



APRIL 2021 SUMMARY OF BOARD PRIORITY ACTIONS

On 2/25/2021, the board of directors held a strategic board retreat, with progress updates and small group discussions about future opportunities for early childhood, school-age youth and family supports. This report summarizes the key takeaway actions assembled from board discussions. The breakout session notes for each topic area are included on pages 4-9. Actions are grouped in three status categories:

1. **Continue:** These areas where the board noted support for continuing currently budgeted priorities and programs are shown on page 1.
2. **New/Funding Neutral:** These policy-related actions that involve Trust community partners' coordination, collaboration, and updates to funding guidelines and priorities are shown on page 2.
3. **New-Expand/Requiring Additional Funding:** These priorities involving expansion of current and launching of new activities are shown on page 3.

Topic Area	Status	Actions & Notes	Timing
Cross-cutting	CONTINUE	Promotion of program safety through access to and distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) Currently budgeted; see April reso for continuation of past emergency expenditures.	Immediate
Cross-cutting	CONTINUE	Investments in data & analytics to support strategic planning Currently budgeted in IT and Research/Evaluation.	Ongoing
Early childhood	CONTINUE	Incentivizing prenatal-2 services Currently imbedded in Quality Improvement System (QIS) policy/program requirements, as well as set as a priority in current Early Childhood Community Research Partnership RFP.	Ongoing
Early childhood	CONTINUE	Thrive by 5 QIS provider & teacher supports Currently budgeted	Ongoing
Early childhood	CONTINUE	High-quality early care & education slots Currently budgeted	Ongoing
Early childhood	CONTINUE	Early developmental screening, assessment & intervention services Currently budgeted	Ongoing
Early childhood	CONTINUE	Early childhood community research Currently budgeted	Ongoing
School-age	CONTINUE	Funding for participant transportation to/from youth development programs Ensure provider awareness of this policy/allowance of expenses in budget guidelines.	Ongoing
Family support	CONTINUE	Parenting education and supports Currently budgeted	Ongoing
Family support	CONTINUE	Public benefits enrollment supports to address basic needs Currently budgeted	Ongoing

Topic Area	Status	Actions & Notes	Timing
Cross-cutting	NEW/ FUNDING NEUTRAL	Advocate to safely increase group size for early childhood and youth programs to align with community COVID response and CDC guidelines Policy issue, worked with mayor's office to achieve needed updates.	Immediate
Cross-cutting	NEW/ FUNDING NEUTRAL	Address long-term impact of remote learning on children (early childhood & school-age) Leverage existing programs and coordinate with the school system and other community partners.	Immediate
Early childhood	NEW/ FUNDING NEUTRAL	Prioritize child care inclusion for children with disabilities Policy issue, Early Learning Coalition (ELC) recently increased rates for children with disabilities to incentivize services for this population, and Children's Trust child care scholarships match the ELC rates.	Immediate
Early childhood	NEW/ FUNDING NEUTRAL	Expand available child care hours of operation Revisit status of existing providers with extended hours based on initial review from 2019 that resulted in Miami Dade County adding funding to their budget for extended hours in impoverished neighborhoods. Continue to study this ongoing need. Policy consideration for piloting within Thrive by 5 QIS.	Immediate
School-age	NEW/ FUNDING NEUTRAL	Add native language supports as enrichment activities in youth development programs Program guidelines update for youth development programs to encourage native language enrichment components in next RFP funding cycle.	Next funding cycle, 2023
Family support	NEW/ FUNDING NEUTRAL	Ensure parenting and therapeutic evidence-based programs (EBPs) in upcoming solicitations include a prenatal-2/early childhood focus , as well as support parent mental health/trauma/social-emotional wellness (SEW) Program guidelines update for parenting/family strengthening programs to encourage prenatal-2 models and support parent mental health in next funding cycle.	Next funding cycle, 2023

