

Children: Our Greatest Investment





The Council



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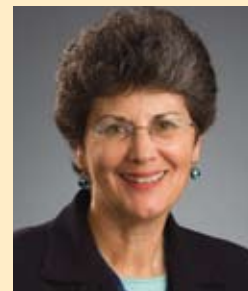


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Chief Executive Officer



Gaetana D. Ebbola

We help Palm Beach County children begin life healthy, remain free from abuse and neglect, enter kindergarten eager and ready to learn, and thrive in quality after-school programs so our entire community succeeds.

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All meetings of the Children's Services Council are open to the public. Monthly meetings are held on the fourth Thursday beginning at 5 p.m. unless otherwise posted.

Special Thanks to the Palm Beach Post staff for its help in creating and distributing this report to its Palm Beach County readers.

Investing in Children: Just Good Business

An open letter from
Kathy Adams, *Chair*
Tana Ebbola, *Chief Executive Officer*

As you read this annual report, you will see services, programs and interventions for our youngest children in economic terms – return on investment. Why? Because the Children's Services Council knows that it is less costly in both human and economic terms to prevent rather than fix later. This was pretty forward thinking when we started 20 years ago, considering that ensuring healthy birth outcomes, early childhood brain development, and the influence of quality child care are now nationally recognized as an economic issue, not social service fluff.

Want to know who is behind the latest research on investing in young children? The answer is some of the nation's leading economists. Their conclusion is that investment in young children may be the best way to stimulate economic growth and that investment in young children's social and emotional development may be the most productive of these investments.

Nobel Prize-winning Economist James J. Heckman has studied economic development for decades. After looking at failed business and

land investment actions related to stimulating economic growth, he joined an increasing number of economists who now believe that investing in children when they are very young has, by far, the most long-term success.

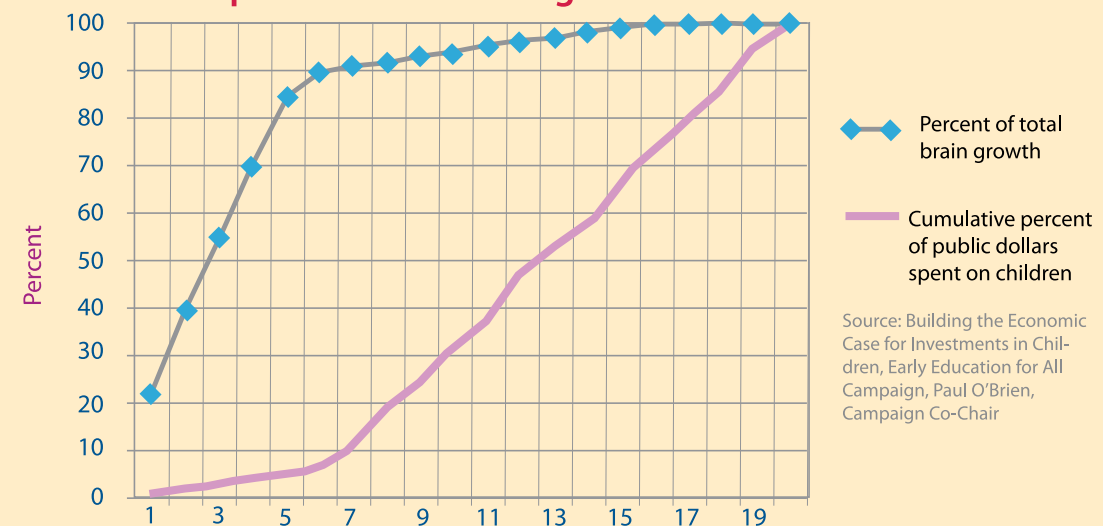
"Skill begets skill, and that process begins early," says Heckman.

"He has concluded that the origin of a nation's productive strength – the cradle of prosperity, if you will – is best measured neurologically, as well as in traditional economic terms." said Richard Louv of his interview with Heckman. Louv is the executive director of the National Scientific Council On the Developing Child. This is a team of leading scholars in neuroscience, early childhood development, pediatrics and economists. It is housed at the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. So, in effect, economists are now researching ways to measure the economic benefits of building brain architecture rather than bricks and mortar and offering tax breaks and land to lure or keep businesses in a community as a means of economic stability.

