



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
RESEARCH-PRACTICE PARTNERSHIP

## SUMMER NEEDS ASSESSMENT INTERIM REPORT

December 15, 2020

Colin Murphy  
Executive Director  
Children's Trust of Alachua County  
P.O. Box 5669  
Gainesville, FL 32627

Dear Mr. Murphy:

The Children's Trust of Alachua County (CTAC) contracted with the Youth Development Research-Practice Partnership (YDRPP) at the University of Florida to assess K–8 summer programming in Alachua County and provide recommendations regarding the following questions: (1) In what parts of the county should Trust-funded programs be located? 2) What evidence-based attributes should the Trust-funded programs include to support positive youth development and literacy? and 3) What types of programs would best meet Alachua County children and families' self-identified needs? This interim report summarizes our progress to date.

**Assessment of availability and attributes of current summer youth programming in Alachua County:** Though quality summer programming for K–8 youth is an integral part of child and youth development and educational success, no agency in Alachua County has been tasked with maintaining a comprehensive database of such services. Therefore, as our first step, we collected these data from information hubs (organizations that compile data for the public, such as Fun 4 Gator Kids and the BOOST Alliance) and funding organizations (the United Way, CTAC, the Community Foundation). Though our data is likely not comprehensive, it does indicate patterns of summer programming and funding over the past two years. It could serve as the foundation for a comprehensive database of summer youth programs that the county could maintain and make available to families. Using this data set, we designed and distributed a survey for youth providers on summer programming for K–8 youth to assess the attributes of current programs (location, accessibility, program length, types of activities, hours available, and cost) and solicit provider perspectives on program capacity and the CTAC RFP process. 53 organizations completed the survey. We are currently analyzing survey data to compile the attributes of active summer programs. We will further explore the provider perspective using either a focus group or targeted individual interviews.

**Identification of Alachua County parents/caregivers' needs:** We designed a qualitative focus group process to collect parent/caregiver needs and perspectives on accessibility and quality of available programs. To ensure our data represent all county residents' needs and include diverse



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racial, economic, gender, and learning-based perspectives, and attends to most vulnerable families, we organized focus-group recruitment and participation by zip code and region. Further, we used equity-based, culturally competent focus group administration practices. Of the 35 parents/caregivers who participated in one of six focus groups, 14 identified as white, 19 as African American Non-Hispanic, one as African American Hispanic, and one preferred not to identify; 31 identified as female, three as male, and one preferred not to identify. We are currently using qualitative research methods to analyze these data.

**Review of best practices:** We are also reviewing and synthesizing academic literature related to best practices regarding youth summer program content. This literature review, combined with our analyses of current summer programming attributes, provider perspectives, and parent/caregiver needs, will inform our recommendations to the CTAC.

Sincerely,

Dr. Christine Wegner

Principal Investigator, Youth Development Research-Practice Partnership