



September 20, 2021

Jonathan Leslie
Project YouthBuild
P.O. Box 13522
Gainesville, FL 32604

CC: Board of the Children's Trust of Alachua County

Dear Mr. Leslie:

First, I would like to acknowledge that I did receive your proposal on July 27th. I did not know that at the September 13th, 2021 board meeting. I did not recall any correspondence from you until August when you asked me to confirm that I received your original email. Once I received your prompting, your application was forwarded to the programs team to go through our review process. I can understand why you would be frustrated. Nevertheless, once I became aware of your proposal, the team at the CTAC worked as diligently and expeditiously as possible given our workload at the time the proposal was received. I understand that you did not think our response was fast enough, and the fact that other proposals submitted around the same time as yours appeared to receive a more expedited review sure did not help. For that, I apologize.

We will not be recommending any funding through the "Unsolicited Proposals" process at this time. In fact, at the September 27, 2021 CTAC Board Meeting, staff will be recommending that Board Policy 6.80,A be rescinded. We will also be presenting to the Board new figures on "Unallocated" dollars. The new figures take into account the recent awards for afterschool programming and estimates for some programs that were previously "TBD". Staff will discuss with the Board some recommendations on how to best use those remaining dollars.

Concerning the details of your proposal, while you provided an enthusiastic description of the type of activities delivered, there is very little in terms of data to quantify the program's performance. The CTAC has adopted the Results-Based Accountability Framework which measures program performance in terms of *how much* programs do in terms of quantity of services (i.e. number of clients, number of different services etc.), *how well* programs perform those services (i.e. satisfaction, completion percentages), and *better off* measures that show positive changes for the clients (i.e. gains in learning or knowledge, changes in behavior, etc.). I reviewed both your current proposal and your end-of-year report to the CTAC (see attached). While your end-of-year report contained information on the number of clients served through October 2020 (23 parents, 37 children, 2 pregnancies) and the number of

sessions per week (2), I did not find any data to substantiate the quality to which those services were delivered or if those services provided any measurable benefits to the parents and families. ***Of course, I know that the program must have provided a tremendous benefit to participants – you provided terrific testimonials in the end-of-year report.*** The stories of the parents that the program supported were extremely moving, touching, and heart-warming. Supporting those narratives with data would make your proposal even stronger in the future. Furthermore, your proposal asked for a funding increase from the original award. Without proposed performance measures, it is difficult to determine if the costs are commensurate with the expected outcomes. We also realize you are preparing your Final Report for FY 2021. Our hope is that once we receive your final report, we will better understand the program's performance.

Lastly, I very much enjoyed our conversation at your office on September 9, 2020. I recall the conversation very well and remember discussing the niche you believed this program filled, and telling me that the participants in this program were unlikely to receive the services of home visiting parent education programs due to the reluctance to let others in their home. As you may know, the Pritzker Children's Initiative has invested in Alachua County with the goal of providing support for our community to improve systems for children and families from prenatal-to-three years old. Mia Jones serves as our Pritzker Fellow and our Early Childhood Coordinator. It was my understanding that you already met with Deon and provided an overview of the parenting program. We have a big interest in seeing that parents and children are connected with resources that help children grow and develop, and that parents are able to access high quality childcare so they can get the support they need to work and provide for their families.

I would be happy to accept your offer from your email on August 26th to share some ideas on how your agency can expand its capacity to better support "opportunity youth" in our community and to receive some feedback on some initiatives the staff of the CTAC will be proposing in the very near future.