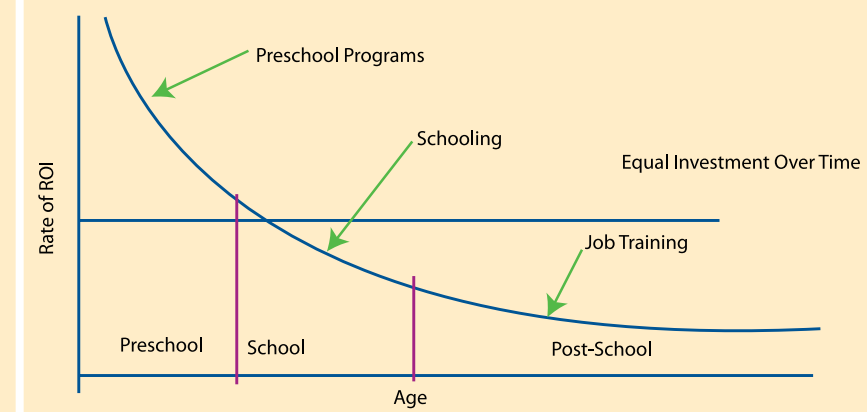
We are fortunate in Palm Beach County to have a means of forwarding this research and putting it into a tangible, usable form – investing in early childhood programs and services that seek to enhance opportunities for optimum brain development. We know that a child's home, child care and community environments play critical roles in the formation of strong or weak brain architecture, which provides the foundation for lifelong learning, behavior and health. We know and are developing systems of programs and services that build on this and on the scientific evidence that the building of strong brain architecture relies on experiences, interactions and the quality of early relationships in the home, in school and in the wider community. And we are successfully moving from the heart to the head – from the charity model of social services to the science and business model (while keeping the heart strongly in place).

The research proves it works. No more hunches. **Heart + Science + Business = Success.** Now we need a national investment strategy to do it.

The Early Years Are Learning Years Brain Growth Compared To Public Expenditures on Young Children



Early Investment Yields Results Investing in Young Children Provides Best Return on Investment



Source: Doug Price at the Florida Tax Watch Business Leadership Summit 10/14/05

The First Step: Healthy Babies



When she found out from a clinic worker that she was three months pregnant, Laura Morales was poor, alone and bracing for a hurricane bearing down on South Florida.

"I told her I didn't have food, I didn't know what to do," Ms. Morales recalled.

So the Palm Beach County Health Department employee handed the terrified woman a card with a phone number. And, swallowing her fears, Ms. Morales made the call. In doing so, she unwittingly entered into a system of care designed specifically to ensure that all women in Palm Beach County have access to prenatal care – so that all babies have the chance to be born healthy.

The Healthy Beginnings Program, administered and funded in large part by Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County, provides access to direct health and social services to pregnant women whose chances of having a healthy baby are hampered by such risk factors as poverty, limited access to health care, poor nutrition, age, substance abuse, homelessness, domestic violence and more. Once identified, these women receive high-quality, consistent prenatal care as well as access to a range of other supports and services.

In Ms. Morales' case, she was connected to much-needed medical care and links to community programs for food, housing and other essential needs. And, after her daughter was born, she continued to receive support from agencies that helped her wade through paperwork to ensure her baby had health coverage, diapers and other essentials. Ms. Morales also received home visits from a nurse to teach her how to care for her baby. And, even today, Ms. Morales continues to receive access to quality, affordable child care so she can work and support her daughter.

These kinds of programs are crucial to ensure babies such as Ms. Morales' are born healthy – which is the first step in preparing children for school and beyond.

