



**JACK & JILL
CENTER**

PROPOSAL

*Bringing Quality Education and Family Support Services
to High Need Children and Families in Broward County*



SUBMITTED TO:

Contact Name

Foundation

Address

SUBMITTED BY:

Lauren Bernstein, Grants Manager

Jack & Jill Center

1315 W. Broward Boulevard

Fort Lauderdale, FL 33312

GRANT AMOUNT REQUESTED: \$ _____

PROGRAM: **Early Education Program**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our mission is to strengthen children and families through innovative education, supportive programming, and community engagement.

Jack & Jill Center is the oldest nonprofit provider of early childhood education in Broward County. It was established in 1942 by the Junior League of Greater Fort Lauderdale, originally to provide childcare for women entering the workforce as their husbands fought in World War II. Today, 80 years later, Jack & Jill Center is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) community-based organization that provides comprehensive, holistic, wraparound support services to children of high-need parents who work or attend school in order to improve their well-being and quality of life. To date, Jack & Jill Center has served nearly 20,000 children and families.

Our Early Education Program provides quality, year-round early childhood education focusing on enabling children to grow emotionally, physically, and socially in a safe, caring environment using age-appropriate methods for cognitive growth. Jack & Jill Center is one of only two NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) accredited centers in Fort Lauderdale. Research has long documented the positive outcomes of high-quality early childhood education, including readiness for school, greater academic achievement, high rates of high school and college completion, lower rates of incarceration, and higher incomes.

Jack & Jill Center respectfully requests a grant in the amount of \$__ from the [Name of Foundation] to support our mission to strengthen children and families through innovative education, supportive programming, and community engagement. We invite you to partner with us as we continue in our mission to serve disadvantaged children and families in Broward County.

THE VALUE OF INVESTING IN EARLY LEARNING

Extensive research confirms that preschool plays a pivotal role in the academic success of underserved children. In low-income communities, the scarcity of quality early childhood education poses a significant challenge, as many children enter kindergarten ill-equipped to compete with their more privileged peers. They face a deficit in language and social skills right from the start, creating an uphill battle – a cycle that often remains unbroken due to the lack of guidance for their parents. However, by providing high-quality early childhood education, we can empower all children to start on equal footing and achieve lasting success. Numerous studies consistently demonstrate the numerous benefits of early school enrollment, such as lifelong academic accomplishments, increased graduation rates, reduced delinquency rates, and a decreased need for special education services. Renowned economist James Heckman emphasizes that community investing in quality preschool programs yields a remarkable 7-10% return per year over a child's lifetime.

The Perry Preschool Study stands as a comprehensive testament to the long-term impacts of early education, as it evaluated individuals at the age of 40. Remarkably, the study's findings reveal that those who had the opportunity to attend preschool programs experienced higher earnings, exhibited

greater employment rates, demonstrated a reduced likelihood of engaging in criminal activities, and were more likely to have successfully graduated from high school compared to their peers who lacked access to preschool education.

Furthermore, a noteworthy 2004 study conducted by the Economic Policy Institute highlights the substantial returns that taxpayers can expect from investing in quality child care and education. For every dollar invested, taxpayers can recoup more than \$2.50, while simultaneously benefiting the families involved.

STATEMENT OF NEED

The data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 American Community Survey reveals a sobering reality: in Broward County, a staggering 255,000 individuals currently live below the federal poverty line. Out of the total of 694,980 households in Broward County, an alarming 50% find themselves residing at or below the Asset Limited, Income Constrained Employed (ALICE) threshold, as outlined in the United Way's 2020 ALICE Report update.

Within this context, it is crucial to recognize the unique circumstances faced by the families at Jack & Jill Center. The center primarily serves single working mothers, who, despite their determination and effort, find themselves within 175% of the poverty level, with a median income of \$28,500. These resilient families raise more than one child, a challenging feat when juxtaposed with the stark contrast of the annual Household Survival Budget of \$69,516, an amount necessary for an average Florida family of four to make ends meet (ALICE Report 2020).

It is worth highlighting that a significant number of our families hail from three specific zip codes: 33311, 33312, and 33313. Regrettably, these areas have long grappled with elevated poverty rates, instances of abuse and neglect, accidental deaths, and a persistent cycle of intergenerational poverty.



The burdensome struggle of securing reliable and affordable child care creates an inescapable cycle of poverty that persists across generations. The absence of stable child care often compels parents to discontinue their education or job training, leading to frequent absences from work and high turnover rates. Consequently, parents face significant obstacles in attaining steady incomes, career progression, and overall stability for themselves and their children. Moreover, poverty can hinder a child's capacity to learn and contribute to a range of social, emotional, and behavioral issues, as well as adverse health and mental health outcomes.

