

Early Learning Connections *Nashville, TN*

Sponsoring Organization

Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee
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Contact Person

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Service Delivery Area

Middle Tennessee (Nashville and the surrounding counties)

Type of Organization

Currently a fund of the Community Foundation, (FDN is a 501c(3))

Summary of Approach

The Nashville Alliance currently includes 11 non-profit early care and education programs that collectively serve over 1,500 children in 17 sites and collectively employ over 400 individuals. More than two-thirds of the children served by these centers receive some form of public subsidy. All sites are 3 stars in the TN Quality Rating system (the maximum rating).

At present, the Alliance works as an unincorporated collaboration led by staff from the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee and operating as a project of the Foundation. The Alliance follows formal meeting procedures and makes decisions based on consensus. Longer-term plans include becoming an independent 501©3 or a subsidiary of the Foundation, with it's own governance board.

Services Provided

The Nashville Alliance is still in start-up mode. Some services have been launched and others are in development and include the following:

Group Purchasing of goods and services – Currently have shared purchasing contracts for property management (hvac, handyman, plumbing, electrical), classroom supplies, milk, janitorial, and mulch and; working on food. Created training program called Cook's Academy to celebrate and train cooks, lower food costs through standardized menu, improved nutritional profile.

Fiscal Management – Have developed a fiscal management benchmarking tool, to be used internally so that Alliance members can evaluate their costs in the context of peer norms.

Administrative Support – currently working on tool to benchmark administrators ‘time on task’ to help guide decision-making and the development of shared staffing with regard to various administrative tasks.

Billing/fee collection – currently not centralized, however the Alliance is exploring this area for shared services potential.

USDA Food Program – currently not centralized but open to exploration. Over 80% of our children are on free or reduced food program.

Enrollment – currently not centralized, however the Alliance is exploring this area for shared services potential. Working on a tool to help track vacancy rates and inform decisions regarding collaborative approach to maintaining full enrollment.

Training – currently not centralized but exploring a range of ways to support shared staff development.

Substitutes -- exploring ways to create a substitute pool for teachers;

Human Resources - currently not centralized but exploring a range of ways to share costs

Staffing: currently exploring this area for shared services potential.

Staff at Network Coordinator or “Umbrella” Organization

ELC Collaboration Manager

Date Program/Alliance Began

Alliance was launched in Fall, 2010

Funding

Prior to launch of the Alliance, several small, local foundations provided funding for a feasibility study. Subsequently, a three-year start-up grant was provided by the Child Care Services Division of the Tennessee Department of Human Services. Individual Alliance members receive funding from a host of federal, state and local sources including: CCDF and TANF child care certificates, CACFP, Head Start, parent tuition, United Way, foundations, churches and other philanthropy,

Participating providers

The Alliance currently includes the following 11 centers, several of whom have multiple sites and/or operate family support services: Eighteenth Avenue Family

Enrichment Center, Bethlehem Centers of Nashville, Blakemore Children's Center, Fannie Battle Day Home for Children, First Steps, Grace M. Eaton Child Care & Early Learning Center, The King's Daughters Child Development Center, McNeilly Center for Children, St. Luke's Community House, St. Mary's Villa Child Development Center, Wayne Reed Christian Childcare Center.

Population served

Primarily low-income, variety of cultural backgrounds, over 80% of children served by centers in the Alliance are on free or reduce food program.