Born Too Soon, Too Small

But CSC recognizes that still more needs to be done to bolster maternal-child health in Palm Beach County. Nine percent of babies born in the county in 2006 were considered low birthweight (5.5 pounds or less). In some struggling communities, up to 21 percent of babies were born too small. Many of those were simply born too soon or, because of their mother's circumstances in life, were denied much-needed medical and nutritional care in the womb.

The immediate and life-long implications of low birthweight and prematurity on a child, a family and the community as a whole, are staggering. In direct medical costs alone, a low birthweight or very low birthweight baby (3.3 lbs or less), can cost between \$15,000 and \$100,000.

Long-term, babies born too early and too small can suffer vision, hearing and other developmental disabilities. They also are at higher risk for abuse and neglect.

Nationally, one in eight babies – more than half a million a year – is born premature, according to a June 2008 Associated Press article.

"The public health importance of preventing preterm birth can't be undersold," Dr. Catherine Spong, pregnancy chief at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, told the AP.

"The public health importance of preventing preterm birth can't be undersold"
*Dr. Catherine Spong,
 pregnancy chief, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development*

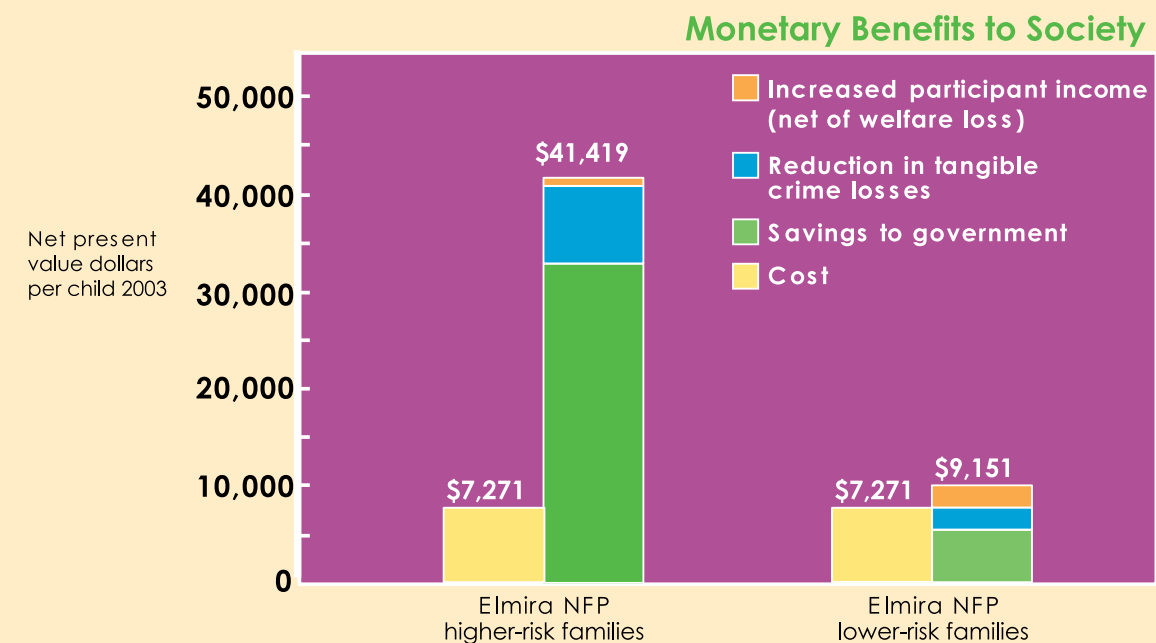
CSC and Partners Launch Evidence-Based Program

In an effort to do even more for at-risk pregnant women and mothers, this summer CSC and its partners launched a unique, evidence-based nurse home visiting program that provides medical, educational and emotional support to first-time mothers. Decades of studies have proven the Nurse-Family Partnership program does wonders for improving maternal-child outcomes for years to come. In other words, it's a solid return on investment for the family and the community.

When it comes to maternal-child health, CSC remains on the cutting edge – for babies, for families and for all of Palm Beach County.

"The question isn't, 'Do we know what to do?' " as Tana Ebbole, CSC's CEO, states. "We know what to do. The questions are, 'Will we do it? And will we do it smart and effectively target our resources?'"

