

ANNUAL REPORT

A report to the Alachua
County Commission on 2023
operations of the
**GAINESVILLE
EMPOWERMENT ZONE
FAMILY LEARNING CENTER**

SUBMITTED BY:

GAINESVILLE FOR ALL



*We Are
Growing
Greatness*





Summary

- We opened up the Gainesville Empowerment Zone Family Learning Center on the campus of Metcalfe Elementary School on August 10th.
- The GEZFLC, as of early December is currently serving 38 children ages six weeks to four years- old and their struggling families.
- It is our goal for our 4-year- old's to demonstrate skills beyond those of children the same age upon arrival at kindergarten for the 2024-25 school year.
- Currently too many African American children, in particular, do not show kindergarten readiness. GNV4ALL is attempting to level the playing field by connecting family members to vital community services while immersing their young children into a highly touted curriculum.

GEZFLC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Accomplishment 1: Renovations

- We renovated the 8,000 square foot building at Metcalfe Elementary School, provided by the Alachua County School Board, to meet Florida Department of Children and Families and state health and safety requirements.
- Robert Kelly Construction Co. commenced work in the fall of 2022 under a \$127,000 contract, work was completed summer 2023.
- The work included: installation of kitchen, laundry and bathroom equipment, electrical wiring, sidewalks, fencing, new doors and cabinets.
- The work was fully funded by contributions received from private donors and grants.



GEZFLC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Accomplishment 2: Staffing

Center Director: Angellia Walker

- Angellia is academically well qualified and a leader passionate about changing lives of the often disenfranchised for the better.
- She is a mother of seven children
- Angellia served as operations/Teacher supervisor at the Rosen Preschool in Orlando for six years before moving to Gainesville to run the GEZFLC.
- She has worked in the field of early childhood education since 1994
- She holds a bachelor's degree from Ashford University

Assistant Director: Schuran Cartwright

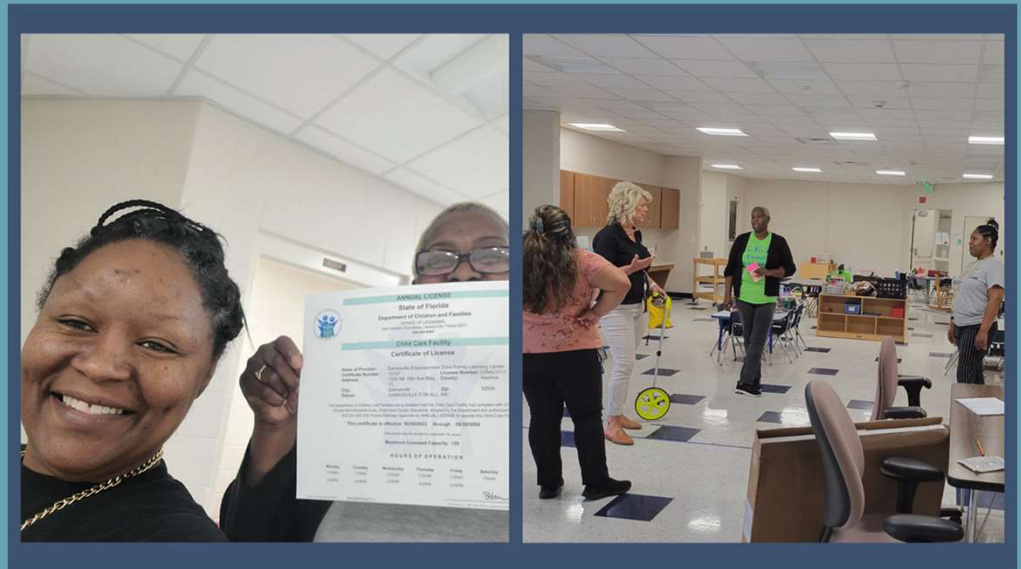
- Ms. Cartwright holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Services and an associate degree in Early Childhood Education.
- She came to Gainesville from South Florida nearly two years ago to work in child care.

As of early December, our staff consists of 3 lead teachers and 5 teacher assistants and floaters. All three leads are college educated.

GEZFLC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Accomplishment 3: DCF Licensing

- Together, Walker and Cartwright seemingly worked around the clock to meet rigid DCF requirements for opening a childcare facility.
- They performed a wide range of tasks such as helping prepare bids for furniture and playground equipment, purchased books, researched local tuition rates and developed policy manuals.
- Our DCF license was granted on June 6, 2023



GEZFLC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Accomplishment 4: ELC Approval

- We obtained certification from the Early Learning Coalition of Alachua County, which provides the bulk of operations funding.
- This was no easy task given the paperwork, which included background investigations for each employee and meeting staffing and curriculum requirements.
- We decided to utilize an ELC recommended curriculum: Creative Curriculum/Teaching Strategies Gold.
- The curriculum offers support to staff via virtual training and one-on-one phone calls.
- It also includes an assessment tool, which is very useful in tracking a child's progress.

