



Dear Community Partners,

When we came together to develop Birth to 22: United for Brighter Futures, we couldn't have known a global pandemic was looming. We couldn't have known the needs of our community's children and families would balloon exponentially. We couldn't have known how important our strong relationships and penchant for collaboration would be.

Today, we couldn't be more grateful. That's why we'd like to take a moment to recognize all 300-plus organizations that have given their heart and soul to this alliance. During this unprecedented year, stressed and stretched parents and caregivers – some of whom have lost jobs, homes, even loved ones – have needed us all more than ever. You have been there, with services and support to meet every challenge. You've modified the way you work with families, and your creativity has paid off – with more families than ever reaching out and getting the help they so desperately need.

Together, we're making a real difference. For example, the Palm Beach County Coronavirus (COVID-19) Relief and Recovery funding process, consisting of 10 local funders, has received more than 550 applications from local nonprofit organizations requesting in excess of \$29 million in assistance. More than 50% of the requests have been for lost revenue, 30% for technology needs and 30% for direct services, such as food and expanded community support. We know the needs are enormous right now. To date, collectively, the local participating funders have provided more than \$7 million to nonprofits. Utilizing CARES Act dollars, the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners has partnered with the United Way to distribute an additional \$4 million to eligible nonprofits.

Additionally, funders have built on this collaboration to address emerging issues specifically caused by the pandemic. Some have pooled their funds to tackle major obstacles – from covering the cost of internet access for students who otherwise wouldn't be able to participate in distance learning, to purchasing and distributing personal protective equipment (PPE) and sanitizing supplies for nonprofits. The funders distributed PPE to more than 120 organizations, including over 12,300 reusable masks for children.

Talk about a safety net! Partnerships such as these - between community organizations, funders and providers – mean that children and families are getting the help they need to face another day during this devastating crisis. We are so proud of everyone working together – this is true collective impact!

Sincerely,

Dr. Lisa Williams-Taylor
CEO, Children's Services Council

Tammy K. Fields
Director, Palm Beach County Youth Services Department



Birth to 22 United for Brighter Futures NEWSLETTER

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Community Conversations

After four events were complete, the data was compiled to identify disaggregate data, evaluate feedback, connection cards and the community's response.

Domestic Violence Awareness

As part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, in October, Melissa Jaacks, Chief Executive for Domestic Violence Services at the Department of Children and Families penned a guest article.

Alliance Spotlights

Since its inception, Birth to 22 and its community alliances, have been working towards providing youth and young adults resources to reach their fullest potential.

Share Feedback & Stories!

Do you have feedback or have an inspiring story to share? We'd love to hear from you!

Contact us at, pub-birthto22@pub.gov.org

Community Conversations Wrap Up

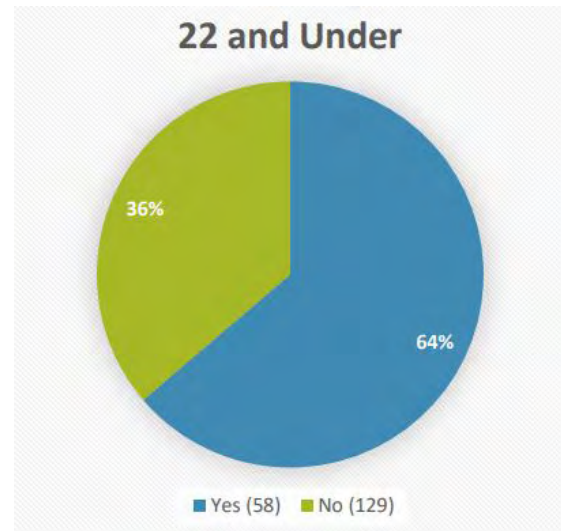
Summary of the FY 2020 Conversations:

Four Community Conversations were held in FY 2020.

In partnership with Palm Beach State College (PBSC) the events were held at the four PBSC campuses throughout the county:

- Lake Worth Campus on October 16, 2019
- Belle Glade Campus on January 16, 2020
- Loxahatchee Campus on February 4, 2020
- Palm Beach Gardens Campus on February 18, 2020

In total, there were 187 attendees (58 were 22 years of age or under).