RAND Corporation - For the higher-risk families now served by the program, a 2005 RAND Corporation analysis found a net benefit (benefits minus costs) to society of \$34,148 (in 2003 dollars) per family served, with the bulk of the savings accruing to government (see graph), which equates to a \$5.70 return per dollar invested in Nurse-Family Partnership.



Karoly, L., Kilburn, M., Cannon, J. (2005). *Early Childhood Interventions: Proven Results, Future Promise*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

Quality Child Care = Economic Development



The young father has trouble seeing beyond the fence encircling the West Palm Beach public housing project where he lives with his wife and 2-year-old son. His vision of what lies beyond is blurred by generations of poverty, illiteracy, job instability – and lack of child care.

The Dunbar Village father knows that, like his wife, he could get training and a decent paying job. That was the plan. But when hit-or-miss babysitting sources became more miss than hit, the father was forced to stay home with his son. The couple looked into formal child care, but was shocked by the cost. Even though the wife earns more than minimum wage, the least expensive child care would swallow almost half her paycheck.

A quality child care program in Palm Beach County easily costs \$170 a week. So the Dunbar Village couple did what any well-informed parents would and put their son’s name on the local waiting list for subsidized care. And there his name sits, along with thousands of other waiting children. CSC matches state/federal subsidized child care dollars with more than \$2.6 million. While that helps provide affordable quality child care for about 1,900 children, it’s simply not enough to help all those in need.

So, too often children linger in substandard, sometimes illegal or even dangerous care rather than thriving in a quality early childhood education program; parents end up waiting instead of working; and the community loses out on more working, taxpaying, contributing members of society.

Sizable Return on Investment

The loss is devastating when you consider what good can come of quality care. Well-designed early childhood interventions have been found to generate a return to society ranging from \$1.80 to \$17.70 for each dollar spent on the program, according to a 2005 RAND Corporation Research Brief.

“ECD (early childhood development) children are much less likely to be retained in the first grade, much less likely to need special education, much more likely to be literate by the end of third grade, much more likely to complete high school, get a good job, raise a family and much less likely to commit a crime,” said Arthur Rolnick, Senior Vice President and Director of Research at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, during an interview on the Children of the Code website.

In other words, Rolnick said: “Early childhood development should be viewed not just as education, but as economic development.”

Continuing to Refine Quality

Tana Ebbole, CSC’s CEO, couldn’t agree more.

“We know there is a direct correlation between young children’s access to quality child care and reduction of child abuse and children being eager and ready to learn when they enter school,” she said.

That’s why CSC continues to refine its child care program to ensure children are receiving high-quality care. Currently, about 125 child care sites in Palm Beach County voluntarily participate in the Quality Improvement System. That means they aim to meet national standards in six areas: environment; staff-to-child ratio; parent involvement; curriculum; child development; and teacher education and support.

Additionally, CSC funds quality after-school and summer programs to give working parents peace of mind. Included in that is more than \$500,000 in local matching money for summer camp scholarships for low-income children, which keeps hundreds of kids off the streets and well fed when school is out.

And CSC funds the nationally recognized, evidence-based HIPPPY program. Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters is a school readiness program that helps parents prepare their 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds for success in school and beyond. Nearly 700 Palm Beach County families currently participate in the HIPPPY program.

“It’s made me be more patient, to know how to sit down and work with them more,” said Omika Walker, a West Palm Beach mother of five who now participates in the program with her youngest son, 4-year-old Donovan Brown.

In the future, CSC would like to take its message of quality deeper into the community by developing a program specifically for the countless friends, relatives and neighbors who provide informal but essential child care for working parents across the county.

But until then, and until more affordable, quality child care is available here, families such as the one in Dunbar Village will wait.

Currently, about 9,800 children receive subsidized child care in Palm Beach County. Another 5,200+ are still waiting.



Surviving in Palm Beach County

A single, working parent of two young children (earning less than \$27,000 a year or 150% of the federal poverty level) would need to spend \$615 a month over income to survive.

