



# ANNUAL REPORT

2019



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## A message from our director

The word I would use for 2019 is transition. Maya Angelou said, "We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty." Each child at our Center transitions from one stage of life to another. It is a powerful experience watching an infant become a toddler and continue to develop and grow through preschool. The ultimate joy is watching them graduate to kindergarten. Each one is beautiful and inspiring because of their individualism, their energy and their enthusiasm for life. Each time a child transitions to a new classroom, their world expands, they find new friends and are positively influenced by different teachers. The children at our Center fill every day with wonderment and remind us (the adults) that the world is a marvelous and fascinating place when you take time to experience it one moment at a time. Our children have helped us, the staff, to appreciate and learn something new each day.

We have used the South Carolina Early Learning Standards for Birth to Age Five as a basis to create individualized portfolios and capture the progress made by the children. During 2019, the PreK 3 and PreK 4 classrooms tracked each child's individual progress towards readiness for kindergarten. The evolution of learning the standards in conjunction with tracking each child's progress has been a work in progress. During the 2020 program year, we will expand the use of these portfolios to our infant and toddler classrooms. The ultimate goal is the ability to ensure all children are making developmentally appropriate progress as they grow, and that our teachers have the necessary resources to provide what the children need.

This year brought new leadership to our Board of Trustees. Board Chair Barbara Pawlishyn has actively ensured each Board committee is using the approved strategic plan, approved in late 2018, as a document to guide their work. Quarterly updates on progress were made at monthly Board Meetings and to kick-off 2020, each committee revised their annual goals based on progress made to date. The strategic areas of focus include Staff Excellence, Financial Stability, Educational Commitment, Leadership Development and Community Awareness. As Board Chair Barbara Pawlishyn's leadership continues through 2020, many of the objectives within the plan are being accomplished.

Last year sixteen enthusiastic, energetic and bright young people graduated from The Children's Center. Seven of these children enrolled at our Center as infants or toddlers and grew through the program. Last year's parents used words like "family," "prepared," "home," "exceptional," and "amazing" when sharing their thoughts about their child's experience at The Children's Center. Our teachers are some of the most special individuals I have ever had the privilege to work alongside. They inspire me daily with their creativity, love and commitment. As these children move to public school, there is no doubt in my mind the transition will be positive and they will be ready for a great start to life!

**Jody L. Levitt**  
Executive Director

# 2019 HIGHLIGHTS

- Sixteen children graduated to kindergarten.
- Maintained our average monthly enrollment of 176 children, age 6 weeks to 8 years.
- Implementation of a program to incorporate new South Carolina Early Learning Standards (birth to five) in both lesson planning and student evaluation.
- Continued partnership with Deep Well to provide weekend meals to our neediest families.
- New volunteer recruitment and training program increased the number of community volunteers regularly involved in our classrooms.
- 100% of first and second graders in Summer Camp maintained or increased their literacy skills over the summer months. 100% of kindergarteners maintained or increased their math skills during that same time.
- The Board of Trustees regularly reviewed progress on the approved strategic plan, made necessary adjustments and accomplished numerous objectives.
- The Children's Center logo was trademarked.
- We increased our social media presence, providing quality parental information in conjunction with Center news.
- Communication with community partners, donors and parents was provided monthly through a new E-News format.
- The Children's Center increased our Google reviews and have achieved a five star rating.



# EARLY EDUCATION: WHY IT MATTERS

- We are born with about 100 billion brain cells
- 85% of brain growth happens in the first 3 years of life
- 1 million NEW neural connections/second made daily

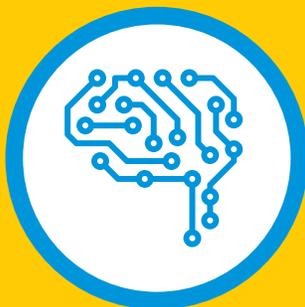
The speed of brain development is fastest from birth to age 5 and is also the most important. A newborn at birth has most of the brain cells they will ever have, but relatively fewer connections, the circuits among the different cells. A baby forms 700 new neural connections per second in the first years of life.

An infant's brain is dependent on responsiveness from adults. So all those adorable things that babies do right from the beginning -- coos, gurgles, sounds and smiles -- how an adult responds to those coos and gurgles help shape the brain circuitry. The baby does something, the adult responds back. Vice versa. It's all about how the how the baby feels -- is she in an environment that is safe, loving and enriching?