Topic Area	Status	Actions & Notes	Timing	Additional Funding Needed		
				FY22	FY23	FY24
Early childhood	EXPAND	Book Club membership growth and customize content in Haitian Creole Consider options to leverage resources through sponsorship packages, monetizing/selling model to others.	Immediate	\$\$	\$\$	\$\$
Cross-cutting	NEW	Expand Trust program staff professional development regarding mental health, trauma and SEW Building upon what we have currently budgeted in program and professional development funding, develop a comprehensive planning and implementation framework (see May reso), to be fully implemented in later years.	Immediate	\$	\$	\$
Cross-cutting	NEW	Racial equity, diversity and inclusion (REDI) plan involving board, staff, providers and community Currently budgeted REDI consultant work with Trust board and staff will be expanded to community in future fiscal years; this will intersect with the 2030 Racial Equity Challenge Kellogg Foundation grant if received.	Immediate	\$	\$	\$
Family support	EXPAND	Expand, re-brand and maintain web content and functionality for parents/caregivers and children Intersects with overall website development currently being solicited through a request for qualifications (RFQ).	Immediate	\$	\$	\$
Family support	EXPAND	Expand Family and Neighborhood Support Partnerships to serve more populations in need as described in notes on page 8 Will utilize IT budget for moderate investment in year leading up to new funding cycle to secure single referral platform. Add to the next 5-year funding cycle, beginning FY 22-23.	Next funding cycle, 2022	--	\$\$\$	\$\$\$
School-age	NEW	Minimum wage/living wage impact analysis on direct Trust-funded programs To be determined through further study, policy change.	Gradual increase 2022 (\$10/hr) to 2026 (\$15/hr)	--	\$	\$\$
Early childhood	NEW	Minimum wage/living wage impact analysis on early learning child care programs (not directly funded by The Trust, but supported through Thrive by 5 QIS) To be determined through further study, policy change.		--	\$\$	\$\$\$
School-age	EXPAND	Expand school health services using telehealth Engage the board's ad hoc health committee for guidance. Will likely require additional expenses in the next funding cycle.	Next funding cycle, 2024	--	--	\$\$\$

\$ = < \$1 million \$\$ = \$1-3 million \$\$\$ = \$ >3 million

EARLY CHILDHOOD BREAKOUT NOTES (bold items were mentioned in multiple groups)

Expand high-quality child care capacity to serve more high-need children and families.

- School readiness numbers have been on the rise and expected to continue that trend.
- **Continue to build on Thrive by 5 quality improvement system (QIS).**
- **Continue funding educator scholarships/ongoing professional development** to ensure a well-trained cadre of professionals, early learning teachers with higher educational attainment (college credit certifications, associate degrees, national certifications).
- **Explore avenues to incentivize inclusion.**
- **Expand traditional hours for high-quality child care** to support family economic self-sufficiency, enabling parents to access work (e.g., gig economy, multiple jobs). This will reduce child poverty and risk for long-term trauma.
- Expand prenatal and birth to two programs.

Conduct a budget analysis to determine the impact of Florida's minimum wage constitutional amendment passage on early childhood education program funding and quality.

- Minimum wage will have a big impact on our providers. Need to find strategies so as not to sacrifice quality.
- Child care centers will need more funding to afford the increases in staff pay and needs for advanced professional development. Risk of providers passing the increased cost on to families.
- Parents will have higher expectations for high-quality programs.
- Need to invest in current early learning educators to improve skills/knowledge to meet educational requirements rather than displace them.

Continue Book Club membership growth, particularly in priority ZIP codes.

- Florida legislature is looking at a state-wide Book Club bill and using our Book Club as the model.
- Work to reduce administrative costs through partnerships and collaboration that seek major sponsorships and monetize the model to sell to others.

Support native language development.

- **Expand Book Club content to increase availability of materials in Haitian Creole or French for Haitian population.** Parent guides and interaction tips may be more useful in Creole rather than creole words on a book page.
- For early learners who have a first language other than English, consider ways to fund strategies to develop native language literacy, since early childhood is a critical period for language acquisition.
- Racial-ethnic bias and multilingualism: REDI (racial equity, diversity & inclusion) lens implies elevating cultural heritage and primary languages.

Social emotional, psychological and physical health early interventions.