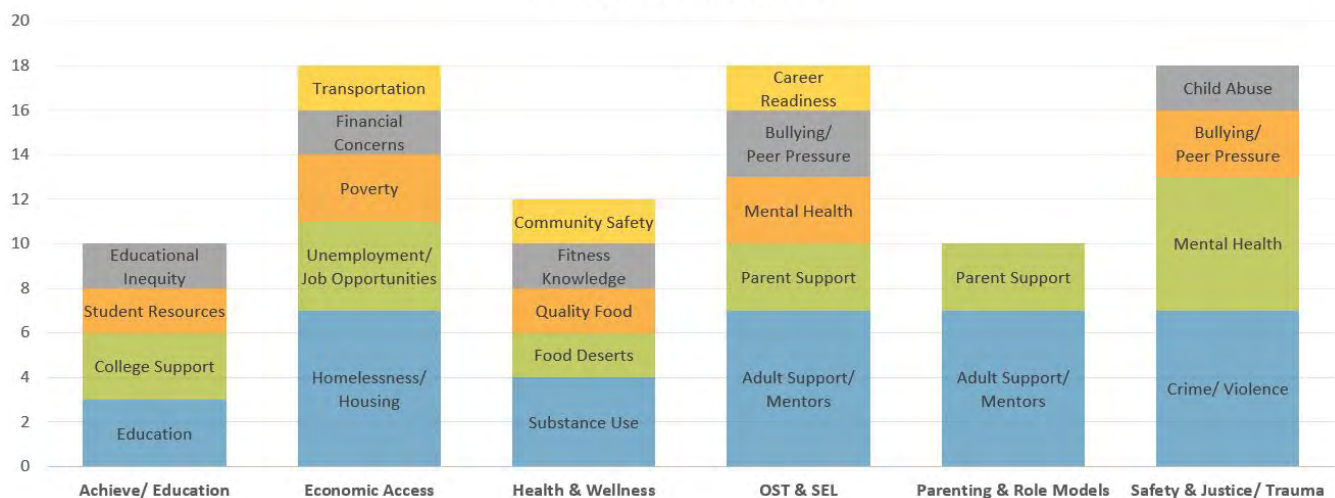


After the four events were complete, the data was compiled to identify the disaggregate data, evaluate feedback, the connection cards, and most importantly the community's response to what Birth to 22 has been working on over the previous year.

The Team Activity

Each Community Conversation began with an explanation of the history of Birth to 22 and where we are looking to go. The group conversations were consistently led by the youth participants. The activity began by having the group identify three specific issues of concern. Across the four conversations, the same areas of concern continued to emerge with the Action Teams.

IDENTIFIED THEMES



The next step is the presentation of data by the Action Team representatives. Finally, the students presented these concerns and offered suggestions to fill the gaps. Their suggestions were thorough and thoughtful. Below is a sample of the information gathered from the Community Conversations:

Action Team	Area of Concern	Feedback/Recommendations
Achieve Palm Beach County	Educational Inequity	Standardized tests do not test your knowledge; where you live limits your education options. Transportation makes it difficult to get to the schools with the better programs. Add more electives and class options (leveled with IB schools).
Economic Access	Transportation	Link with education so kids can get to schools with better programs; expand transportation systems with recommendations from local cities (ex. City of Delray metro trolley system; free Palm Tran passes for students who stay after school).
Health & Wellness	Food Deserts/Quality of Food	Community gardens; mobile feeding stations, community cooking classes; explore the link with obesity and areas with more fast food and less safe recreational sites.
Out-of-School Time & Social Emotional Learning	Adult Support/Mentors	More support in school, sometimes we have to wait a month to get an appointment; school personnel punish rather than getting to the root of the problem or understanding; add community ambassadors to provide additional support and reduce guidance counselor caseload; middle school feels more isolated from teachers, elementary school is more supportive; less ISS and suspension if they'd talk to kids who are acting out to understand; coach counselors to find balance between supporting teachers & supporting students.
Parenting & Role Models	Parent Support	Coach parents to set boundaries and structure; parents don't have sources or know where to access resources to become better parents; educate parents on mental health, vocational options.
Safety & Justice/ Trauma	Mental Health	Teens don't have "happy spots" (safe places they can go to relax and unwind); train students to be guidance counselors; more support; parents don't want to admit when their child has a mental health issue which prevents support/ intervention; families decline services because they don't want to get "in the system."

Once all Conversations were complete, information was collected and compiled, then forwarded to each of the teams for review. It is currently being adjusted and prepared to send to the Community Conversation attendees.

After receiving this information, the teams have a better understanding of what the community is concerned about and can continue moving forward with their charge or make adjustments to integrate new concerns into the work.