Extensive research has consistently highlighted the transformative impact of high-quality early childhood education on children's development. Such education equips them with the readiness needed to excel academically, increases the likelihood of completing high school and pursuing higher education, reduces incarceration rates, and enhances future earning potential. As the sixth largest school district in the United States, Broward County is experiencing continuous growth. At Jack and Jill Center, our dedicated efforts center around ensuring that children achieve age-appropriate milestones in social, emotional, and communication skills, empowering them to succeed in both school and life.

Our Family Profile

- 80% are headed by single mothers
- Average of 2 or 3 children per household
- Average annual gross income for the entire household is \$28,500 for a family of 3
- 90% are living within 175% of the federal poverty level
- 97% of families qualify for government subsidies for child care
- 91% African-American, 2% Latino/Hispanic, 1% Caucasian, 6% Multiracial/Other

The families who choose Jack & Jill are motivated to work and financially stabilize their homes, work towards independence, and break their cycle of poverty. We hold our families accountable in numerous ways including the following:

- Parent/Caregiver must work or attend school a minimum of 25 hours a week, showing that they are working towards self-sufficiency. Paystubs and school schedules are checked twice a year.
- Parent/Caregiver must complete a family assessment upon enrollment and annually thereafter. This allows Case Managers to track income, employment, education level, housing, transportation, community support, and access to assistance through WIC, Medicaid, or food stamps. From this assessment, we are able to check progress with the parent and connect them with outside resources that might improve stability.

All of the programs provided to the parents and families of Jack & Jill Center are designed to strengthen a parent's ability to advocate for themselves and for their children. Parents make a significant impact on their child's success.

EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM

Jack & Jill Center's **Early Education Program** provides quality early childhood education focusing on enabling children to grow emotionally, physically, and socially in a safe, caring environment using age-appropriate methods for cognitive growth. The Center is currently open year-round, Monday through Friday, from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, currently serving about 120 children, ages 6-weeks through 5-years. Additionally, children are provided with two hot, balanced meals and a snack every day, along with preventative care, including dental, hearing, vision, and speech screenings.

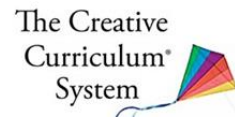


Early Education Program Highlights

- 100% of children received excellent nutrition through a well-balanced, daily prepared menu
- 100% of children are up-to-date on required immunizations
- After an extensive and rigorous re-application process, we are proud to report that our Early Education Program has been re-accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children! Achieving this re-accreditation is direct result of staff from across the organization working together to provide the highest quality educational opportunities for our children.

Curricula

Teachers engage children in activities including art, math, literacy, science, music, puzzles, manipulatives, and physical education using the nationally-recognized **Creative Curriculum**®. This award-winning, research-based curriculum is widely regarded as a forward-thinking, comprehensive, and culturally rich approach that respects the role that teachers play in making learning relevant for every child. Activities are designed to meet specific goals for social, physical, cognitive, and language development. As a result, children become more social: forming friendships, playing in groups, and learning to get along and share with others.



Creative Play

Jack & Jill Center's Early Education Program is deeply rooted in the philosophy that children learn through play. We structure our classroom environments to offer dynamic spaces to engage children's imaginations. The Creative Curriculum allows children to unlock more creativity through activities such as socio-dramatic play, open-ended art activities, free-choice activities, using manipulatives and puzzles. For example, Unit Blocks are effective tools for children to become the architects of their space, learn the basic mathematic principles of shape, proportion, physics and support, use symmetry, patterns and



geometry, as well as practice cooperation, persistence and self-control. These versatile wooden structures become the building blocks for higher test scores in math and science, planning and problem solving, character development, creative socio-dramatic play, and motor coordination. Research shows that for every 15 minutes of free play, 4- and 5-year-olds spend a third of their time engaged in spatial, mathematical, and architectural activities. Play-based learning helps children to develop initiative, self-regulation, prosocial behavior, language and literacy skills, math skills, memory, and symbolic thinking. These skills are linked to success in school and reduced aggression.

Continuity of Care

Jack & Jill Center practices continuity of care. Continuity of care is the high-quality practice of having teachers and children stay together for several years, rather than having children change teachers and groups of peers each year, or more frequently. Because learning occurs simultaneously with emotional attachment, it is best for young children to have a stable caregiver throughout their early years. Children and their teachers are moved up as a group into the next classroom one time a year. This practice fosters strong attachment and benefits the children by giving them caregivers who know them and their parents well.

Family-teacher relationships are strengthened as well, as parents and teachers also have more time to get to know and trust one another. Within this relationship, parents are more likely to share concerns about their child, listen to the teacher's suggestions, and learn from observing teacher-child interactions.