Individualize learning with one platform, resources of the highest quality, and connected workstreams.

Through the leading early learning platform, our ecosystem brings together essential content, tools, data, and support aligned to research-based objectives, empowering teachers to easily identify and respond to each child's needs.

[Explore Our Platform →](#) [View Our 38 Objectives →](#)



Whole-child curriculum connected to assessment to individualize learning



Incorporates all essentials for transformative family engagement



Data and reporting to inform instruction and drive program efficacy



Intentional support for every professional development need, from beginner to expert

GEZFLC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Accomplishment 5: Playground Opened

- Our state-of-the-art playground serving toddlers to 4 year-olds opened in early November after more than a year of preparation that included an extensive bidding process to find the right fit for a vendor.
- We settled on the vendor used by ACPS
- More importantly, our children are thrilled.
- We invested more than \$100,000 in playground equipment that will benefit children in our community for decades to come.



GEZFLC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Accomplishment 6: Connecting with the Community

Family Assistance

- We work closely with community resource organizations such as Catholic Charities to meet the needs of our hard-pressed families.
- In the past few months alone, we've assisted families experiencing homelessness, eviction and suicidal thoughts.
- One struggling mother talked of committing suicide as she dropped off her child. Staff members quickly alerted the director who along with other staff members talked her down and encouraged her to seek professional counseling. The mother and her children are now in family therapy.

Volunteers

- We have many volunteers who regularly give their time and hearts to GEZFLC children.
- We have volunteers from Alachua County Library, for instance, who provide storytime, music and other fun activities for our children.
- We have volunteers that have painted murals at the center for us and play piano for the children.
- Businesses such as Vystar Credit Union make their financial literacy program available to our parents free of charge.

Challenges

Challenge 1

- The biggest hurdle we've faced so far has been making our services affordable for our struggling families.
- Our family learning center not only provides a highly rated curriculum and family services, but we pay competitive salaries to our staff, which includes college- educated professionals. We also provide health insurance and retirement benefits.
- Low- income families are our target audience, so we felt compelled to make our services as affordable as possible.
- Less than two months after opening, we began making available scholarship assistance of up to 50 percent off parent contributions and beyond reimbursement rates paid by ELC.
- Reducing our rates is a significant loss in revenue but we hope that we can find private and public monies to make up for the deficit.

Challenge 2

- We had hoped to open our doors with 50 children but last- minute obstacles such as delays in getting our ELC contract approved left families with no choice but to enroll their children elsewhere to utilize their vouchers.
- Consequently, we opened with three infants, five one-year olds, two 2-year-olds, three 3-year-olds, and six VPK children totaling 19 children and five staff.
- As of December 1, we had 38 enrolled children and 8 teachers.

Challenges

Challenge 3

- We had planned on utilizing the federally funded Child Care Food Program starting on opening day but were notified just weeks before opening that the certification process would take longer than expected.
- We were told that we had to be open for at least three months to qualify.
- We had to find an alternative and sought assistance from Alachua County Public Schools Food Service, which agreed to supply our meals at a cost of about \$2,000 per month for our 30 plus children.
- These unexpected costs had not been budgeted.

Meet Our Staff

- **James F. Lawrence** is serving as acting executive director of the GEZFLC.
- **Angellia Walker** is director of the GEZFLC
- **Schuran Cartwright** is Assistant director
- **Sofiya Nazarov** is Executive Administrator.
- **Victoria Liu** is Internal accountant
- **Michael Solomon** is external accountant
- **Trish White** is Family Engagement Specialist
- **Ciera Williams** / VPK teacher
- **LaPorsha Smith**/ 3-year-old Teacher
- **Zoe Lackey**/ 2-year-old Teacher
- **TaKeshia Jackson**/ 1 year old Teacher Assistant
- **Atlanta Allen**/Floater Teacher Assistant
- **Iza Hill**/ Part time Teacher Assistant Floater
- **Candice Stinson**/ Infant Teacher Assistant
- **Carolyn Fields**/ Infant Teacher Assistant

All teachers and the director are currently enrolled in Infant /Toddler CLASS Group Training sponsored by the Early Learning Coalition.