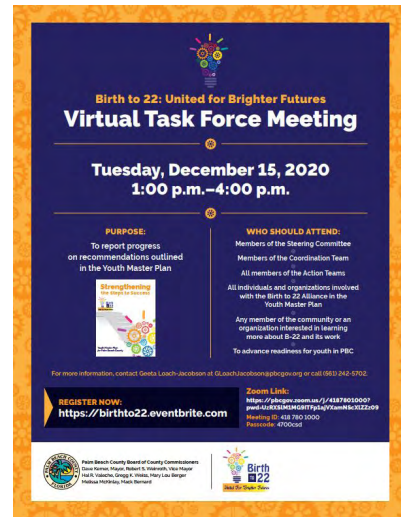
The team is now in the process of planning Community Conversations for FY 2021. Since the last conversation in February 2020, we have faced a global pandemic that may have adjusted the concerns of the community. The next round of conversations will give us a better understanding about these changes and what further work may need to be done to continue moving forward. *For the full Community Conversations data report, visit <http://pbcbirthto22.com/engagement/>.*

Birth to 22 Task Force Meeting

Birth to 22 will host a virtual Task Force meeting on December 15. The meeting will assess the progress on recommendations outlined in the Youth Master Plan.

The Youth Master Plan was developed by over 60 members of Birth to 22 as a blueprint for setting priorities and taking action to improve the lives of children and youth in Palm Beach County. It reflects an ongoing effort to engage community members at all levels in building on strengths, aligning ongoing efforts and addressing gaps in order to create a community where all youth – from birth to 22 – reach their full potential.

Members of the Steering Committee, Coordination Team and Action Teams are to attend the meeting. Additionally, individuals and organizations involved with the Birth to 22 Alliance, members of the community or organizations interested in learning more about Birth to 22 and its work to advance readiness for youth in Palm Beach County are encouraged to attend.



For more information contact Geeta Loach-Jacobson at GLoachJacobson@pbcgov.org or to register, visit www.birthto22.eventbrite.com.

SEL Action Team Resources



Palm Beach County's Birth to 22 Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Action Team has curated a growing library of free resources to help community members integrate social and emotional learning into their work, services to youth and into their personal lives. Click [here](#) to view resources.

Featured Resource: [SEL in the Workplace](#) - a guide to help organizations infuse SEL into their meeting or group sessions and ideas to help build adult SEL practices into workplace culture.

Domestic Violence Awareness



Many of the Birth to 22 alliance members participated in events recognizing October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Melissa Jaacks, Chief Executive for Domestic Violence Services at the Department of Children and Families penned a guest article.

"That Hole in The Wall: One Domestic Violence Survivor's Story"

"That hole in the wall." These were the words a domestic violence survivor affirmed when asked, "When did you

know it was time leave?" Renee, whose name has been changed to protect her identity, recalls two years of turmoil that led to her decision to walk away from her abuser.

In what started out as a friendship that grew into a relationship, Renee initially found herself completely entranced by the attention and adoration she received from her partner.

"He would constantly check in on me, like asking me to call him when I got home and anytime I left. Oftentimes, he would take me to and from my college classes and work," Renee said. "I remember him doing little things for me all the time, like taking my car to get detailed for hours.

And he would say he ‘just wanted to have some alone time together...’ all the time.”

Renee said that, in the beginning, these all seemed like characteristics of a doting, loving partnership. “What girl would say no to all of that?”

But, as the relationship began to grow, Renee became more and more distant from her family and friends. Her boyfriend would somehow always find a way to be with her, she recalls. “He sat in my classes, walked with me around campus, hung around at my job. And then, when I finally got to hang out with my friends, he was there, too.” Renee recalled her abuser constantly saying, “your family doesn’t want to see you happy.”

Renee continued to face this subtle, yet controlling, psychological aggression from her partner, until one day, it went a step further and turned physical. Renee was attempting to leave her apartment when her partner told her he wasn’t going to allow her to go. She noted, “I actually thought he was joking, so I laughed and reached for my car keys and backpack.”

Her abuser ripped the keys from her hand, pulled her out of the doorway, slammed her against the wall, and reared back a balled-up fist. “At that point, all I could do was tense up and brace myself for him hitting me.”

As his hand came near, through squinted eyes, Renee saw it veer away from her and slam into the wall, right next to her head. “Seeing that hole in the wall...I finally started to realize that this is not a healthy relationship,” she said.

Renee said that, over the next year, the person she had been completely infatuated with turned into someone who, “wanted me dead.”