- Early childhood research demonstration projects are critical to understand the needs and best practices of early childhood interventions. This allows a community agency to contribute to research and evidence while getting a clearer and more updated picture of community needs.
- Family strengthening programs should include pre/peri-natal, infant/toddler program models.
- Support early learning centers to better address developmental delays and reduce disparities. Alignment with REDI as some communities are disproportionately affected by developmental delays. Offer training for behavioral analysts/technicians to support children in early learning programs.
- Support children and families in relation to the increase of children on the autism spectrum and other developmental disabilities.
- Invest in foundational years to prevent gaps from expanding if another crisis arrives. Early Intervention programs and focus on children with special needs.

- No intervention is too early (expand prenatal-2 focus): Prevention is best! Investment in early childhood saves money and prevents crime. Take a strengths-based approach and not risk avoidance.

Supporting parents to benefit children.

- Social-emotional, psychosocial and psychological services for children but also PARENTS.
- Increasing evidence in the literature and practice linking parent mental health to child well-being and vice versa.
- Provide information and resources for parents to support child development and family functioning, as well as awareness of resources such as Trust-funded programs.

COVID-19 pandemic-related concerns.

- **Look at long-term effects of remote learning on children, especially for those who began with learning challenges.** Gaps have been magnified due to COVID. Educational needs as well as developmental milestones related to social-emotional learning.
- Children learning remotely are losing more ground than students that are attending the schoolhouse. How do we support them?
- Undetermined number of children have fallen off the radar with no ties to the public school system. How to track them and get them re-engaged?
- Leveraging technology and at-home resources to provide supports that address differences in parent education and access to supplemental learning resources.
- Learning pods (pending licensing and funding) can be an innovative solution for foster care youth who need to be in school but have limited options due to school district class size restrictions and medical conditions. This may be a useful model even after the pandemic and to meet additional needs not just educational.
- Possible decline in adult physical health has implications for parent-child interactions and child development. Long-term health concerns from contracting the virus, gap in medical preventative care and prevalence of mental health challenges may be affecting the health of key adults in a child's life.
- Increased impact of children being exposed to domestic and family violence, maltreatment, so need therapeutic supports in place. How do we support families holistically?
- Impact on teacher social-emotional health, retention and job satisfaction.
- Need to lift restrictions on group size for early learning classrooms that is keeping multiple centers and schools from reopening. It is currently at 12. Mayor is addressing this issue.
- Should we advocate for a longer school year to make up for lost time?

SCHOOL-AGE YOUTH BREAKOUT NOTES (bold items were mentioned in multiple groups)

Conduct a budget analysis to determine the impact of Florida's minimum wage constitutional amendment passage, including how to tie expected wage increases to higher quality frontline program delivery.

- This is not a stand-alone issue. It will impact other sectors/areas of funding as well.
- **The Trust should make a commitment to say no entry level staff should receive less than a living wage.** Funded agencies should bring in entry-level staff at living wage based on the Miami-Dade County living wage ordinance. The goal is to train and keep employees, and if you do not pay a living wage, employees will work at another agency that is paying more. Even at \$15/hour, Miami-Dade rent is not affordable, which is why we are seeing so many people becoming homeless. If we believe children are the future, then the people who educate them should also be a priority in terms of salary and professional development.
- Quality versus quantity issue. Unsure if we will be able to tie the wage increase to quality versus maintaining currently required levels of quality, which are already higher than minimal licensing standards.
- Do we have status of provider pay? Staff reported preliminary salary reviews show youth development programs have the highest number of lower-paid/frontline staff due to minimal qualifications required.
- Programs may let go of personnel. Need to maintain programming quality ratios.
- We need to better understand how it affects offering the same number of slots, but we may not be able to rely on millage rate necessarily to do that.
- Also need to connect this effort to equity and bring in more staff/role models who look like the children being served. Representation matters: example given of the "Call Me MISTER" initiative to build the next generation of African American male teachers.

Continued provider staff professional development (PD) and supports, based upon current practices and the need to strengthen mental health, trauma and social-emotional well-being (SEW).