Here’s the breakdown:

Gross monthly income:	\$2,200
Average cost for 2-bedroom apt:	\$1,209
Low-cost food plan:	\$479
Min. child care costs (2 kids):.....	\$1,127
\$ left over for other expenses:	(\$615)

Source: CSC’s 2008 Economic Indicators Report

Bringing People Together



First-grade teacher Edward Parker just did what came naturally when he corrected a little boy's behavior at a local elementary school cafeteria. Little did he know that encounter a year ago would change so many lives.

The next day, that little boy named Johnathan offered Mr. Parker, a father of two, a lollipop. Then he asked him a stunning question: "Do you want to be my father?"

While still so young, Johnathan had already lived a lifetime of sorrow. His father was dead and his mother was long gone. He and his little brother lived with his aunt and uncle until his aunt, too, passed away. Unable to deal with Johnathan's behavior, his uncle handed him over to the state child welfare agency.

For half his life, Johnathan had no permanent home.

Later that night, Mr. Parker asked his wife if she wanted to adopt a child. Without hesitation, Mrs. Parker answered, "Why not?"

There "was a spot in our home and our heart," said Mr. Parker, explaining that the couple had recently lost an infant daughter, who'd been born premature. "She guided him to us."

Despite the legal complications, Johnathan officially became a Parker this past spring with help from Foster Children's Project attorneys.

A focal point for families

CSC's Family & Community Program first and foremost develops community-based sites such as Beacon Centers, where families receive coordinated and integrated services. Such services may include parenting information, mentor programs, tutoring, adult education, nutrition information and much more.

These community sites also offer a focal point for families and neighbors to come together – to play, learn and bond.

As one local mother put it: "I don't know what I would be doing if Beacon wasn't here... It is a blessing."

Family & Community also supports advocacy and oversight programs, such as the Foster Children's Project in which Johnathan was involved. These programs, like all of CSC's work, must prove they're accountable and effective.

A life of grief now knows love

Beginning in July 2001, Children's Services Council contracted with the Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County to provide attorneys for children entering shelter care because of abuse, neglect or abandonment.

When the Foster Children's Project was created, many children remained in substitute care for more than three years – often bouncing from place to place, constantly changing schools, neighborhoods and friends. Their lives were marked by grief, loss and separation.

So the Foster Children's Project's goal became, and remains, clear-cut: Either help children return safely home to their families or find them an adoptive home as quickly as possible. In CSC's view, this is yet another way to prevent children from being abused, neglected or abandoned.

The program now provides legal representation and other services to a continuous caseload of about 350 children ages 12 and younger and their siblings. A recent independent evaluation of the project found that children in the program exited foster care 60 percent faster than their peers in a comparison group.

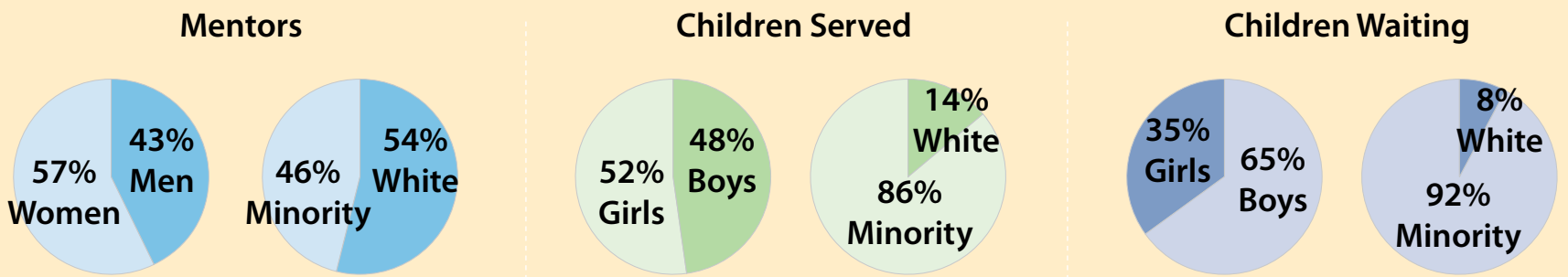
But to a child like Johnathan, those are just numbers. What matters most to him is knowing that at the end of each day, he's going home to a family that loves him.