Thankfully, Renee could turn to her family, who helped her eventually escape her abuser. For months, she endured violent threats through text messages and voicemails, physical stalking and cyberstalking, and even vandalism. But, with her support system, as well as the assistance of law enforcement and a victim’s advocate through the judicial system, she was able to obtain a restraining order and receive domestic violence services, which enabled her to keep her abuser away, stay safe, and eventually move on from this “nightmare” of an experience.

While she was no longer in an abusive relationship, the toll that years of psychological and physical abuse took on Renee was not undone overnight. Still, she views her experience as an opportunity to help girls and young women in similar situations. “I went through a lot before I even realized what

was happening. Now that I look back at the threats, the manipulation, how he was isolating me from my family and friends... I want to tell other people going through this that you don’t deserve to be treated that way and that you can get your life back.”

Renee’s story is not unlike the tens of thousands of other domestic violence survivors that end up seeking domestic violence services in Florida each year. In fiscal year 2019-2020, Florida’s Domestic Violence Hotline, housed within the Department of Children and Families, received over 70,000 calls from individuals seeking emergency services, safety planning assistance, and other information to help them and their families escape abusive situations.

Still, many survivors of domestic violence, unfortunately, do not report their abusers to the police or seek help through domestic violence services because they are scared or ashamed, perhaps even unable to because of their abusers’ constant presence or surveillance. For this reason, we may never know the true prevalence of domestic violence in Florida or on a national level.

If you know someone in a situation similar to Renee’s, there are a few different ways to support them:

- Talk with them: Let your friend, coworker or loved one know that they are not alone, and you are there to listen if and when they want to talk. Be open to listening, do not interrupt them, and do not judge their decisions. Let them know you are willing to set up a code word or signal for when they may need you to call the authorities for help.
- Acknowledge the injustice: The violence perpetrated against them is not their fault. No one deserves to be abused. They have a right to control their own life and choices. Acknowledge how wrong it is that they are experiencing this behavior from someone who was supposed to care for them.
- Help plan for future safety: When planning for safety, it can be helpful to discuss what the survivor is already doing to stay safe. Talk about what they are doing now to keep safe. Ask if the current plan is working. If it’s not, brainstorm new ideas.
- Be prepared: Call the Florida Domestic Violence Hotline or the local certified domestic violence center hotline to learn about services and resources that may be of assistance. Be prepared to provide these phone numbers to your loved one when they are ready for help.

If you are in an abusive situation, Florida’s Domestic Violence Hotline is available 24/7 to help. Call 1-800-500-1119 or visit www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/domestic-violence/ to find a service center in your area.

Alliance Spotlights



Since the onset of the pandemic, the Early Learning Coalition has seamlessly pivoted to continue to meet the needs of Palm Beach County's families and children, early learning providers, and the community. In many ways, COVID-19 has encouraged us to use technology in innovative ways to connect with and meet our stakeholders' needs. We were excited to participate in the [2020 Train The Brain Campaign](#) through various family engagement and provider quality support offerings throughout October. The annual Train The Brain Campaign is led by our local community partner, Palm Health Foundation, and rallies the community to build resiliency and self-care in the face of adversity.

Recently, the Early Learning Coalition shared a [letter of appreciation](#) and salute with our exceptional early learning and after-school community. Specifically, our teachers, early educators, after-school practitioners, and child care owners who have given their time and support without fail

to ensure the education, care, and safety of our youngest learners. This letter was written on behalf of and in partnership with several of the leading Birth to 22 agencies, including the Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County, Palm Beach County Youth Services Department, and Prime Time Palm Beach County.

Through this continual, local collaborative partnership, the Early Learning Coalition can shed light on the important issue of having a robust, high-quality child care system in Palm Beach County. This hot topic is being pushed higher on the priority list as the pandemic reveals the child care industry's mission-critical nature, as a foundation for K-12 learning and beyond, and a pillar of our society's future sustainability. We were thankful to have this point of view published via a special [OpEd](#) piece in the Palm Beach Post.

If you are interested in joining our coalition to ensure every child in Palm Beach County is ready to learn and ready for life, visit our website for more information at www.elcpalmbeach.org.



