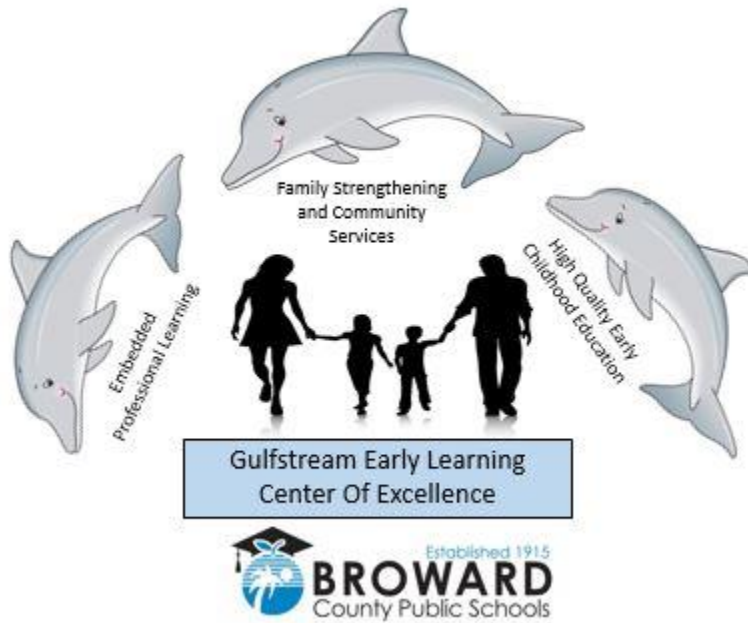


Gulfstream Early Learning Center of Excellence



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MISSION

Gulfstream Early Education Center of Excellence will provide the highest quality early care and education while engaging in community focused services to include adult education, family strengthening, health and wellness, and professional development opportunities for early childhood educators through Broward Schools and the Community.

VISION

The vision for Gulfstream Early Education Center of Excellence is to become a Model School of High Quality Early Childhood Education, including family strengthening, community partnerships, and educator professional development impacting the entire Broward Community.

KEY COMPONENTS

1. Model school of high-quality early childhood education
 - a. Classrooms for infants, toddlers, and preschool including Pre-Kindergarten
 - b. Outdoor classrooms and interactive space
2. Classrooms and environment designed to support on-going professional learning
 - a. Demonstration classrooms
 - b. Professional learning training facilities
 - c. Technology-rich classroom and work environments
 - d. Large meeting space
 - e. "Hub" for Children's Literacy Initiative
3. Family & Community Engagement Resource Center
 - a. Engagement activities
 - b. Social service connections
 - c. Resource library
 - d. Educational Resource and Referral assistance
 1. School Readiness Funding
 2. VPK
4. Health Center
 - a. General health and wellness
 - b. Vision and Dental

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FACILITIES PROPOSAL

Building	Focus	Description
1	Administration	Entrance to building, Office space for Administration of Site
1	Health Clinic	Community and Early Childhood Health Services
2	Family Strengthening	Social and Community Services, Family Engagement and Counseling, Washing Machine and Dryer Availability and Full Kitchen
3	Professional Learning	Wing of 8 classrooms with LCD Projectors and Boards, Use for Professional Learning for Community and Broward Schools Teachers
6	VPK Model Classroom	Model classroom (Furniture, Curriculum, Resources, Manipulatives) Designed for VPK Teacher Professional Learning, Broward Schools and Community
7	Large Meeting Room and Stage	Area for large groups to meet with Focus on Early Childhood Education, including Professional Development, VPK Graduations, and Community Gatherings
8	Media Center	Open Media Center for ECE Center and Community/Family Engagement, Meeting Space, Hub for Children’s Literacy Initiative Partnership
8	Family Literacy Community Schools South	Adult GED and ESOL classes for families with young children while children participate in ECE center. Potential add courses for CDA, Director’s Credentials, and Career
5, 9 13, 12	Early Childhood Education Center	Early Childhood Classrooms for “School within a School” at Gulfstream. Classrooms for infants, toddlers, and Pre-K children. Administrative Offices, Indoor and Outdoor Playgrounds
11	Early Childhood Demonstration Lab	Demonstration lab with two-way mirrors and acoustics to Observe two Classrooms in Action.
850	Mommy and Me Playgroup	Free-standing modular with bathroom and storage space. Use for Mommy and Me playgroup.

