



Going the Extra Mile

To Our Unsung Heroes of Child Care,

In early spring, we watched as the novel coronavirus reached our shores, and life hasn't been the same since.

The unknown virus came with a wide range of social distancing measures—closing offices and schools, stay-at-home orders, mandatory face masks- all to flatten the curve. It left so many of us in shock. Three months into the year and America had become the epicenter of the pandemic on the brink of economic collapse.

However, throughout this pandemic, parents and caregivers have continued to seek and depend on CHILD CARE. During these unprecedented times, it became crystal clear that a few sectors were being given new attention and the respect they have long deserved:

- Health Care Professionals
- Front-line Workers
- Essential Employees
- Child Care Providers
- Early Childhood Educators

Yes, Child Care Providers. You answered the "call to serve."

Rising to The Challenge

Whether your site's doors never closed for a day, or you opened as soon as you could, or you waited until it was safer in your community to serve families; it was no easy feat. There was no playbook, and not enough personal protection equipment to go around. You weren't 100% prepared. You didn't have all the answers. You simply said yes, for the children. **You rose to the challenge.**

After all, this is what you do best. You educate and care for the children, providing trusted, safe, and reliable educational experiences. Caring teachers reaching out to children, making



positive connections and interactions is precisely what Palm Beach County's children need. You rose to the challenge.

When the school district needed community support during a difficult time, you opened your doors once again. You served school-age children who needed a safe place to learn while their parents worked.

The jobs of Early Childhood Educators and Child Care Providers were hard before. These COVID challenges made them even harder. Through it all, you've adapted to new routines, followed CDC guidance, reduced ratios, and adapted educational practices to continue to offer incredible levels of support for children and families. You are the **UNSUNG HEROES** of the pandemic, and we are in awe of your hard work, strength, and bravery!

Resilience

As teachers and early childhood and school-age educators, we see the quality work that you do day-in and day-out, selflessly, to build the future leaders of our local, state, and world communities. We salute you for the role you play in the lives of the children you serve; it takes a village to set our children up for success so that they can grow to be happy, healthy, strong, and active participants in our world.

You go the extra mile, and we thank you for unflinchingly going above and beyond during this time to meet the needs of Palm Beach County's children and families.

Ready to Rebound. Ready to Help.

We have never experienced a public health crisis like this one before. Child care is mission-critical to our first responders and health care professionals serving on the front-line, our parents and caregivers who have lost jobs (or worse, family members), and the children themselves who need extra love and stability during this chaotic time. **You and the child care industry of Palm Beach County are mission-critical to us.**



It is no secret that the child care industry was underfunded and undervalued before COVID-19. Today, you have our commitment to help advocate for both federal and state resources to fund early childhood education, afterschool, and child care services adequately.

Again, thank you so much for all you've done to care for Palm Beach County's children. As a community, we'll rise to this challenge in the same way that you have. When you are ready to rebound, we're ready to help.

Stay safe and know you have an alliance of more than 300 of Palm Beach County's civic and community organizations supporting you!

With much appreciation and gratitude from your partners and friends,

Warren Eldridge



Lisa Williams-Taylor
CEO



Tammy Fields



Suzette L. Harvey



Written on behalf of all 300 organizations involved in the Birth to 22: United for a Brighter Future Alliance. Please join us at our next Birth to 22 Business Breakfast on April 9th, 2021. For more information, visit: <https://unitedwaypbc.org/event/birth-22-breakfast-2021/>

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