Finally, this approach allows teachers to develop and put into practice a broader understanding of child development as they observe it first-hand over a longer period of time than in most child care settings. Anecdotal evidence suggests that teachers experience greater emotional satisfaction from the longer relationships with children and families, which may in turn lead to increased job retention – a critical goal in the field of early care and education.

Primary Caregiving

Within the continuity of care program, Jack & Jill Center practices primary caregiving. Primary caregiving ensures that every child has an assigned caregiver, and every parent has a primary contact. The teachers in each room will divide the group of children so each child has a primary caregiver. This teacher forms a caring, nurturing, and responsive relationship with the child. In the classroom, s/he will be the “expert” on their children, knowing pertinent information such as the child's individual schedule, developmental abilities, special needs, sleeping habits, and individual interests

Speech, Physical, and Occupational Therapy

Jack & Jill Center's Family Program Senior Manager assesses children who need speech, physical, or occupational therapy. Referrals are made to the Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System (FDLRS) Child Find to get the child directed to the Early Steps Program for complete developmental evaluations and free therapeutic services and/or special needs program placements, depending on what the child qualifies for.

Jack & Jill Center partners with Kids Spot to provide virtual and on-site speech, physical and occupational therapy, and with Kids in Distress to provide on-site Infant Mental Health Counseling and behavioral support. In addition, Jack & Jill Center made referrals to other agencies in the community including FDLRS/Child Find for developmental evaluations.



Goals & Objectives

CATEGORY	OBJECTIVE
Overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will maintain or improve in age-appropriate developmental stages • Be ready for Kindergarten upon graduation
Cognitive Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to develop problem-solving strategies • Learn to make sense of the environment through sensory-motor exploration • Stay focused for longer periods of time
Math Concepts & Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sort and classify • Create and recognize patterns • Recognize shapes and sizes • Sequence, incorporating literacy and math concepts • Able to use educational board games and flashcards • Able to use computer math software and interactive games on iPads
Emotional Development & Intrapersonal Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to regulate themselves • Establish secure attachments • Able to communicate angry feelings in words, rather than acting out physically • Engage in intentional communications
Social Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop acknowledgement of others and strengthen bonds • Strengthen listening skills and learn from interactions • Develop appropriate verbal communication
Physical Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased development of fine motor skills with fingers and hands • Increased development of gross motor control (running, ball toss, climbing, etc.) • Increased coordination of eye/hand coordination (stringing beads, writing, etc.)

Early Childhood Education Program Quality

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC): 9/1/2021 – 9/1/2026



The **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** is the largest nonprofit association in the United States representing early childhood education teachers, para-educators, center directors, trainers, college educators, families of young children, policy makers, and advocates.



Jack & Jill is one of only two NAEYC accredited centers in Fort Lauderdale and is in the top 2% of early childhood education centers in Broward County. To date, 100% of our Lead Teachers hold a degree (B.A. or A.A.) and have their Child Care Certification.

Early Childhood Program Assessment



Preschool Program Quality Assessment (PQA) measures program quality in seven domains: learning environment, daily routine, adult-child interaction, curriculum planning and assessment, parent involvement and family services, staff qualifications and development, and program management.

Child Development Assessments

Our assessments include observations by staff and parents, the creation and maintenance of portfolios, and the documentation of progress. All children enrolled at Jack & Jill are screened two to three times a

year by our Teaching staff utilizing nationally recognized assessment tools. These evaluations are designed to measure new knowledge and increased developmental skills.



Ages & Stages Questionnaire (Students ages 6 weeks – 5 years, not in the VPK Program)

This developmental screening tool focuses on the following developmental areas: communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and personal-social. The tool pinpoints developmental progress in children and is used in partnership with families.



Florida Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Assessment (Students ages 4 & 5 in VPK Program)

This assessment includes progress monitoring measures in the areas of Print Knowledge, Phonological Awareness, Mathematics, and Oral Language/Vocabulary that are aligned with the VPK Education Standards. It is completed within the first 30 days of the school year, and again within the last 30 days of the school year.



Teaching Strategies Gold (Students ages 6 weeks – 5 years)

Teaching Strategies Gold is an ongoing assessment of children which enables teachers and administrators to quickly identify children who may need additional support. Utilizing the vast array of reports available, teachers are able to focus on each child's individual strengths and see what is needed to support every type of learner. The assessment's recommended solutions are based on the latest research and are fully aligned with the State's early learning guidelines.

Screening and assessment scores are maintained in each child's portfolio and are compared to nationally set standards. Our Director of Early Education and teaching staff use these tools to provide each child with individual guidance as needed. These scores provide the team with the ability to evaluate, compare and track classroom results as compared to national standards. Results are shared informally with parents on an ongoing basis, and formally at Parent/Teacher conferences.