Research and Background

Children's Experiences during early childhood, the period from prenatal development to eight years of age, can influence outcomes across the course of an individual's life. This window of opportunity builds the foundation for life-long learning. High quality early childhood education and strong family supports in these years produce short- and long-term positive effects on children's cognitive and social development. Research also shows that high-quality, intensive early care and education programs for children can have lasting positive effects, including greater school success, higher graduation rates, lower juvenile crime, decreased need for special education services, and lower adolescent pregnancy rates. At the same time, low-quality care can have harmful effects on language, social development, and school performance that are more difficult to improve, especially for children in schools with fewer resources. The positive effects from high-quality programs and the negative effects from poor-quality programs are magnified for children from disadvantaged situations or with special needs, and yet these children are least likely to have access to quality early care and education.

The Gulfstream Early Childhood Center of Excellence will be built around three core features designed to have an impact on high quality early childhood programs throughout Broward: embedded professional development, high-quality teaching practices, and intensive family strengthening. The core features will work together in a comprehensive and intentional way with a strategic focus and support of community and national partnerships.

A wealth of scientific findings show that the combined focus on teachers, community, children and families lead to positive results for the teachers, community, and families.

Parent Engagement and Family Strengthening

Research confirms that parent engagement is one of the most powerful predictors of a child's educational trajectory, influencing a child's school readiness, motivation to learn and long-term academic achievement, among many other long-term effects. Parent-child relationships and parent engagement in learning help lay the foundation for the lifelong social-emotional, academic and life success of young children. The critical importance of healthy, warm and responsive relationships between parents and children is well-established in the developmental psychology, health and neuroscience literature.

Not every family with a young child has a nurturing path available to them. There may be few or no meaningful connections between the families and the community's service providers. Isolated families may feel lost. And, not knowing where to go next they may lose hope. With support from their community, families can find a nurturing path.

Family functionality, high quality interaction and communication, healthy and whole family structure and overall atmosphere create an appropriate context where the child finds safety,

develops positive self-image and acquires skills necessary for current and future integration and participation in community life. The involvement of parents in young children's education is a fundamental right and obligation.

For young children from families experiencing significant adversity, two-generation programs that simultaneously provide direct support for parents and high-quality, center-based care and education for the children can have positive impacts on both. The family unit is the basic building block of society. Engaging more than one generation in learning together positively impacts the entire family, and in turn, the larger community. Engagement should be family led, authentic, and built on a two-way exchange of information, mutual trust, and respect between families and the schools and community groups within which they are engaged. Research indicates that the inclusion of more than one generation in education increases the likelihood that college and career readiness will be passed on as a shared value.

High Quality Educators

A large body of evidence demonstrates that effective early education teaching practices include emotionally supportive, organized and instructionally challenging interactions—and that such practices can contribute to reducing or preventing the achievement gap at kindergarten entry and promoting positive life outcomes. For young children from low-income families, participation in very high-quality, center-based, early education programs has been demonstrated to enhance child cognitive and social development.

Professional development must build knowledge, support the transfer of that knowledge to practice, and facilitate ongoing collaboration to examine and improve that practice. As the early childhood field strives to improve practice and classroom quality, sustainable and effective professional development will be a critical lever in ensuring the early childhood workforce has the support and capacity to improve outcomes for young children and families. As a demonstration site, Gulfstream will also serve as a laboratory school to facilitate research designed to learn more about how children grow and develop best practices for education. The site will provide exemplary educational facilities for young children while also educating current Broward Schools teachers, teachers and support personnel from the community, and preservice teachers in the key components of child development and early childhood education. As a laboratory school, Gulfstream will serve the early childhood professional community in the form of training, educational presentations, a gathering place, and as an open door for model classrooms in action.

Research shows that pre-service teachers as students who observe children's development and have the opportunity to interact with children in a supervised setting, in conjunction with their coursework, are better able to link conceptual information with application. When students are given opportunities to observe and interact with children and teachers, they increase their

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knowledge of child development, have better interactions with children and adults, and have increased interest in the field.

When early childhood teachers and administrators participate in professional development their global classroom quality increases, they tend to interact more sensitively with the children in their care, and children's scores in a variety of developmental domains improve. As a center of excellence and a laboratory school setting, Gulfstream will promote such opportunities and make research and best practice accessible to early childhood professionals, thus in effect increasing the quality of early childhood programs throughout the wider community.

**A Day in the Life of a 4 Year Old at
Gulfstream Early Learning Center of Excellence**

I love going to VPK at Gulfstream Early Learning Center of Excellence. Every day on the way in with my mother, we pass the beautiful orchard and gardens. I read the sign on the fence to my mom. "Momma, dice "Orchard and Gardens" en English, and en Espanol dice, "Huerta y Jardines," y en Creole dice, "Orchard ak Jadenys." My mom usually answers me in Spanish, but today she answers me in English as well. She has been learning at Gulfstream just like me, but in the adult classes. She says that learning English will help her get a better job and make more money for us. She also wants to get her high school diploma (GED) so she can become a teacher and help others learn.

