

Healthy Social Emotional Development and Family Support Program

OVERVIEW

The Healthy Social Emotional Development and Family Support (SED) Program is a unique collaboration between Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, Inc. (MBHCI), Partnership for Strong Families (PSF) and the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) using the strengths of each individual organization to enhance early childhood learning experiences, strengthen families and increase school readiness for children ages 0-5.

The SED Program meets families “where they are ” by bringing services and supports to five early learning centers located within several high-risk communities in Alachua County [Small World Daycare and Learning Center (32601); Cuddly Kids Academy (32601); Angel’s Christian Academy (32641); A Child’s Place (32608); Lee’s Preschool (Alachua, 32614)].

CAC hosts trainings for early learning center staff and parents, including Child Abuse Reporting and Prevention and the “No Hit Zone” which promotes safe and calm environments without hitting of any kind. CAC also provides their expertise to facilitate multi-disciplinary staffings for children/families as needed.

MBHCI’s Mental Health Consultants provide on-site observations, assessment and coaching for both early learning center staff and parents, along with individualized, referral-based services and supports designed to optimize child development, mental well-being and readiness for learning.

PSF’s Early Childhood Family Support Facilitators serve families by connecting caregivers with family support services designed to increase protective factors (Concrete Supports, Social Connections, Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development, Nurturing & Attachment, Family Functioning & Resiliency) and decrease risk factors related to child abuse, thus improving overall family outcomes.

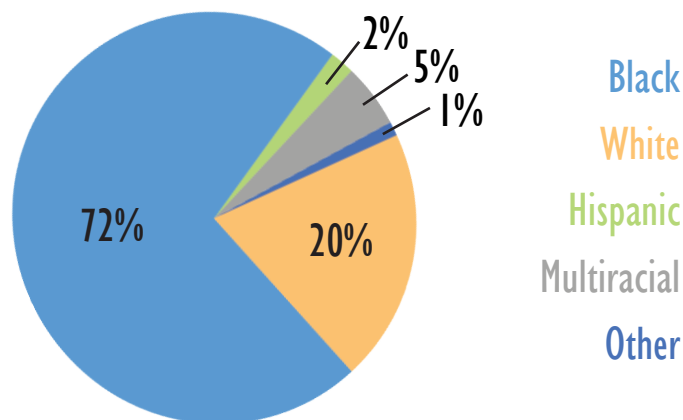
FEB. 1, 2019 - SEPT. 30, 2019

76 children ages 0-5 received on-site Behavioral and/or Mental Health Consultation services including, but not limited to, classroom observations, assessment, consultations and connections to other services or supports.

34 early learning staff received coaching/support related to effective management of classroom behaviors.

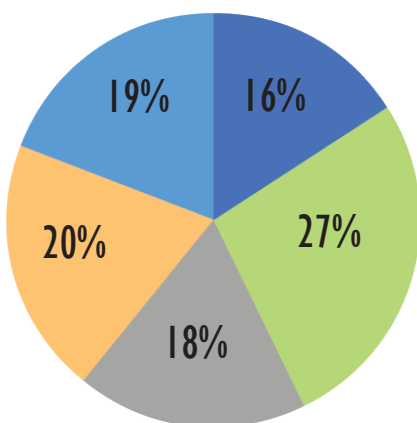
0 children participating in the program have been suspended or expelled due to classroom behaviors.

Children and Families served by Race/Ethnicity



Children and Families receiving Services by Center

Small World
Lee’s Preschool
Angel’s Christian Academy
Cuddly Kids
A Child’s Place



70 families, including 79 caregivers, 95 children ages 0-5 and 35 children ages 6+, benefitted from Family Support Services, such as provision of concrete supports (e.g., food, clothing, car seats), employability skills, housing assistance and connections with community resources (Early Learning Coalition, the Health Department and various early learning and development specialists.)

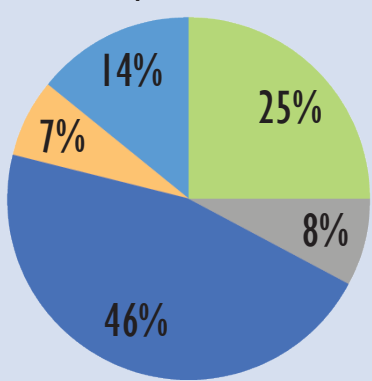
4/5 of participating sites received **Child Abuse Reporting and Prevention Training**; three additional local early learning centers participated in this training at their own request, reaching **76** early learning staff. One *No Hit Zone* implementation training was facilitated for **13** early learning staff. An additional *No Hit Zone* training is scheduled for November 2019.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR SURVEY

Results demonstrate participating families are building protective factors.
Note: The PF Survey does not include a sub-scale for Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development.

