

## Early Childhood Health Services

**Vision services** Ocular health program that provides comprehensive eye exams and prescription eyeglasses to eligible children enrolled in Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Head Start and Early Head Start programs. A primary goal is the early detection of vision impairments and the support of access to vision care. Services are delivered through mobile clinics and vouchers for free eye exams and eyeglasses from community optometrists.

**Oral health services** An oral health education and preventive services program serving un-/underinsured preschool and elementary aged children attending Trust-affiliated early child care, after-school and summer programs. Services are provided at program sites and include oral health education and counseling, screening for oral diseases, fluoride varnish application, dental sealants and referral for connection to/follow-up with a dental professional for comprehensive continuity of care and any needed restorative services.

**Infant and early childhood mental health consultation** Supports that improve children's social-emotional well-being and decrease challenging behaviors by



building the capacity of early childhood educators, directors, parents and other caregivers to support children's social-emotional health. Early childhood mental health consultation is a preventative intervention that places mental health consultants in early childhood settings to improve social-emotional health in programs and classrooms. Child- and family-specific consultation is also available to address individual needs; all services are provided countywide in a culturally responsive manner.



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THE CHILDREN'S TRUST  
**Thrive**  
by 5

**Investments  
Overview**

# A Roadmap for Our Children to Thrive by 5

The Children's Trust recognizes the importance of early brain development and its impact on later life success. As a result, we have invested in an array of strategies to support young children's physical, cognitive, social and emotional readiness for starting school. Thrive by 5 aims to coordinate a continuum of service supports that include:

## Early Intervention

**Specialized autism evaluations** Diagnostic evaluations for children ages 2-5 years who present with behaviors that suggest they may have an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Children are referred by Miami-Dade County Public Schools or Early Steps, and receive thorough evaluations by highly specialized, experienced clinicians. Families receive detailed feedback of their child's test results, a diagnosis and recommended interventions, as well as connections to specialized school and intervention services.

**Short-term early intervention services** Assessment, care coordination and early intervention services for children ages birth-5 years who do not meet eligibility requirements for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Parts B/C, but have mild developmental delays that can benefit from intervention; children are

referred from Early Steps and Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS). Services include short-term speech/language, occupational, behavioral and/or developmental intervention in the child's home, early care and education program or provider's office.

**Early childhood summer programs for children with disabilities** Summer programs for young children with disabilities ages birth-5 years that promote school readiness through the development of literacy and math, motor and social-emotional skills. These programs fill a gap in services during the summer months for children who receive school-year early intervention and special education programming. Some also offer parenting workshops and parent-child interaction therapy, which teaches participants how to support their child's development, offer appropriate discipline and minimize stress.

## Early childhood research demonstration projects

Research projects that expand the reach and testing of promising early childhood practices in Miami-Dade County's high-need areas/populations, conducted in part through establishing partnerships with community organizations that possess a clear connection to early childhood outcomes and school readiness.

## Early Learning Quality Improvement System

A new model to level the playing field for infant and toddler care in low-income neighborhoods. It will support improved program quality and teacher practices by offering on-site coaching, teacher scholarships, teacher salary supplements, tiered payment differentials and child scholarships. These incentives have been proven to encourage programs to improve and sustain their delivery of high-quality early learning services, which impacts young children's readiness to enter school.

## Parenting & Home Visiting Services

Evidence-based programs – implemented in homes, pediatric offices and other community settings – offer individual learning and skills-building for parents of infants and young children, as well as the chance to connect with and support one another in groups. Programs focus on nurturing parent-child relationships, language-rich environments, age-appropriate child development, behavior management, child health, safety and injury prevention. Additionally, through the use of developmental screenings, parents gain understanding of developmental milestones and are connected to resources and further assessment if needed.

## Early Literacy Supports

**Reach Out and Read** Gives young children a foundation for success by incorporating books into pediatric care and encouraging families to read aloud together. Medical providers give books to children at more than 10 well-child visits from infancy until they start school. More importantly, they encourage families to read aloud and engage with their infants, toddlers and preschoolers every day. Books in English, Spanish and Haitian-Creole are provided at health care sites across the county.

**Read to Learn Book Club** Distributes free books countywide to 3-year-old children residing in Miami-Dade in English or Spanish; specialty book packets in Haitian Creole are available upon request. Books are mailed to the child's home along with a guide for parents containing instructions on how to maximize learning with each book. The program supports children's language development, cognitive development and developing literacy, and also offers early literacy workshops to families of preschool age children.



**Read to Learn Books for Free** Designed to ensure that children and youth in disadvantaged communities have access to books by maintaining community book shelves throughout the county. The program, targeting children ages birth-8 years, maintains 65 strategically placed bookshelves at public sites to provide access to age-appropriate books for children that they can read while on site – and take home with them when they leave to start their own library at home.

**Summer Reading Explorers** Helps rising kindergarten, first, and second graders improve their reading skills. Students reading at or below reading level receive small-group reading tutoring services provided by certified teachers. The program is tailored to each child's reading ability, is both structured and interactive, and follows an evidence-based reading curriculum. Services are delivered in selected Children's Trust funded summer programs and early childhood education programs in our quality improvement system. Includes parent school readiness workshops and book giveaways.

