



HobeSoundEarlyLearningCenter

Foundations For A Brighter Future

2024-2025



HISTORY

The Hobe Sound Early Learning Center has been serving children and families in Hobe Sound and surrounding areas since 1962. Our programs and services have evolved over the years but our quality and commitment to early childhood development remains the forefront of everything we do. In 2023, the Center opened 3 additional classrooms to increase enrollment and meet the need of families in our community. Currently, HSELC is serving 207 children ages 1-5.



Mission Statement

The Hobe Sound Early Learning Center provides families, regardless of income, an affordable early-education program incorporating nurturing, education, and recreation to stimulate their children's healthy emotional and social development and help them excel in school and life.

Vision Statement

For all children to realize their full potential in an impactful high-quality, high yield early learning environment.



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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& John Boyer
Co-Presidents

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Treasurer

Amanda Graves
Secretary

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Kristen Bennett
Dr. Ken Botsford

Alana Deasy

Philip Franke

Kim Nash

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Ashley Azzi
Head of School

EARLY LEARNING ADVOCATES

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Nina Botsford

Barbara Carr

Cindy Dwyer

Judy Keller

Sue Lester

Mary McCormack

Elly McKenna

Phil Rooney

Eleanor Seaman

Eric Wesel

Pam White



A Work of Heart

CELEBRATING OUR QUALITY and COMMITMENT

by ASHLEY AZZI
HEAD OF SCHOOL

At Hobe Sound Early Learning Center, we know that early childhood education is more than lesson plans and routines, it's a work of heart.

Everyday, our teachers are shaping young minds and guiding children through their most formative years with patience, intention, and deep care. It takes a truly special person to do this work, and I am constantly in awe of the dedication, love, and professionalism that our team brings into the classroom.

This year, our commitment to excellence in early learning was affirmed through our strong CLASS scores, an achievement that speaks volumes about the quality of interactions happening each day within our walls.

For those unfamiliar, CLASS (the Classroom Assessment Scoring

System) is a nationally recognized tool used to assess the quality of teacher-child interactions. It doesn't look at what's on the walls or how many toys are in the classroom. Instead, it measures what matters most: the ways in which educators connect with children, guide their learning, and create a safe, nurturing environment that supports healthy emotional and cognitive development. CLASS evaluates three key domains: emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support, each essential to the social and academic success of young children.

CLASS is measured on a 7-point rating scale, and we are proud

to share that our center scored a 5.46, a score that reflects the genuine warmth, consistency, and intentionality our teachers bring into the classroom every day.

Why does this matter? Because children's brains are developing at lightning speed during the early years. In fact, 90% of a child's brain development occurs before the age of five. During this time, the relationships children form with their caregivers—especially their teachers—help build the foundation for all future learning. The tone of a voice, the consistency of routines, the encouragement to try something new, the support through big emotions—these moments are not small. They're everything.



Our high CLASS score is a direct reflection of the intentional work our educators put in to ensure every child feels seen, heard, and supported. This year, our team has focused heavily on strengthening small group instruction—an essential component of quality early learning that allows teachers to hone in on each child's unique strengths, needs, and learning styles. This work, paired with our dedication to social-emotional

learning, has had a profound impact.

We're proud to share that 84% of our students met kindergarten readiness benchmarks this year, a number that places us above the state average and showcases the effectiveness of our whole-child approach. But beyond that percentage are real children with growing confidence, curiosity, and compassion, ready to take on the world one question, one friendship, and one

new experience at a time.

We are proud. We are grateful. And we are committed to continuous growth. As we reflect on these accomplishments, we know that none of this would be possible without the heart of our school: our educators, our families, and you, our supporters. Thank you for believing in the power of early childhood education done with excellence and heart.



Guiding Our Mission:

A LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENTS

DEAR FRIENDS OF THE HOBE SOUND EARLY LEARNING CENTER.

As we reflect on this past year at the Hobe Sound Early Learning Center, we do so with deep pride in the progress made and a strong sense of optimism for the path ahead. The Center's mission—to provide children, regardless of income, with high-quality early education in a nurturing and inclusive environment—has remained our North Star. And as Co-Presidents of the Board of Directors, it has been our privilege to work in partnership with an extraordinary administrative team, led by Head of School Ashley Azzi, to ensure that the Center is well-positioned to fulfill that mission for generations to come.

One of the most significant milestones of the past year was the approval and adoption of a new Strategic Plan, finalized in early summer 2025. This plan is the result of months of thoughtful collaboration between the Board and Center leadership. It provides a clear and ambitious roadmap focused on three key areas: capital improvements to our physical campus, long-term financial sustainability, and enrichment of the programs and faculty that make our work so impactful. The plan reflects our values, affirms our priorities, and—importantly—comes with a strategic financial framework to support its implementation.

That work is already underway, and it will require a sustained, hybrid effort—one that leverages the Board's role in strategic oversight while empowering Ashley and the senior administrative team to lead its day-to-day execution. We are confident in their leadership and look forward to supporting them every step of the way.