- **May be able to lower costs for PD using learning in virtual environments.**
- **Increase PD support for creating nurturing/supportive relationships and environments within after-school care.**
- **More PD around methods/strategies to identify and address trauma, mental health and SEW needs in children and their caregivers/families, and also in care providers and teachers.** All been affected by the past year's pandemic. Self-care is important. Provider staff are the bridge to families, and we need to make sure they can give families what they need to cope.
- **PD should also focus on resiliency to maintain SEW. Need to balance a strengths-based approach while supporting challenges/deficits.**
- Continue focus on preventing/reducing the impact of ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences), especially in the context of pandemic-related stressors on children, families and program staff. **Concerns about increased rates of murder, suicide, domestic violence.** Trauma in caregivers impacts children; address the issues of caregiver stress and trauma. Children and parents are suffering, particularly those challenged in their environment. Need to understand how much trauma effects overall community.
- **Concern over lack of supply of licensed professionals to assist in mitigating trauma, combined with reluctance in help-seeking. Leverage telehealth/technology solutions** for supporting mental health, while also minimizing "Zoom fatigue" by ensuring quality content (for mental health services and PD).
- Survey providers' technology capacity and needs, especially smaller agencies. Build capacity using technology. Consider purchasing software applications for agencies and helping them leverage it to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Offer race, equity, diversity and inclusion (REDI) training across The Trust's ecosystem (board, staff, providers, community).

- **Focus on REDI is critical, as it relates to all aspects of our work. Should be part of core training for providers, staff & board.**
- **Extend REDI, SEW, mental health/trauma PD opportunities to board participation at least once a year.**

- This can uplift our community. Require programs/staff attend training/certification. Learned through board Ad Hoc Committee that training is important for increasing awareness. Continue these efforts at board and staff levels, modeling values that we want to see.
- Need dedicated, high-quality trainers/resources, which may be expensive. Makes sense to centrally fund this for all providers.
- Address challenges in institutional and structural racism in our society that create challenges for families. Ensure providers are not bringing a lens of needing to “fix” their participants, but instead adopt a lens of cultural humility, support and joining.
- Board composition should reflect community’s diversity. Concern over current underrepresentation of Hispanics among board. *(NOTE: In most recent board demographics survey, 11 of 30 board respondents (37%) reported being Hispanic/Latinx, while in 2019 64% of children in Miami-Dade were Hispanic)*

Support native language development.

- Support for children whose native language is other than English to continue to develop their native language and be literate in this language. Social justice issue, part of culture. Advocate equitable access to current dual language programs.

Reimagine our comprehensive school health delivery to enable expansion to more schools through leveraging technology and telehealth resources.

- **Health is a foundational need that is critical to academic success. School health and increasing access via telehealth is an important equity issue.**
- **Assess current services, telehealth expansion/implementation needs** (ex., infrastructure, equipment, connectivity for schools and for families) to serve more high-need areas/schools.
- Use existing infrastructure, leverage partnerships. Utilize telehealth that exists between the schools to expand those programs without adding cost.
- **Also need to focus on non-school-age children.** Look into leveraging partnerships with county and others.

Community violence/safety continues to be an issue in some neighborhoods. Need to fund safe transportation to and from after-school and summer programs. Families and kids do not feel it is safe to walk to school/youth programs.

Support funding to assist families to increase involvement in organized/competitive sports, which require resources but may also offer opportunities for exposure to wider peer groups and college scholarships.

Increase support for opportunities in the arts. Public school art programs are not free; they often involve significant fees. Can we assist with these fees?

Can we consider serving kids experiencing homelessness/transitioning out of temporary, youth shelter beyond age 18? What type of safety net support can we provide to those kids if they are not in foster care and do not have a documented disability?

COVID-19 pandemic-related concerns.

- Long term effects of pandemic on children’s learning. Potentially provide supports for learning gaps due to lack of resources, other challenges.
- Increased need for tutoring after school especially for students who have not been engaged by online learning.