Children in the Foster Children's Project find permanent homes 60 percent faster than their peers.



Mentoring in Palm Beach County

Currently, there are more than 2,000 adult-child matches among programs in the Mentor Center's network. Nearly 550 children still are waiting for a mentor.



Children's Services Council General Fund



REVENUES 2007

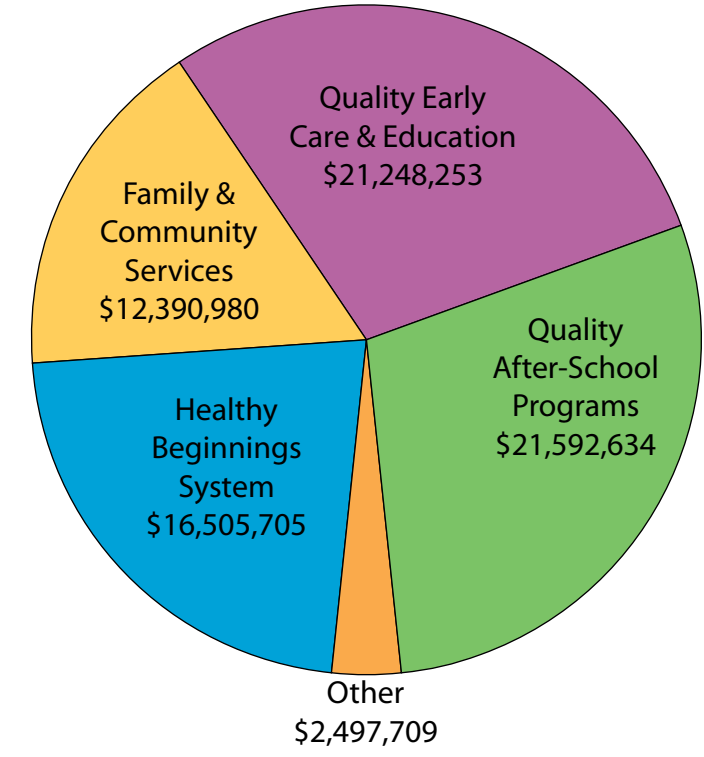
Property Taxes	95,978,470
Interest.....	3,760,515
Grant Income	7,899,167
Miscellaneous.....	19,394
TOTAL REVENUES	\$107,657,546

EXPENDITURES 2007

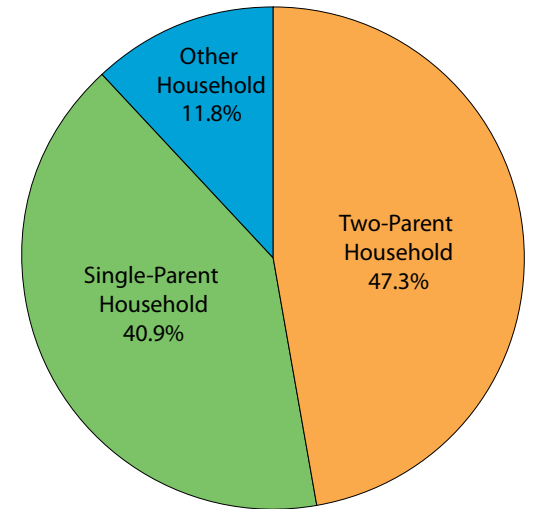
Children's Program Services	74,235,281
Administrative.....	14,354,310
Capital Outlay	16,125,781 *
TOTAL EXPENDITURES.....	\$104,715,372

(*one time)