She walks me into my classroom and we read books together. I take her on a tour of our classroom and show her my favorite areas: blocks, sensory table, and our exploration station study about alligators. We pick out a book about alligators to take home tonight and read together. She leaves to go to her class and now it's time for me to get busy! First, I write my name so the teacher knows I'm here. Then, I go to our morning meeting area and we talk about what we did last night. When I shared that I scored a goal at soccer, she and all of my friends started clapping for me. Morning meeting is then filled with songs, reading big books, and today we even moved liked animals in the Everglades.

Next we go to the art room, which is filled with colorful things to explore. Today we put pretty things into recycled bottles, which means to use again. We pour water, oil, and food coloring into the bottle and the teacher sealed it with a hot glue gun. After art class we go out to work and learn in the gardens. I like to turn the composter, which makes food for the plants. Some plants are called herbs and they smell so good. In the garden I draw pictures of our favorite herbs and rub them on our papers so my mom can smell what I drew.

Back in the classroom, I select centers to play and learn with my friends. My teacher calls me to her table and we read a book about alligators together and tell stories with play alligators in the water table. I pretend it's a real swamp!

At lunch time my Mom comes for a quick visit and we eat lunch together outside. We do this every day as part of our PACT time (Parent and Child Together). We talk about our food and what we have done so far with our day. After she leaves, I take my nap and spend the rest of the day learning and playing with my friends. When my Mom picks me up, she says we have a special surprise...a trip to the Gulfstream Health Clinic! The doctor checks my ears and eyes to see if they are ready for kindergarten. He asks my mom if I have had swimming lessons, if I have been eating healthy, and if we read together every night. She says, "si" to each! We walk back to the car to go home. When we walk past the orchard and gardens my mom takes my hand and gives me a big smile. I am so lucky that my school has so much for my family. I can't wait to come back tomorrow!

A Day in the Life of a Parent at Gulfstream Early Learning Center of Excellence

I am a father of two children at Gulfstream Early Learning Center of Excellence, a six month old in the infant classroom and a four year old in VPK. Last year my wife attended classes at Gulfstream to get her Child Development Associates (CDA) credentials. She is now a teacher at a child care center in the neighborhood and we are so proud of her and what she has accomplished. Now it's my turn. After I drop off my children in their classrooms and spend time talking to the teacher and reading books with the kids, I walk over to my classroom: GED as part of the Community Schools South program. I attend class here every day and learn the skills I will need to earn a high school diploma and join the workforce or continue my education. My teacher personalizes instruction for me and we spend most of our time on math, because that's what I need. I am starting to see things differently and I share my new growth with my four year old when we play math games together.

Every day I join my children for lunch and "Parent and Child Together" (PACT) time. We eat together, talk about our day, read books, and play games. Before going back to class, I stop at the Gulfstream Family Resource Center to plan our next father group. I meet with a social worker from one of the community organizations and we brainstorm ideas. As vice president of the group, I help to organize our weekly meetings and plan for presentations based on the needs of the group. This week our focus will be on spending quality time with our children and supporting their social emotional growth.

In the Resource Center, I also see grandparents gathering in the lounge and families visiting the clothing and food bank. One mother stops in with her four year old to find out information about VPK. She wants to take her child to her local church VPK program, but doesn't know how to complete the needed voucher. I volunteer to walk her over to the VPK model classroom, where support staff is available to help her complete the information.

After lunch I go back to class and continued studying. I should be graduating in June at the same time my son will be graduating VPK. I will be so proud of us both, especially because we will be ready for our next steps ahead.

At the end of the day, I pick up my children from their classrooms and walk over the media center. A librarian from Broward County Public Libraries is just getting ready to start story time and has children from the community gathered on the floor. My wife comes walking in the door and we sit on the carpet with our children for story time. Afterwards, both our children check out books to take home and we even get a board puzzle for our infant. On the way out the door, my wife tells me that she is interested in continuing her education and wants to get an Associate's Degree. She heard that classes may be available on the weekends at Gulfstream and goes by the office to check it out. With our children and ourselves, the learning continues!

A Day in the Life of a Teacher at Gulfstream Early Learning Center of Excellence

Today I am traveling to Gulfstream Early Learning Center of Excellence for a professional development day. When I pull up, I see a giant mural on the wall of ocean animals swimming around with lots of books...I think I'm in the right place! The first place we meet is in the large group meeting space, where I am with 100 other VPK teachers from all around the county. We walk around and look at the VPK projects on display within the cafeteria, already starting to take notes before the day has even begun! Everyone is asked to be seated and a speaker leads us all in a song celebrating the morning as the words appear on a screen. We learn information about early literacy and child development and then receive our schedules for the day.