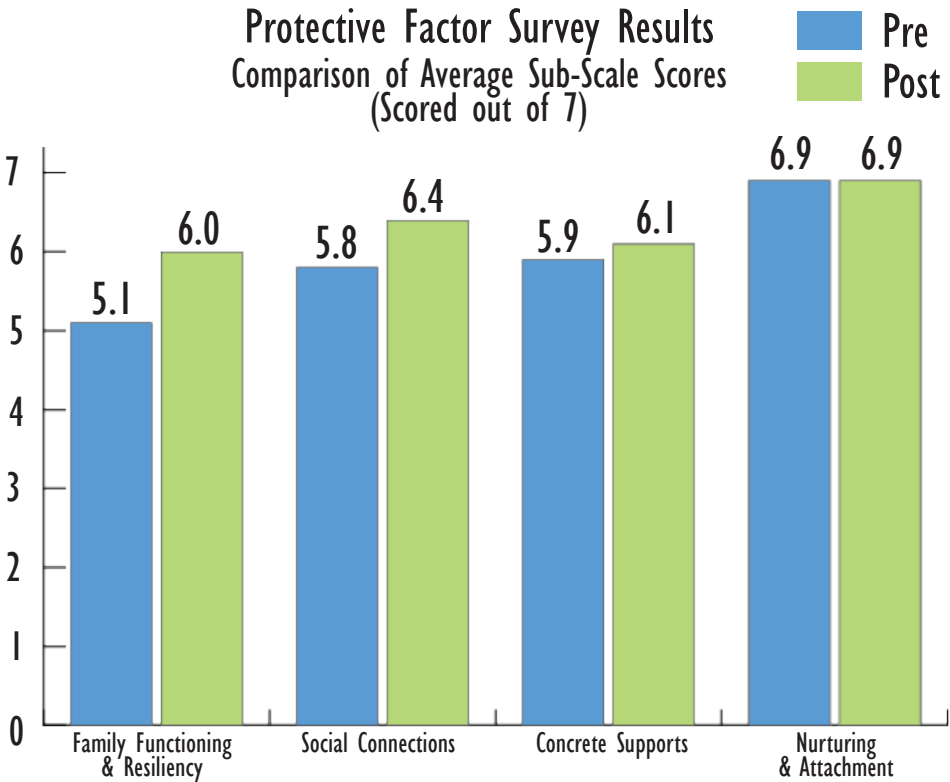
842 unique services/supports were provided to families with the goal of increasing the research-informed caregiver protective factors (PF).

Percent of Services Provided by Protective Factor



Family Functioning & Resiliency
Nurturing & Attachment
Social Connections
Concrete Supports
Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development

Protective Factor Survey Results
Comparison of Average Sub-Scale Scores
(Scored out of 7)