Brain development in the area of language, the synapses needed to learn language, peak at 9 – 10 months of age. Many higher cognitive functions peak at 1 year of age. Language has been shown to be a predictor of success. Researchers see differences in children's vocabulary as early as 18-24 months. **We know that 3rd grade reading scores can predict future life success, but did you know that 18 month vocabulary can predict 3rd grade reading skills?**

Research shows us that many children from low income households are at a disadvantage in the area of brain development, language development and loving caregiver involvement. So, if these children do not receive the important interactions to develop those positive brain connections, their vocabulary development is lacking - they will enter kindergarten well behind their peers. Statistics show they are less likely to graduate high school, have poor health habits and more likely to become a part of the expense of crime and poverty to the American taxpayer.

## BY THE NUMBERS



The brain forms as many as **700** neural connections per second before the age of 5.



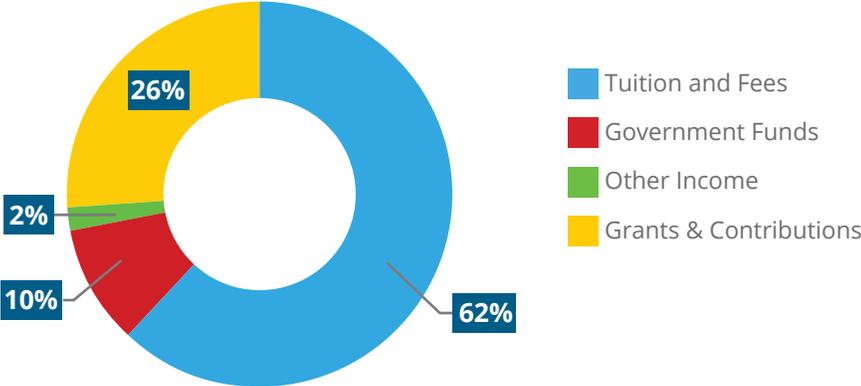
Students with early education are **29%** more likely to graduate from high school.



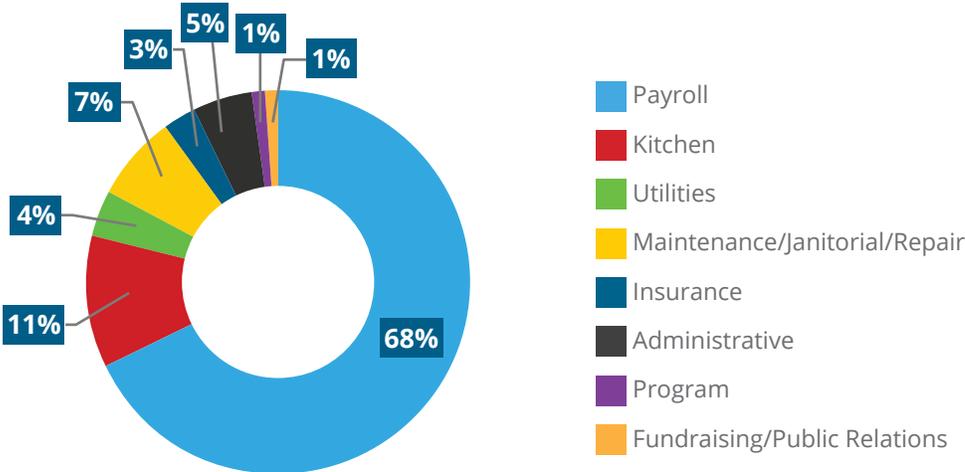
Every **\$1** invested in early education equals as much as **\$13** saved in future costs to our society.