FAMILY PROGRAM

Designed to work hand-in-hand with Jack & Jill's Early Education Program, our comprehensive **Family Program** is designed to strengthen low-income, at-risk families by providing intensive parent education, case management, referrals, and an array of other support services. Through these programs, families gain the skills, knowledge, and resources they need in order to reduce the risk for incidences of abuse and neglect and to foster their child's healthy growth and development. All of the parent education courses are held virtually and in the evenings to accommodate working parents' schedules, and are open to families from the community.



Family Program - Outputs

Jack & Jill families face health, emotional and financial challenges presented by the pandemic. Our Family Program team consistently communicates with each family in order to assess their needs and provide support where possible.

- During the 2022-23 school year we provided close to 2,020 hours of case management
- During the 2022 Fiscal Year, Jack & Jill Center provided \$41,208 in emergency assistance from our Emergency Assistance fund to help with rent, mortgage, utilities, car payments, car seats, and gift cards for food and gas
- Our Food & Clothing Pantry was accessed by 122 families 323 times throughout the year
- 130 families received donated Thanksgiving baskets
- 182 families received donated holiday gifts from toy drives held for Jack & Jill Center



During the 2022-2023 school year, Jack & Jill Center offered 6 virtual parent education series, including Nurturing Parenting, Financial Literacy, Health & Wellness, First Time Home Buying, Healthy Relationships, and Individual Financial Coaching. A total of 92 participants completed at least one series, including 29 participants from the community. 27 of the 92 participants completed two or more classes.

HEALTH PROGRAM

Children and families enrolled at Jack & Jill Center and the Madelaine Halmos Academy have unrestricted access to our HEALTH (Helping Everyone Achieve Long Term Health) Program. Services provided through this program are an essential piece of our comprehensive and holistic approach to strengthen children and families through innovative education, supportive programming, and community engagement. The



HEALTH Program was designed using the Centers for Disease Control's Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Model. Through comprehensive health assessments, provision of health services, preventative healthcare, and community partnerships, this program has a significant positive impact on the health and wellness of our children, families and community.

Schools are one of the most effective and efficient modes for reaching children to provide health services and programs.

Through our HEALTH Program initiatives, including providing an on-site School Nurse, we reduce barriers to healthcare access and ultimately increase receipt of medical and preventive care. Our long-term goal is to ensure the life-long academic achievement, productivity, and success of our children and their families.

MADELAINE HALMOS ACADEMY

The Madelaine Halmos Academy is a private elementary school serving kindergarten through fifth grade students. The Academy's unique and robust program nurtures the whole child by combining academic, social-emotional, and wellness elements to ensure a highly-effective educational experience. Program elements include project-based curriculum, technology integrations, wellness activities, engaging extracurricular activities like computer science, art, on-site counseling/ therapeutic services, and interactive, educational field trips.



Collaborations

Jack & Jill Center collaborates with several community organizations to provide services for families. Collaborations are important to Jack & Jill's model because they allow us to expand and extend services to families at low or no additional cost. In addition, partnerships and new collaborations ensure that Jack & Jill will not duplicate other services provided by the community. Current key collaborative partners include the Junior League of Greater Fort Lauderdale, Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Forum on Women's Health, Children's Opportunity Group, Junior Welfare Society, Children's Aid Club, Children's Diagnostic Treatment Center, Kids in Distress, Women in Distress, Salvation Army of Fort Lauderdale, St. Thomas Aquinas High School, Florida Atlantic University, Sheridan and Atlantic Technical Education Centers, Hispanic Unity, Foster Grandparents, LensCrafters Gift of Sight Program, Oral Health Institute, United Way's Reading PALS and Project Lifeline Program, Miami Herald Wishbook Foundation, Urban League of Broward, and Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Cribs for Kids.



SUSTAINABILITY

Jack & Jill Center's **Early Education Program** is a core component of our organization's mission to strengthen children and families through innovative education, supportive programming, and community engagement. Our programs offer our children with long-term and consistent quality education and our families with the resources, support, and stability to yield economic independence and financial stability. Thankfully, due to the longevity of our successful program, Jack & Jill Center enjoys the commitment of long-time supporters who invest faithfully in the program as well as a committed Board of Directors, Auxiliary Board, broad volunteer base, and dedicated faculty and staff. Jack & Jill Center also has several partner community agencies we collaborate with on projects.

FUNDING REQUESTED

Jack & Jill Center respectfully requests a grant in the amount of \$___ from the [Name of Foundation] to support Jack & Jill Center’s efforts to build a strong educational foundation for our children’s future and strengthen families. We invite you to partner with us as we continue in our mission to serve underserved children and families in Broward County.