Moments like this also give us the opportunity to acknowledge the dedicated individuals who have helped lead the Center to this point. This year, we say farewell to four outstanding Board members, each

of whom has made a meaningful and lasting impact on HSELC.

Lindsey Thomas, who joined the Board in 2022, brought financial acumen and steady leadership to her role as Treasurer and member of our Finance Committee. Her work helped guide thoughtful budget practices and fiscal planning that continue to benefit the Center.

Natalie Whelan, who began her term in 2021, served with distinction on our Education Committee. Her passion for children's learning and development was evident in every conversation, and her voice helped shape key programmatic decisions with empathy and clarity.

Nicolas Matsoukis, who joined the Board in 2020, provided sound, practical guidance through his role on the Buildings and Grounds Committee. His insight and experience were critical as the Board began its early conversations about the need for capital planning and long-term facilities work.

Finally, we are especially grateful to Jaime Kiske, who has served on our Board since 2018, for her longstanding and tireless service. Jaime's involvement has touched nearly every facet of HSELC's growth in recent years. She was a driving force on our Resource Development Committee, chaired the Strategic Planning Committee that led us through the recent planning process, and co-chaired the Hobe Sound Chili Cookoff—our largest and

most vital fundraising event—for several consecutive years. Her deep dedication, thoughtful leadership, and unwavering support of the Center have been nothing short of extraordinary.

As we express our gratitude to these remarkable Board members, we are equally excited to welcome two dynamic new members to our Board of Directors this year.

Kristen Bennett, a current HSELC parent and experienced HR professional, brings strong experience in talent acquisition and a deep understanding of our community. Kristen and her husband, Matt, live in Tequesta with their two daughters, Rory and Rosie, and we are excited for the perspective she brings as both a parent and a professional.

We also welcome Alana Deasy, Managing Director at AR Trading, LLC and a lifelong resident of northern Palm Beach and Martin Counties. Alana and her husband, Ryan, have two children who have attended HSELC, and she brings valuable business experience, strong community ties, and a clear commitment to early education. We are thrilled to have both Kristen and

Alana join us during such a pivotal time in the Center's development.

We also want to express our deep appreciation to Ashley Azzi and her senior leadership team. Their professionalism, focus, and tireless work on behalf of the Center—especially during a year marked by long-range planning and operational demands—have been nothing short of exceptional. The Board remains grateful for their partnership and proud to support them as they bring this vision to life.

Of course, the true heart of the Hobe Sound Early Learning Center is found in its faculty. Our teachers are the lifeblood of this organization—educators, caregivers, mentors, and role models. Every day, they bring warmth, energy, and expertise into their classrooms, helping to shape the confidence and character of the children we serve. Their dedication is deeply felt and deeply valued. We thank them for the critical work they do and for the joy and care they bring to every student who walks through our doors.

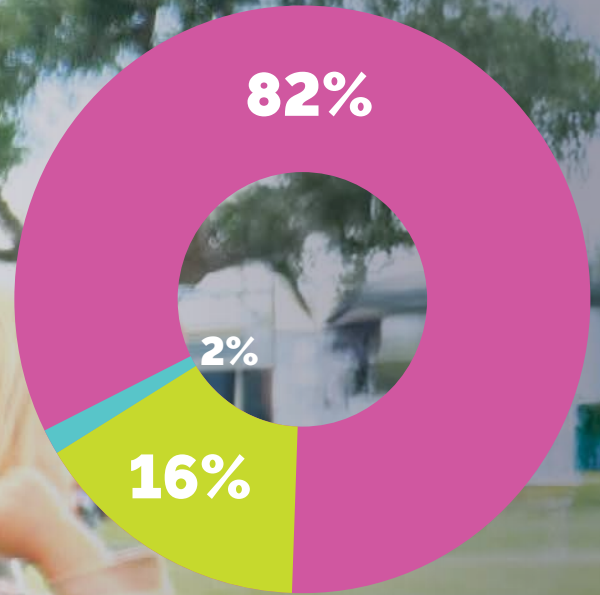
The work of the Hobe Sound Early Learning Center is not only essential—it is transformative. With a strong plan in place, a capable and inspired team, and a community of supporters committed to our shared mission, we are ready to take the next bold steps forward.