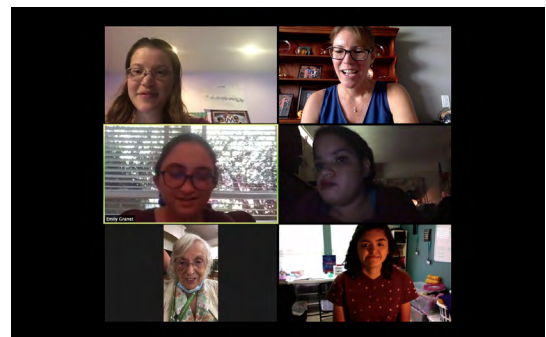
The Unicorn Children's Foundation offers a weekly virtual Connection Club for individuals with special needs. Connection Club is for teens and adults looking for fun and interactive ways to connect with friends. The group created their own greeting cards and became pen-pals with senior residents at The Brenntity of Vero Beach. Because many of the club participants expressed interest in meeting their pen-pals, the organizations hosted a virtual meet and greet BINGO game on Thursday, October 8.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, isolation has had a dramatic effect on mental health in both Special Needs and Elderly populations. Friendships are one of the most important factors influencing a person's quality of life and influence both mental and physical health; however, research has shown that for many people with disabilities, significant interpersonal relationships are rare or non-existent, which contributes significantly to rates of depression, anxiety, and challenging behavior.

Connection Club member, Victoria De La Garza states, "I liked seeing the seniors and telling them hello. I enjoy

meeting new people." She added that she enjoyed meeting one of the residents who shared her story about being a nurse. "[Her] story was interesting and I thought it was neat that one person collected stamps. I collect snow globes so we both have something in common we collect items."

The two organizations had so much fun, and are looking forward to their next game.



For more information about Connection Club or other virtual classes, visit www.unicornchildrensfoundation.org/fallclasses.html or contact Kerri Morse at kerri@unicornchildrensfoundation.org.



The Securing Our Future Initiative (SOFI), a collective impact initiative around eradicating

poverty for families in Palm Beach County, successfully hosted a series of awareness and advocacy events during the past few months and collected and analyzed data from its first cohort. Between August and October, it facilitated Poverty Awareness Week activities, hired a program evaluator, completed FY 2020 data collection and analysis, and started recruiting for the FY 2021 cohort (its second cohort).

Commissioner Mack Bernard proclaimed October to be Poverty Awareness month in Palm Beach County and in observance of this month, the Palm Beach County Community Services Department (CSD) held an array of virtual activities to engage the community in poverty-reduction work. The Initiative held a proclamation announcement, panel discussion around health, job readiness workshop, book discussion, career fair, and Racial Wealth Gap simulation. A total of 2,893 community members were engaged, inspiring the community to take action in the form of volunteering or advocacy efforts. During the week, in partnership with the Palm Beach County Library System, activity participants read “Not a Crime to be Poor” by Peter Edelman and discussed themes related to the justice and mental health systems, as it relates to poverty. SOFI will host a book discussion quarterly and in January, another book discussion will be held and participants will read “Evicted” by Matthew Desmond.

One of the SOFI’s goals is to remove systemic barriers and to create an opportunity ecosystem where access to effective and essential human services is enhanced. Therefore, staff has begun to look at data to make programmatic and policy decisions that will lead to achieving the goal. In FY 2020, the Palm Beach County Community Action Program (CAP), which serves as the backbone agency for the SOFI, hired a program evaluator to lead those research and evaluation efforts. Jodie Boisvert, the new program evaluator began employment with CAP on September 8 and jumped right in. With her support, CAP collected data from all FY 2020 SOFI funded agencies. Between October 2019 and September

2020, the agencies worked with 64 families consisting of 191 individuals. Twenty-seven percent or 52 children were under the age of five (5). In terms of demographics, 98% of the participants were Black/African American non-Hispanic. Finally, 66% of all participants were female and all heads of households were female except for one male.

FY 2020 was a highly successful year where 45% of all participating families increased their household income.

As SOFI ramps up its FY 2021 efforts, it released a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to recruit new agencies to join the initiative. Agencies that work with low-income families seeking to become economically self-sufficient were encouraged to apply. The deadline for grant proposal submission ended on November 9.

In addition to recruiting new agencies to join the collective impact initiative, SOFI is recruiting new families interested in increasing their total household income. The goal of the initiative is to move 188 families over the federal poverty line every year. The number of families served will exponentially grow, as funded agencies accompany these families during their journey towards economic self-sufficiency over an extended period of time. If you know of families that will benefit from the Securing Our Future Initiative, please connect them with CAP staff at the Community Services Department.



To engage in the Securing Our Future Initiative, collective impact work, please reach out to Jodie Boisvert at JBoisvert@pbcgov.org.