FAMILY SUPPORTS BREAKOUT NOTES (bold items were mentioned in multiple groups)

Expand funding to family and neighborhood support partnership (FNSP) initiative to support more populations in need. FNSP promotes positive childhood experiences, builds family and youth strengths and relationships, and also supports basic needs, so that children and families will achieve better outcomes.

Current FNSPs:

- **Children exposed to family conflict/domestic violence**
- *Children of incarcerated parents*
- **Families living with significant disabilities**
- **Gay, lesbian, bisexual, or questioning (GLBTQ) youth**
- **Youth identifying as transgender**
- *Unaccompanied immigrant minors*

- **Youth involved in the child welfare system**

- *23 identified high-need neighborhoods*

Potential new populations of need:

- **Families experiencing homelessness**
- **Youth affected by human trafficking**
- **High-ability or gifted students who lack enrichment opportunities and economic resources**

- Identify and talk more about strengths. Use a strengths-based lens.
- Use a family-focused approach to services, providing what each individual family identifies as their needs.
- **Importance of leveraging public and private funder partnerships and coordinating with existing initiatives to address complex issues/achieve collective impact**, particularly for areas that are not a major investment area. Trust's limited funding cannot be all things to all issues. Bringing Trust services in to complement other specialized services (e.g., support after-school care within a homeless shelter versus funding the entire shelter). Be strategic to comprehensively address families' needs.
- Ensure the identified high-need neighborhoods include the south part of the county, with a focus on supports for the migrant community.
- **Continue with major focus on supporting children and youth with disabilities and their families.** Recognize that parents need support, psychological services.
- **Continue support for youth in shelter aging out of foster care.**
- **Continue support for families involved with child welfare to prevent out of home placement.**
- Continue support for LGBTQ youth focused on suicide prevention through mental health supports and addressing bullying (in schools and homes). Transgender children and youth need customized supports.
- Expand definition to "youth affected by sexual trauma and human trafficking," rather than only human trafficking. Invest in treatment for these kids and make this part of the regular funding cycle.
- **Identify and support gifted/talented students in need (e.g., youth in foster care, very low income).** Provide support to build on strengths, increase potential for these children. Consider pre-service teachers/education students as resources to support enrichment opportunities for gifted students.
- Families experiencing homelessness have a myriad of needs and vulnerabilities (e.g., family violence, trauma, food insecurity, disabilities) requiring comprehensive social-emotional, health and educational supports to thrive.
- Support for families/parents of youth offenders to prevent reoffending and support rehabilitation. Both prevention and intervention are needed. Language and cultural barriers need to be addressed. REDI could support this with preventive education about how to interact with the school, the church, and the criminal justice system.
- Parent-focused supports for children who have parents with significant mental health, trauma and/or substance abuse issues.

Continue investments in parenting education and supports.

- Early screening and education on how best to support their children.
- Prevention to ideally eliminate the need for the child welfare system. Parents don't want to have children removed and taken care of by the state. Help the families and keep kids in their homes.
- Educate families in love, compassion, understanding for their children; strategies for success to help them thrive.
- Provide information and resources for families to support child development and family functioning, as well as awareness of resources such as Trust-funded programs.

Invest in a single referral platform with shared community resources to increase continuity of care and service coordination.

Buffer economic impacts on children.

- Need to address hunger, food insecurity, food deserts. These are basic needs that are foundational and impact many other areas.
- Pandemic job loss has affected families' way of living, unpaid medical bills, housing instability, economic limitations.

COVID-19 pandemic-related concerns.

- Help the most vulnerable parents address needs arising from the pandemic through a holistic view of education, social-emotional, health and economic needs. Parents may have been impacted economically and on verge of homelessness.

Enhance the use of data and analytics in strategic planning for our finite resources.

- What resources are available or should be leveraged to identify gaps in services and/or investments that will have the greatest impact?
- Are we collecting longitudinal data on Trust participants attending services since early childhood through transition to adulthood? Do programs track long-term outcomes for participants attending over time?
- Look at the data through an equity lens. This is extremely important to identifying and averting a school-to-prison pipeline.

Encourage programs to reduce polarization created by social media and the potential long-term impact it may have on children and parents.