MEET OUR TEAM



James F. Lawrence
Executive Director



Angellia Walker
Director



Schuran Cartwright
Assistant Director



Sofiya Nazarov
Executive Administrator



Victoria Liu
Accountant



Ciera Williams
VPK (Pre-K) Teacher



Zoe Lackey
2-Year-Olds' Teacher



LaPorsha Smith
3-Year-Olds' Teacher



Candice Stinson
Infant Room



Iza Hill
Classroom Assistant



Atlanta Allen
Preschool Teacher Assistant



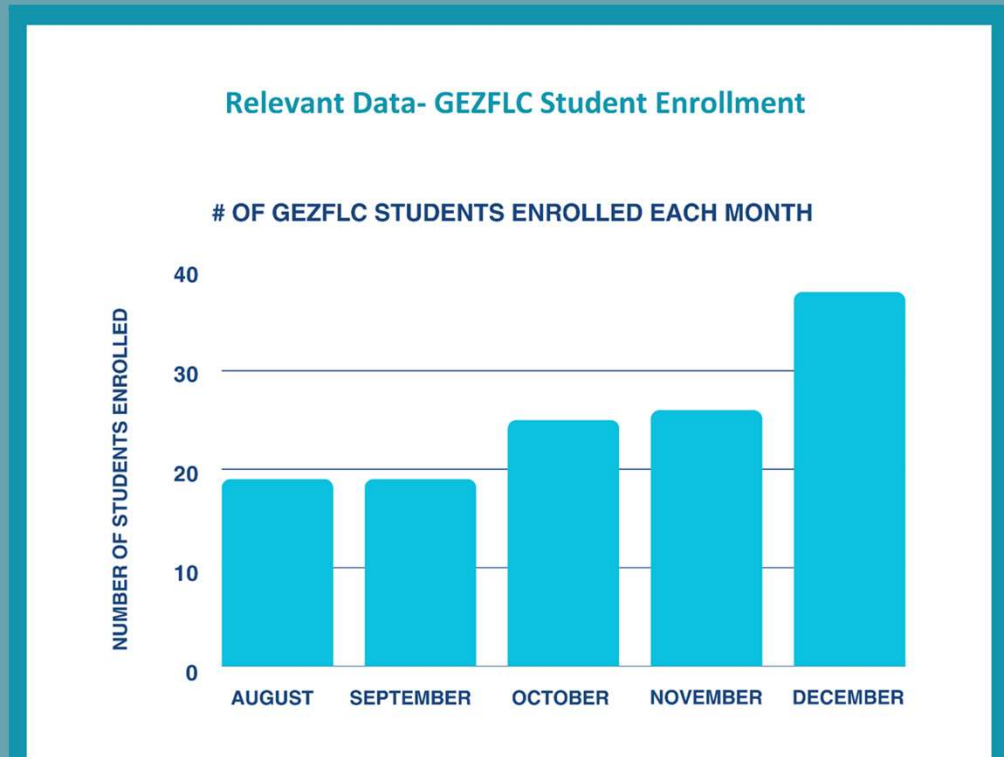
Keisha Jackson
Teacher Assistant



Carolyn Fields
Teacher Assistant

Relevant Data

- In October we began awarding scholarships to assist families in paying for GEZFLC tuition rates.
- The graph shows the correlation in enrollment rates and the timing of when scholarship began being awarded.
- This data demonstrates that a big obstacle for these families in enrolling their children in quality early childhood learning is the cost of tuition.



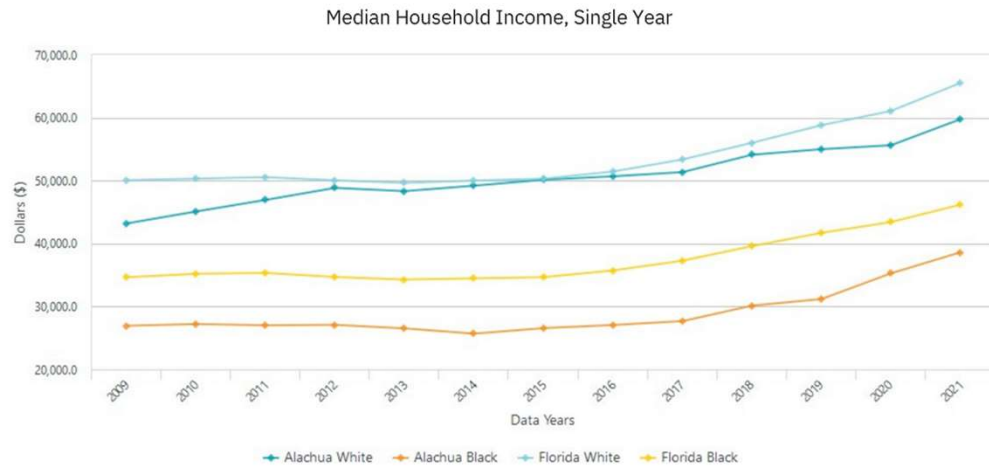
Relevant Data

- This graph shows the stark difference in income between white and black citizens in Alachua County as well as in the state of Florida.

Relevant Data-Median Incomes in Alachua County



Florida Department of Health
Bureau of Community Health Assessment
Division of Public Health Statistics and Performance Management



Relevant Data

- In 2021 the average household income of Black Alachua County Citizens was \$38,610.00, based on this average, the share of childcare cost compared to income for Black families in Alachua county is 22.5% of their income.
- According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, childcare is affordable if it costs no more than 10% of a family's income.
- This percentage is more than double that.