CareerSource Palm Beach County is promoting paid internships for young adults between 17 and 24 years old. Internships are a crucial

aspect of our Young Adult Program as they provide work experience and mentoring opportunities for young adults in their transition to adulthood and the workforce. Internships can be held on-site, or via virtual or remote

environments, allowing more flexibility for employers and participants. Palm Beach County Youth Services Department consistently hosts CareerSource interns and they become valuable members of the team.

Young adults can apply online [here](#).

Employers interested in hosting an intern can apply [here](#).

For more information, contact CareerSource [here](#).

Collective Impact Pledge

Birth to 22 is committed to a common agenda, we are an alliance of community partners that engages and aligns existing coalitions, networks, systems and youth-serving organizations as well as connecting families, community members, and most importantly, young people.

Take the *Pledge*, be listed as a Collective Impact Partner

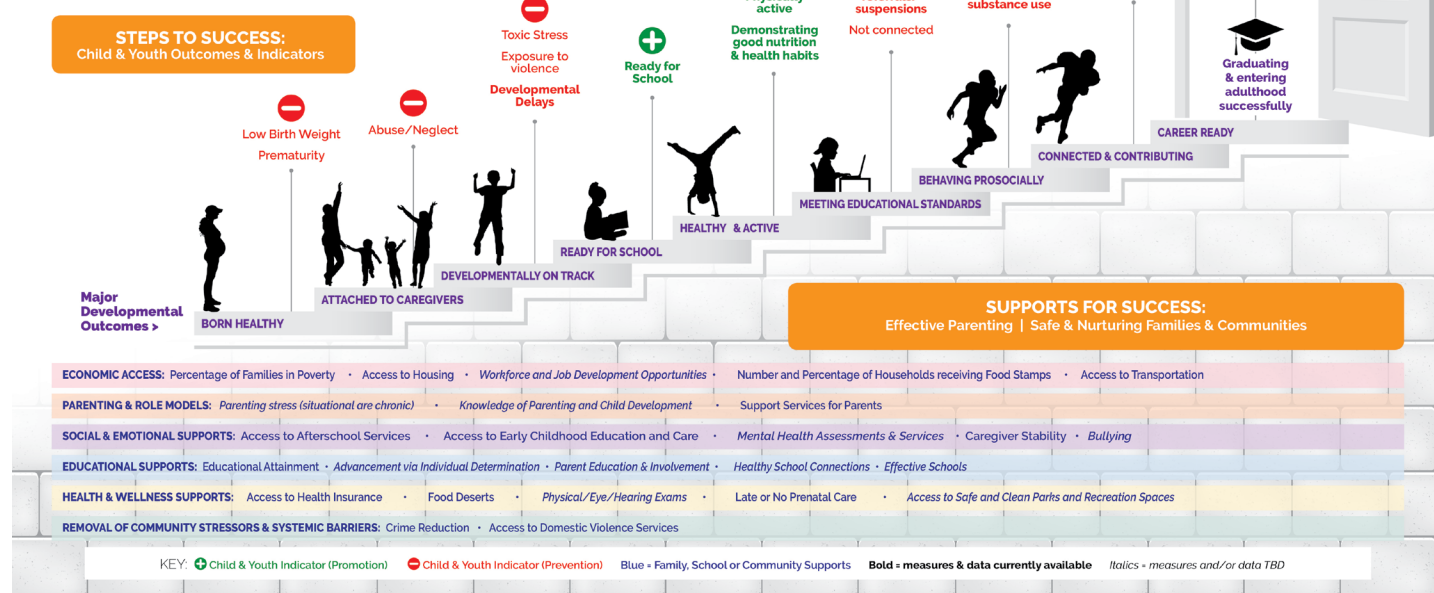
of the Birth to 22 Alliance to improve outcomes from cradle to career for all Palm Beach County children, youth and families, and will provide support as provided on the attached.

Click [here](#) to join us in envisioning and creating a culture that values our youth from cradle to career.

Steps to Success

The Steps to Success represent 6 domains of child and youth development – physical health, behavioral health, academic readiness, social/emotional well-being, career readiness and connection and contribution to community and society. These steps represent key markers of success that allows us to access developmental outcomes. As children and youth make their way up these stairs, we are able to track their progress or lack thereof. The indicators, or measures, for these different areas are shown above the stair steps in the green text (for things we are trying to promote) and orange text (for things we are trying to prevent). Understanding what this data looks like for different subpopulations within Palm Beach County is also essential. In order to achieve those outcomes, children and youth need key supports along the way, through a combination of effective parenting and safe and nurturing families and communities. A sample of possible measures are listed below.

Steps to Success & Supports for Success



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