My first stop is in the VPK model classroom, where they actually have furniture, resources, and curriculum arranged and organized as if it were a real classroom. The only thing missing is the kids! Our presenter guides us through the classroom arrangement, developmentally appropriate materials, and areas for student engagement. I take lots of pictures! We are able to interact with the resources and furniture and then return to our tables to take notes and continue the presentation. Next we travel as a group to a professional development room for a focus on Social Emotional Learning. The presenter provides us with Curriculum, our VPK standards, and our focus for Social Emotional Learning in early childhood. The classroom is arranged with circular moveable tables and we spend most of the time discussing and collaborating with our peers, VPK teachers from both the community and the public school system.

My group has lunch outside underneath a large oak tree in the "Reading Garden." There are murals on the wall of children reading, picnic benches, and natural seating areas all around. Next, I visit the professional development library in the media center at Gulfstream. Here they have hundreds of professional development books focused on Early Childhood Education. As a community VPK teacher, I am able to check out books and return them when complete. I even get the chance to talk with someone from Children's Literacy Initiative (CLI) and Broward County Libraries. They both share book titles that are "hot off the presses" for young children.

My last stop is in Early Childhood Demonstration Lab. Our guide walks us through the back door and we sit at tables in the middle. I notice that two of the walls in the room are actually windows into Pre-K classrooms! The presenter flips a switch and we can see and hear the interactions within one of the classrooms, focused from a microphone around the VPK teacher's neck. She is leading a small group of children around a water play table as they tell stories about alligators "swimming in a swamp." She prompts them with questions and allows them time to respond, the whole time modeling higher level vocabulary. One child leaves the water table to grab a book, "Look, I can make my alligator do things just like in the book." She follows up to add to the conversation. When the discussion is over, our presenter asks us to make connections with the materials, the teacher student relationships, and what we learned about Social Emotional Learning.

I leave with many ideas, pictures, new friends, and books to continue my learning. What a day!

Components of Successful Laboratory/Community Schools

1. Provides a clear mission or objective that is clearly accessible and understandable to members of the community and campus. Has a plan for meeting the mission and a means for documenting accomplishments.
2. Defines the curricular program by implementing a clear philosophy and curriculum, based on theory and research, which is apparent to all involved in the program.
3. Secures various streams of funding through fundraising, grants, and development opportunities. Work to secure university support.
4. Integrates social services for families by connecting families with agencies that will address family health care, human services, and educational needs
5. Supports family literacy by providing referral or direct services and available resources that assist parents in access of family literacy programs, adult education programs, access to public libraries or other opportunities that afford families the opportunity to become involved in literacy and continuing education as determined by family needs.
6. Builds relationships through networking with key players and potential advocates. Such networking can lead to fiscal support as well as nonmonetary resources.
7. Balances the mission by aligning teaching, research, and service within a particular philosophical or curricular approach by providing opportunities for students and staff to increase their knowledge and skills (teaching), having clear policies and procedures for research and providing information to the community at-large and exemplary early childhood services as a showcase (service).
8. Provides ongoing comprehensive professional development for all school leaders, staff, and community partners. Continuous, high-quality professional development is important to ensure effective partnerships
9. Develops links with academic programs on campus by aligning curriculum with college coursework to maximize student learning experiences. These links need to be deliberate, intentional, and maintained for the laboratory school to have salience in the institution.
10. Provides adequate, well-furnished space that is conducive to meeting the mission.
11. Creates a plan ensuring the smooth transition of children and families into the school and kindergarten
12. Addresses comprehensive services for children and families. A designated person located at the school to lead the coordination of school–community partnerships. Coordinators help maintain partnerships with community agencies and facilitate effective communication and collaboration among the leadership team, specialized instructional support personnel, service providers, school personnel, parents, families, and members of the community.
13. Builds leadership team comprised of school and community stakeholders. Consider school leadership carefully by employing adequate staff who can effectively lead and carefully consider the roles and responsibilities of each leadership position

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14. Plans for long-term sustainability. Successful partnerships plan for sustainability from the beginning. Develop a plan to maintain your community partnerships across multiple schools and fiscal years. Try to create a diversified funding stream to support service delivery work from multiple funders.
15. Evaluates effectiveness through a variety of measures. Partners are chosen based on data that highlight their fit with the current needs of the school and community. It is equally important that appropriate data are used to evaluate the effectiveness of the partnership.
16. Communicates to share progress and challenges. It is important to share the successes and challenges of each school–community partnership to highlight what is working and ways to overcome challenges to educate others hoping to improve school community partnerships.

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