Relevant Data-Cost of Childcare Compared to Income

The following graph shows childcare costs in Florida vs. Income.

How big a bite does child care take? *Infant care costs as a share of income in Florida*



Average cost of infant care in Florida: \$8,694/year (\$725/month)

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, child care is affordable if it costs no more than 10% of a family's income. By this standard, only **30.2%** of Florida families can afford infant care.

Source: Economic Policy Institute: *The cost of child care in the United States*

ECONOMIC POLICY INSTITUTE

Relevant Data-Our Services

- We have partnered with the University of Florida School of Dentistry to provide free oral health screening to the students at the GEZFLC.
- If they are in need of dental work the School of Dentistry connects them with free dental services.
- The School of Dentistry already provides oral health screenings to schools in Alachua county.
- Based on their data, Metcalfe Elementary school (where the GEZFLC is located) has the worst rating in oral health among students, 72% of third graders at Metcalfe Elementary School have untreated tooth decay. See graph.

University of Florida College of Dentistry Department of Community Dentistry & Behavioral Science Why Children's Oral Health Matters

#1 Chronic Disease

Tooth decay is the **MOST COMMON** chronic disease in children, disproportionately affecting those from lower income households.¹

40% Tooth Decay

In 2021, 40% of Alachua County third graders had untreated tooth decay; 7% of those had an **URGENT** need for dental care.²

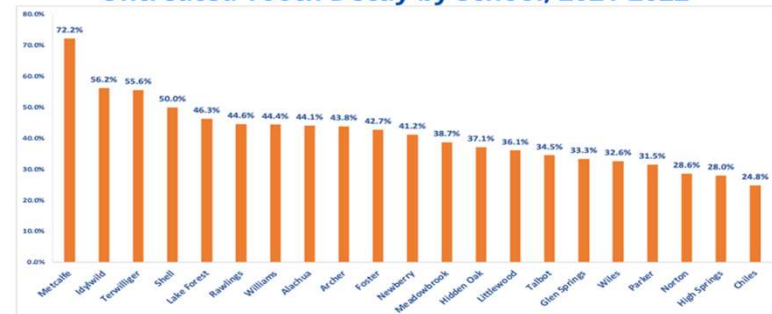
3 Million Missed School Hours

Dental disease costs Florida's children an estimated **3 million school hours** each year and can result in pain, infection, and difficulty eating and speaking.³

Oral Health Access

61.8% of Alachua County residents reported **COST** as the primary reason why their child or children were unable to receive needed dental care.⁴

Percentage of Alachua County Third-Grade Students with Untreated Tooth Decay by School, 2021-2022



1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Hygiene-related diseases: dental caries (tooth decay). 2016.
2. University of Florida College of Dentistry/Department of Community Dentistry and Behavioral Science. Oral health surveillance program, 2021.
3. National Research Council: Advancing Oral Health in America. Washington, DC: The National Press, 2011.
4. American Dental Association. 2019.

Citation:
Graph provided by Olga S. Ensz, DMD, MPH Clinical Assistant Professor Department of Community Dentistry & Behavioral Science

GAINESVILLE EMPOWERMENT ZONE FAMILY LEARNING CENTER 2024 BUDGET OVERVIEW

- Operational and capital needs are sourced from tuition, private grants, and reimbursable grants from the City of Gainesville and Alachua County.
- The absence of office rent significantly bolsters our financial stability.
- \$346,623.52 is projected to be used from reimbursable grants from the City of Gainesville and Alachua County to cover a portion of salaries and wages. The grants are projected to be depleted the end of June 2024.
- We envision operating at 75% capacity from January to July 2024, then at 100% capacity from August onwards.
- Operating expenses are a total of \$47,297.26.
- \$28,297.26 is allocated to office supplies, technology, and insurance.
- \$13,000.00 is for essential services such as electricity and internet.
- \$6,000.00 is for program expenses, specifically for marketing to promote GNV4ALL initiatives.
- \$808,192.29 is for salaries and administrative costs including compensation for key personnel: an executive director, assistant director, family engagement specialist, teachers, teacher assistants, and additional staff.
- The budget incorporates covering FICA, reemployment tax, and professional fees.
- At full capacity we will employ 5 full-time teachers and 8 full-time teacher assistants to serve 87 children.
- We benefit from hundreds of volunteer hours of professionals, executives and talented individuals.
- The President and Executive Director of GNV4ALL receives no compensation for his services.
- The GEZFLC offers partial and whole scholarships to families who demonstrate financial hardship.
- The demand for scholarships is greater than our ability to fund and we anticipate greater demand in the future.
- GNV4ALL is actively pursuing other initiatives to fund the operations of the Family Learning Center.