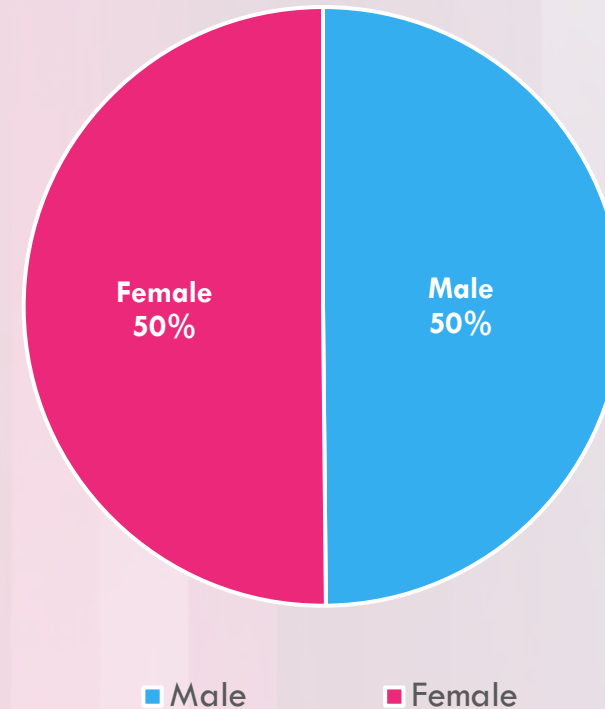


# Demographics of children at all partner centers

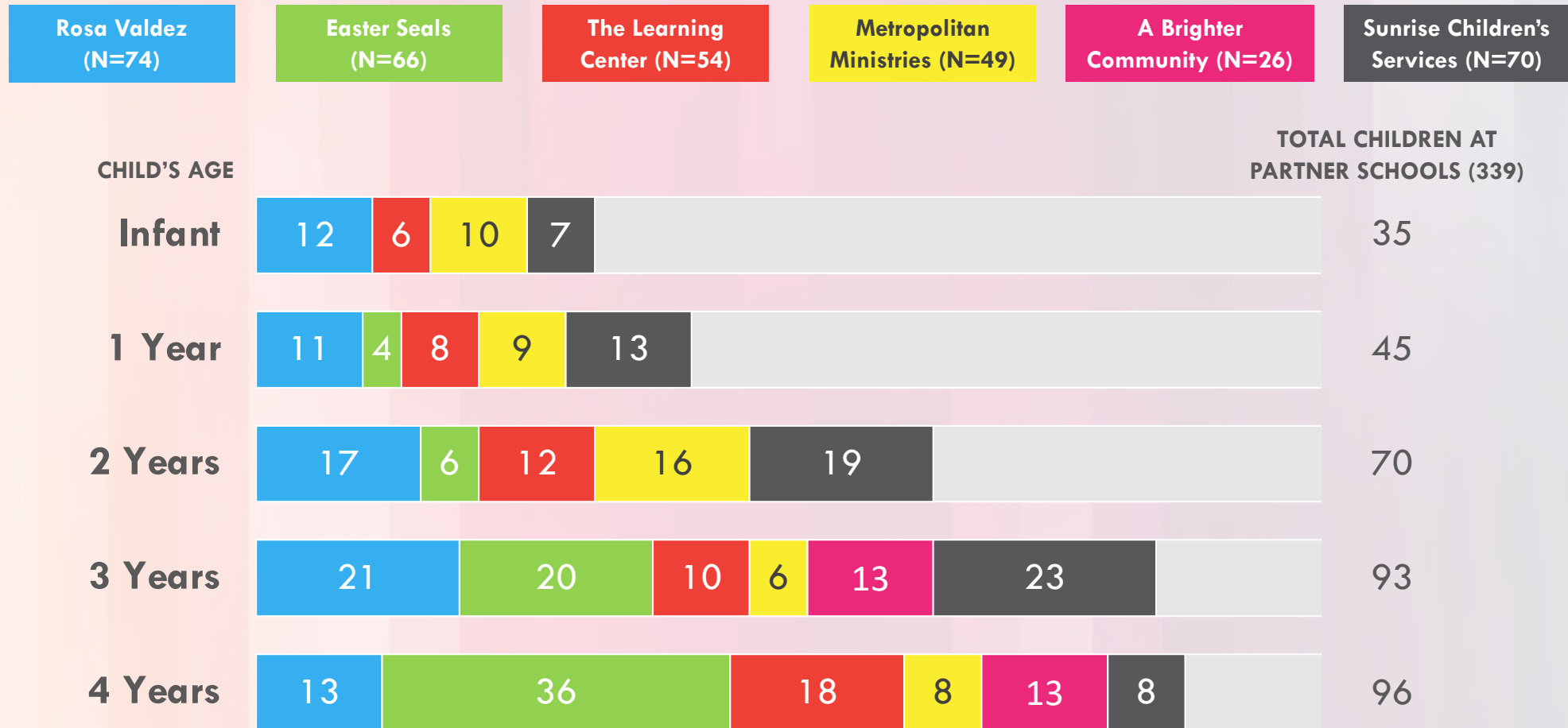
## STUDENT RACE/ETHNICITY



## STUDENT GENDER



# Partner schools served 339 preschool students in 2021-22



THIS CHART REFLECTS THE TOTAL PRESCHOOL STUDENT COUNT AT THE END OF THE 2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR BY AGE AND PARTNER