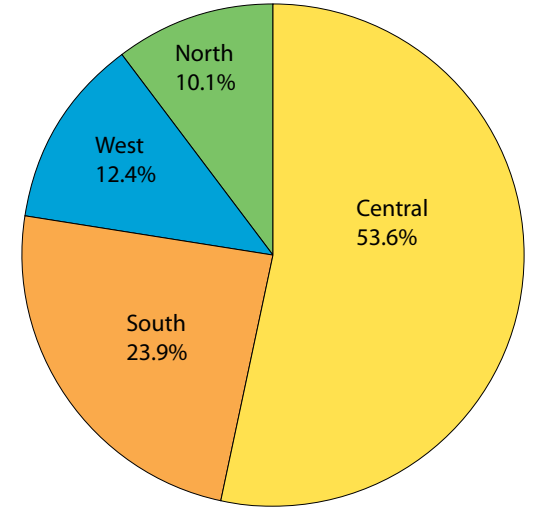
CHILDREN'S PROGRAM SERVICES



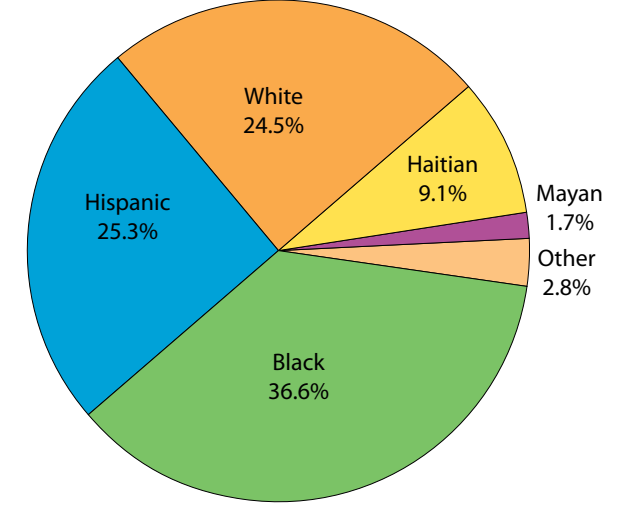
HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION



REGION

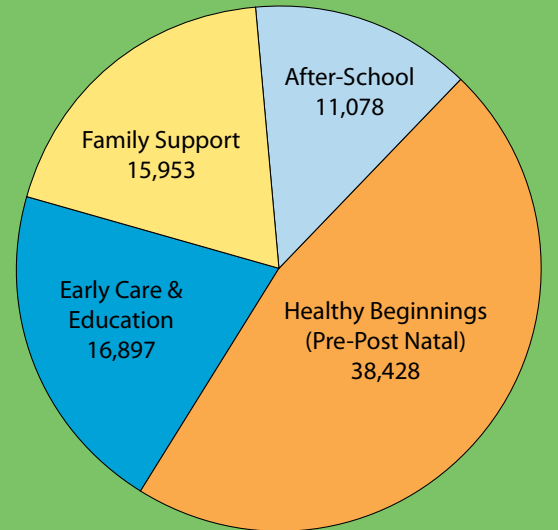


RACE



CSC at a Glance 2006/2007

CHILDREN/FAMILIES SERVED



Total Children/Families Receiving Direct Services: 82,356
 Additional Children/Families Receiving Indirect/Outreach Services: 80,596





EXPECT ...

Wonder: We help thousands of pregnant women, their babies and families every year by connecting them to local health care providers for prenatal and infant screenings and affordable care and services.

Leadership: Our Mentor Center enhances the quality of mentoring programs through training and technical assistance and by recruiting role models across our diverse community.

Answers: Our parenting programs offer essential information throughout the community, so all families get the care and support they need in raising their kids.

Hope: We weave child abuse prevention into all that we do, from teaching parents how to recognize developmental milestones to helping families delve deep into the emotional attachments that connect them.

Connections: We aim to keep kids off the streets and keep neighborhoods united by transforming schools and neighborhood sites into active community centers.

Breakthroughs: We make it our business to ensure poor working families have access to affordable, high-quality child care and after-school programs.

SUCCESS: By investing in children and families in Palm Beach County, children can expect breakthroughs, parents can expect answers and our whole community can expect success.

To learn more, call 561.740.7000
or visit www.cscpbcc.org