# FINANCIALS AND NUMBERS

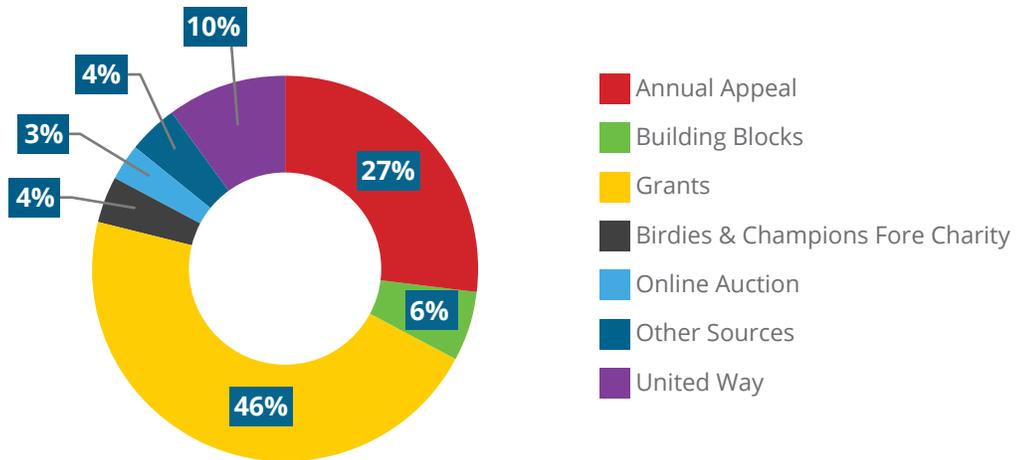
## 2019 Revenue Sources



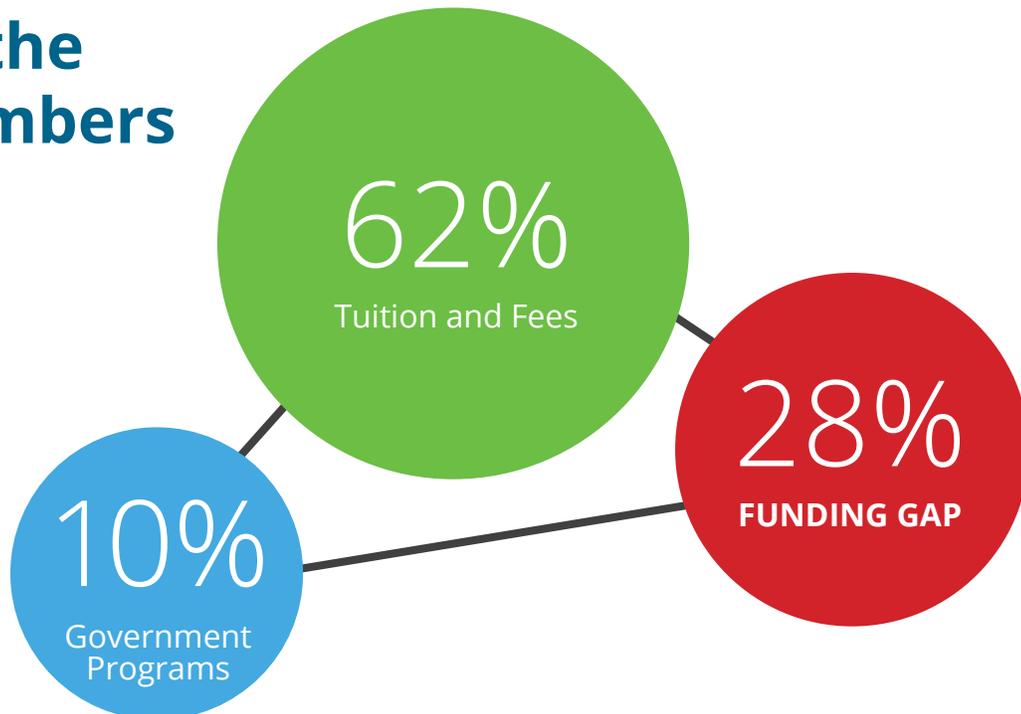
## 2019 Expenses



## 2019 Fundraising Activities



## By the Numbers



*We rely heavily on the generosity of individuals, grants and special events to keep tuition affordable.*

# 2019 DONORS

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The Bargain Box  
The Church Mouse  
Ward Family Foundation  
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Ms. Orethia White  
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## Other Sources & Tributes

Hilton Head Christian Academy  
Hilton Head Island  
Bridge Association  
Hilton Head Realtors Association  
Spaghetti Dinner  
Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Hoover  
Island Recreation Center  
Italian American Club  
of Hilton Head  
Kroger Community Rewards  
Mako Medical Laboratories  
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Mr. & Mrs. Albert Prillaman  
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Sunset  
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Mr. & Mrs. Tim Stehly  
The GE Foundation  
United Way of the Lowcountry Inc.

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