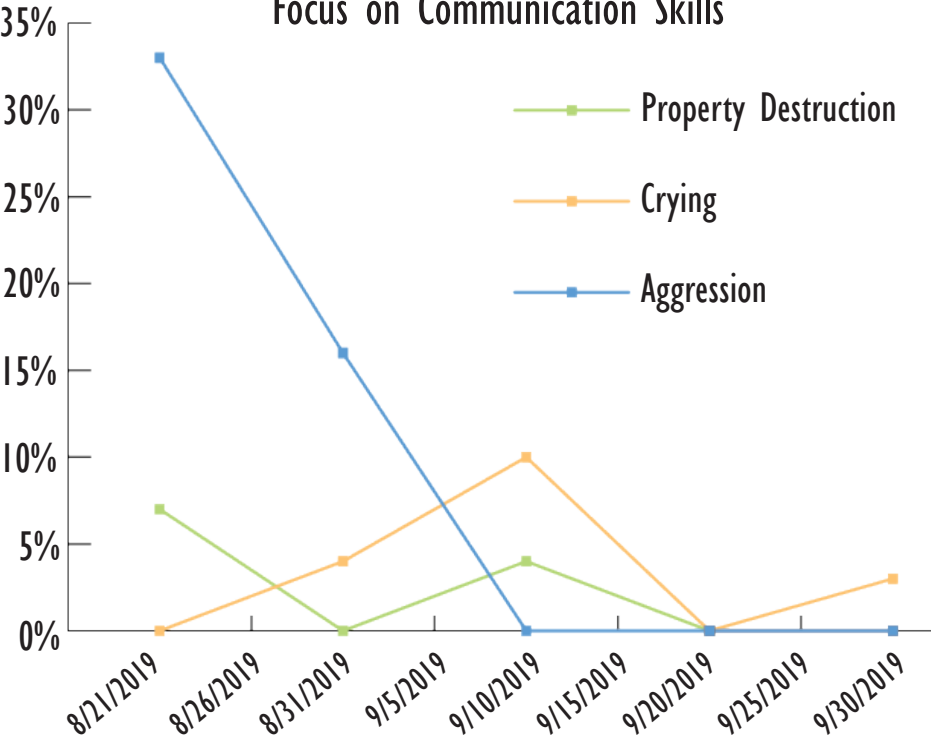


CHILDREN’S FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT RATING SCALE (CFARS) DATA

Of those students still enrolled in the program, **91%** are rated as the “Same” or “Better” with improvements seen in **behavior and interpersonal functioning** when compared to baseline results.

Of those students who have been discharged, **88%** were rated in the “Better” range at the time of discharge with improvements also observed in **behavior and interpersonal functioning**.

Child A: Behavior Observations with Coaching
Focus on Communication Skills



As recorded through classroom observations, children participating in behavioral health services are also showing a decline in negative behaviors, including aggression, prolonged crying and property destruction. Future goals for these children include increasing creative play with peers, minding to peers and developing calming strategies when upset.

Aggregate client survey results demonstrate that **100%** of respondents rated neutral or above:
Confidence in managing difficult behaviors
Ability to engage students in structured classroom activities
Good knowledge of classroom management tools
100% of respondents agreed:
Meridian counselor accessible when needed
Program Partners accessible when needed
100% of respondents would recommend program services to others.

NOTE: Despite teacher’s confidence in managing challenging behaviors, classroom management, and increasing student engagement, observations made using TPOT and TPITOS identify a continued need for coaching best practices in these areas in order to improve outcomes.

SUCCESS STORIES

A family received assistance finding safe and stable housing, including help moving-in and provision of basic furniture and household items.

Assistance was provided to a family through coaching for the parent and teachers, along with tangible items designed to promote self-soothing for the child, who is engaging in self-harming behaviors. The child has a younger sibling under the age of 5 who was at-risk of being removed from his school and the after-school program, but with intervention has maintained in both settings. The team continues to work to engage the mother and provide additional support, as needed.

A mother of six children shared feelings of depression and feeling stuck in her current situation. With the support of program staff and upon the mother being ready, the ECFSF assisted the mother with seeking assistance through Peaceful Paths. With this support, the mother was able to obtain an injunction, receive counseling and successfully relocate with the children after receiving relocation funds. The mother told the ECFSF that the support of the SED Program is what pushed her to get the help her and her family needed.

In partnership with the DOH, our team is helping to meet an identified need for car seats by providing an on-site, car seat event at Lee's Preschool. An additional partnership has been developed with Trinity United Methodist Church/Faith Mission and Gainesville Fire and Rescue to provide car seats for families at other participating sites.

A special event was held for families at Depot Park with a focus on building social connections and overcoming barriers to program participation. Approximately 40 individuals attended the event, including PSF and CAC staff, early learning center staff, parents and children.

LESSONS LEARNED

Program staffing changes and difficulty filling some positions created the need for existing staff to take on more responsibilities. This coming year will include a focus on staff retention, including many opportunities for open communication and cross training.

With a finite number of qualifying children at the five early learning centers, our team is looking for ways to expand our reach to additional children/families beyond those currently served at the five early learning centers.

NEXT STEPS

Create more opportunities for outreach and family engagement activities both within the early learning centers and the community.

Expand to reach more families:

Provide program at one additional site (approved as part of updated contract)

Consider extending services to children over age 5 attending afterschool programs, as funding allows.

TARGET POPULATION

The five participating early learning centers are strategically located within historically underserved communities.

1. Small World Daycare and Learning Center (32601)
2. Cuddly Kids Academy (32601)
3. Angel's Christian Academy (32641)
4. A Child's Place (32608)
5. Lee's Preschool (Alachua, 32614)



PARTNERSHIP FOR
**STRONG
FAMILIES**

