



# CHILDREN'S SERVICES COUNCIL OF Palm Beach County



## Fast Facts

### ORIGIN

In the 1980s, services for Palm Beach County's children were scattered, did not focus on prevention and did not demonstrate accountability or effectiveness. Through the efforts of forward-thinking state and local lawmakers and engaged residents, the state legislature approved a special act allowing counties the option to levy a property tax in order to provide a comprehensive prevention and early intervention system of care for all children. Palm Beach County voters overwhelmingly approved this option and launched the Children's Services Council in 1986.

### GOALS

The Council strives to ensure that Palm Beach County children:

- Are born healthy
- Are safe from abuse and neglect
- Are ready for school
- Have access to quality afterschool and summer programs

### KEY STRATEGIES

1. Facilitate access to prenatal and inter-conception care.
2. Promote child and maternal health and wellness.
3. Promote positive alternatives to early childbearing among teens.
4. Address maternal depression, trauma, toxic stress and mental health concerns.
5. Enhance parenting skills and knowledge of child development and promote positive relationships.
6. Address child developmental concerns.
7. Promote physical, cognitive, social and emotional competence and development among young children.
8. Promote family and early childhood literacy.
9. Expand access to quality early care and education programs.
10. Provide access to quality out-of-school, afterschool and summer programs.

### LEAD AGENCY

Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County

### MISSION

To enhance the lives of children and their families and to enable them to attain their full potential by providing a unified context within which children's needs can be identified and resolved by all members of the community. To achieve its mission, the Council will plan, develop, fund and evaluate programs and promote public policies that benefit Palm Beach County's children and families.

### INITIATIVE BUDGET

\$110.5 Program Services Budget (FY 2015-16); Agency Budget \$124.5 million (FY 2015-16)

### START DATE

1986

### GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Palm Beach County, FL

### KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 1,359,074 (2014 ACS)	Percent of Newborns at Low Birth Weight 8.2% (2013, FL Dept. of Health)
Population Under 5 70,672 (2014 ACS)	Percent of Children in Food-Insecure Households 23.6% (2013, Feeding America)
Percent of Children in Poverty 22.2% (2014 ACS)	

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## INNOVATION OF NOTE

**BRIDGES** is a place-based family and community engagement initiative to ensure that children are healthy, safe, ready for school and on grade level at the end of third grade. Started by the Council in 2010, there are now 10 locations established in low-income neighborhoods. Strategies include:

- Building on the strengths of family relationships through formal and informal engagement
- Strengthening parental capacity and confidence
- Creating platforms for parent leadership
- Engaging the broader community
- Partnering to provide individualized, culturally responsive, flexible and relevant coordination of services for each family
- Interventions based on the goals and needs identified by the family

### + EARLY CHILDHOOD-LINC

An initiative of the Center for the Study of Social Policy, **Early Childhood-LINC** (Learning and Innovation Network for Communities) is developed by and for communities. Our mission is to support families and improve results for young children in communities across the country with a focus on accelerating the development of effective, integrated, local early childhood systems.

## MEASURES OF PROGRESS

### APPROACH

The Children's Services Council uses four key indicators in its evaluations: 1) percent of babies born low birth weight; 2) percent of preterm births; 3) percent of verified abuse and neglect for children ages birth to five; and 4) percent of children ready for kindergarten. Each indicator is addressed from four guiding questions:

- How are we doing compared to previous years?
- How are we doing compared to our expectations?
- How are we doing compared to others?
- What is our Return on Investment (ROI)?

### INDICATORS

- In 2014, birth outcomes for babies born to families receiving services from CSC-funded programs were better than a comparison group:
  - 7.2 percent of babies from families receiving CSC-funded services were born low birthweight, compared to 8.7 percent of a match group.
  - 12.6 percent of babies from families receiving CSC-funded services were born preterm, compared to 14.1 percent of a match group
- In Palm Beach County, 70.5 percent of children were deemed ready for kindergarten. For children who received services from CSC-funded programs, 73.3 percent were deemed ready. For children in a comparison group, 57.1 percent were deemed ready.

## STRUCTURE & LEADERSHIP

Governance of Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County consists of a 10-member board. Five are gubernatorial appointees, and they serve staggered four-year terms. Five others serve by virtue of their positions in other bodies, and they are: Palm Beach County School Superintendent, Southeast Florida Regional Director of the Department of Children and Families, a school board member selected annually by the school board, a county commissioner selected annually by the county commission and a juvenile court judge selected annually by the Chief Judge for Palm Beach County Circuit Court.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Community members and parents are involved through focus groups, community needs assessment, and as members of the Early Childhood Cabinet. Additionally, through the BRIDGES, a Community Consortium comprised of neighborhood residents directs activities aimed at capacity building and improving the neighborhood's birth, safety and school-readiness outcomes.

## FINANCING

The Council is empowered to set a tax rate applicable to all county residential and business property. It has lowered the tax rate for the past five years. In the current year, this tax generates about 83 percent of the Council's \$124.5 million budget. Another five percent is grants. About 12 percent is brought forward from a robust reserve fund, built up over 27 years to allow for innovation, new programs and system refinement. Nearly 89 percent of the total budget goes to direct services for children and families and supports for programs.