Sincerely,



Colin G. Murphy
Executive Director

**Florida Institute for Workforce Innovation d/b/a Project YouthBuild
Parenting Program
Children’s Trust of Alachua County
End of Year Report
October 12, 2020**

To be completed by the Providing Agency

How much?	Actual	How well?	Actual	Anyone better off?	Actual
Expected # of children to be served: 35-55	37	Exceeding YTD performance measures	n/a	yes	n/a
Intensity of Services: On-going engagement (weekly sessions)	At least 2 per week				

Project Narrative:

Describe what has been accomplished year-to-date.
Include any adjustments due to COVID-19 or any other helpful information

Accomplishments Year to Date

Launched in 2009, Project YouthBuild, is a 9-month educational, occupational, and leadership program for young people ages 16 – 24 who have dropped out of school and have a low-income. Traditionally, 45-60% of young people enrolled in Project YouthBuild are parents with few of them engaging in available parenting and home visitation programs. The PYB Parenting Program was developed to help meet the needs of young parents and their children living in our community who lack access to resources. Created using a blended model, the PYB Parenting Program, provides young parents with evidence-based parenting skills/education while increasing their engagement and participation with existing programs through effective advocacy and relationship building---while serving as an early intervention program for their young children.

To date, the PYB Parenting Program has served 23 parents, 37 children, 2 current pregnancies.

Parent Information:

Age Range: 18 – 27 years old
Average Age: 22
Total females: 20
Total males: 3
Single Parents: 15

Children Information:

Age Range: Newborn – 10 years old
Median Age: 1.5 years old
Female children: 17
Male children: 20

Variety of Course Offerings to Date (at least 2 course offerings per week since August):

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| Co-Parenting Seminar | Financial Literacy |
| Early Steps Developmental Screening Program | Meal Planning |
| Mindfulness & Stress Management | Family Planning |
| Time Management | Phono-Graphix Literacy Class |
| Read-a-Long & Navigating Library Website | Safe Playgroups Workshop |
| Cares Clinic (Assisted Parents with Completion of Alachua Cares Application) | |

November Scheduled Courses:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Doula Birthing & Postpartum Care | Communicating with Children Class |
| Safe Sleep Class | Nutrition & Healthy Cooking Class |
| Healthy Discipline | Phono-Graphix Literacy Class |
| Post-Secondary Financial Aid Clinic | Fatherhood Initiative |
| Peer Support Groups | |

Partner Collaboration Year to Date:

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| Early Learning Coalition | Santa Fe College |
| University of Florida | Library Partnership |
| Partnership for Strong Families | Bread of the Mighty |
| Big Brothers, Big Sisters | Stokes Center |
| Gainesville Thrives | Planned Parenthood |
| Community Action Agency | Friends of the Library |
| Healthy Start | Healthy Families |
| System of Care | City of Gainesville |
| River Phoenix Center for Peace Building | Meridian |
| BOOST Alliance | Head Start |

Case Management/Support Services Overview:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Mental Health Counselling Referrals | Food & Nutrition Distributed |
| Baby Formula Distributed | Diapers Provided |

- +50 Books Given Away
- Home Furniture Provided for Family of 6
- Distributed Gas Cards
- Assisted with ELC childcare applications
- Childcare payment assistance
- Assisted parents with Alachua Cares Application
- FAFSA Assistance
- Distributed Bus Passes
- Program Referral
- Utility Assistance
- Transportation to medical appointments

Parenting Program in Progress:

Jane

Jane is a 27-year-old mother of three. Since August, Jane and her 3-year-old daughter, 1.5-year-old son, and 6-month-old son have lived in an extended stay motel while their subsidized 1-bedroom apartment is being remodeled. The motel is located in Southwest Gainesville and her apartment is located in Northeast Gainesville. The PYB Parenting Coordinator was able to meet Jane at her temporary residence to complete an enrollment and intake assessment. Jane was able to outline barriers and challenges that were most pressing in her current situation. She shared that living in a small hotel room with no transportation made it difficult to go grocery shopping due to walking with her 3 children and carrying groceries back to her residence. In addition, Jane reported she had not been able to take her children to medical appointments since the Covid-19 stay at home order was issued in March. She expressed concerns related to her emotional well-being and feeling trapped in her motel room with no one to talk to for long periods of time. Lastly, Jane needed assistance finding a job as she had not been employed for over three years.

Since that initial meeting, Jane has started a part time job working 4 days a week and was given a bus pass which she now uses to get to and from work. Prior her first day of work she shared that she wasn't able to purchase scrubs that were required for her position and we were able to assist her with purchasing her uniform. She has established a positive relationship with a licensed mental health counselor and is meeting weekly via zoom or in person. The PYB Program Coordinator took her to the grocery store, so Jane could stock up on groceries. Staff also assisted Jane with making a formal request to her landlord for a 3-bedroom apartment at her housing complex and the management committed in writing to provide a 3-bedroom apartment versus the 1-bedroom apartment she currently occupies. Jane applied for utility assistance through the LIHEAP at Community Action Agency and staff are assisting her with a childcare application with the Early Learning Coalition. Finally, she hadn't been able to take her two children to the doctor since the COVID-19 stay at home order began in March, so the PYB Program Coordinator picked up her and her children from the motel and transported them to the doctor's office, where her children were updated on their immunizations. She has been actively in contact with staff at PYB, and has attended and participated in weekly parenting classes.

Mary

Mary is a 22-year-old single mother with a 2-year-old daughter. Mary is a current student at Project YouthBuild and was one of the first applicants to the Parenting Program, attending the open house August 3rd with her daughter. Mary's goals for the Parenting Program included learning about developmental milestones for her daughter and making sure she was reading to her daughter regularly. Since enrolling in the program, she has been an active participant in courses such as family planning, financial literacy, and more. Mary has not only been involved as a participant, but she had advocated for other young parents with young children by recommending class topics that would benefit her peers. We have invited her into partnership

meetings with other organizations, so she can speak to the needs and interests of parents involved in our program. Mary participated in one of our Alachua CARES clinics to apply for funding after losing her job in the spring due to the pandemic and she received funding assistance for her and her daughter. Once she graduates from Project YouthBuild, Mary's future goals include attending Santa Fe College to become an EMT. Parenting Program staff are assisting her now with completing financial aid and college applications, so she can enroll this Spring.

Adjustments as a Result of COVID- 19

Like many organizations and programs, the Project YouthBuild Parenting Program operational plan and delivery has been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Program modifications for the Parenting Program have been based on CDC, state, and local guidance always placing the safety of staff, young people enrolled in the program and their children, and our community partners. Program recruitment has been impacted by the pandemic as it has limited our ability to present to groups, host open houses, and other activities involving contact with the community. With the exception of limited instances, all classes and workshops have taken place via distance learning and meeting on Zoom. Relying on distance learning and virtual meeting platforms has limited our course and workshop offerings that would require hands on learning activities. Due to the majority of partner locations being closed throughout the pandemic it has limited our ability to host classes and workshops in outlying communities in the community.

One of the most significant adjustments we have made is to develop a comprehensive strategy to mitigate food access, housing and financial hardships that the majority of the families we work with have experienced since March. The Parenting Program Coordinator has spent significant time assisting families to secure assistance related to food, utilities, housing, job losses and health crises. One of our core priorities has been to help young parents and their children stabilize their current living situation, so they can focus on positive development.

With the everchanging environment, we have learned valuable lessons. For example, we now utilize tele-counseling when appropriate. This adjustment has helped young people with lack of transportation meet regularly with their counselor. We have developed courses and workshops that work well using a virtual meeting environment and we will continue to offer a variety of learning and support opportunities to young parents and their children utilizing virtual platforms. We have been able to teach young people how to utilize technology that will help them in their educational, occupational, and personal development pursuits.

Lastly, given all the challenges, obstacles, and limitations the pandemic has imposed on our community and program, we have been extremely encouraged with the participation by young people and their children and we continue to see growing interest. We are confident that the PYB Parenting Program is helping meet an unmet need in our community and addressing the Trust's four overarching points of emphasis: All children are born health and remain healthy; all children learn what they need to be successful; all children have nurturing, supportive caregivers and relationships; all children live in a safe community. We look forward to collaborating with the Trust and community partners to provide important and timely supports and services to young parents and their children.