With gratitude,

JOHN BOYER & STEVE BARTRAM

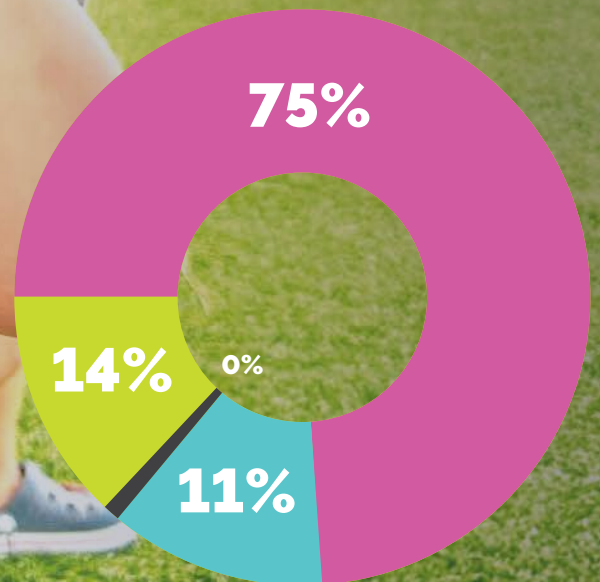
Co-Presidents, Board of Directors

REVENUES



- Tuition, Reimbursements, Subsidies
- Community Support
- Fundraiser

EXPENSES



- Staff
- Occupancy
- General Expenses
- Fundraising

2023-2024 **Total Revenue** \$2,716,078

2024-2025 **Total Revenue** \$2,980,421

2023-2024 **Total Expenses** \$2,862,280

2024-2025 **Total Expenses** \$2,846,827

Inside the Classroom:



FROG STREET PRE-K curriculum is a comprehensive, dual-language program designed to meet the needs of diverse learners while supporting developmental learning domains. This engaging, interactive pre-kindergarten curriculum celebrates the joy of learning as children travel down the road to success.



FROG STREET THREES provides intentional instruction in key areas of development so children ages 36-48 months can effectively continue the path to kindergarten readiness. This curriculum has well-rounded activities developed around early brain development research, addressing all development domains. It includes social and emotional emphasis through Conscious Discipline.



FROG STREET TODDLER nurtures curiosity through exploration. It focuses on enhancing the simple joy of childhood while equipping parents to nurture curiosity through exploration. This program is specially created for children ages eighteen to thirty-six months. The activities center around five development domains; differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all learners. It is designed with intention and purpose to move children forward in their development.

HEAD START & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAMS HSELCL contracted with the Agricultural and Labor Program Inc. (ALPI) to provide educational services to Head Start and Early Head Start families. Research has proven how important these formative early years are for children's later successes in school and life. This partnership removes the financial barrier many families face when considering an early childhood education for their children and helps to build the foundations needed to perform academically on their grade level.

Head Start programs support children's growth in a positive learning environment through a variety of services, which include early learning and development, health and family well-being. The child's entire family, as well as the community, is involved to create a quality program and assist the child with school readiness.



★ Programs with Purpose

INSPIRING GROWTH
AND LEARNING



ArtReach

The center's art program under the guidance and leadership of the Lighthouse Gallery, in Tequesta, engages children's imagination in the world of art. The ArtReach program offers children weekly interactive art instruction and materials to inspire their creative spirit. ***This program is generously sponsored by the Hobe Sound Community Chest!***

Music Together® Class

This in-school curriculum raises the overall quality of a child's education by touching crucial factors all at once: school readiness, family engagement, parent-child relationships, and teacher professional development. When Music Together is a part of the school day, music is not just fun – it is a powerful learning tool, too! ***This program is generously sponsored by the Hobe Sound Community Chest!***

Small Group Instruction

Our certified educator works directly with VPK students in small groups based on their skill levels to provide extra learning opportunities. Small group instruction has been a key factor in our success with students who are struggling with School Readiness Skills.



Parent Empowerment Workshops

These classes are "life changing" and help parents deepen their connection to their children and foster self-love, responsibility, resiliency and self-esteem. They provide young parents the tools they need to create a safe, peaceful & supportive environment in their home. We are enthusiastic about making these workshops available to all parents.

Technology

Classrooms were provided with tablets to help guide children through learning technology skills sets & utilize interactive programming to be prepared for kindergarten. **Our VPK and 3-year-old students participated in Whiz Kids Inc. during the 2024-2025 school year.** Technology and computer training for preschoolers offers necessary skills that contribute to their overall development and preparedness for school.

Fitness Program

The Center partnered with Hobe Sound Soccer Club to provide students with opportunities to participate in soccer. The program teaches students teamwork, communication, sportsmanship, confidence, coordination and gross motor skills.



Bi-Lingual Program

Bi-lingual educators and staff open the lines of communication and prepare students to be fully engaged, informed, and aids in their achieving a level of inclusiveness that enhances their lives.

Healthy Meals with Community Partner

Every day, we provide a healthy breakfast, a warm & nutritious lunch and wholesome snacks to all children attending our Center. All meals are prepared by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Martin County and meet the daily nutritional recommendations for children one-five years of age.



Leaving ^A Legacy THROUGH LITERATURE

In the spring of 2025, we were deeply honored to unveil the **Jansing Legacy Library & Bench**—a beautifully crafted space dedicated to the memory of **Mrs. Shelley Bush Jansing**. Created with love and intention, this special addition to our campus celebrates the life and legacy of a remarkable woman whose impact on our Center will be felt for generations to come.



Mrs. Jansing, who passed away in November, was far more than a generous supporter of Hobe Sound Early Learning Center—she was a steadfast advocate for early childhood education and a guiding light in our mission. Her unwavering belief in the potential of every young child and her commitment to fostering a strong educational foundation made her a true champion of our work. Her influence reached far beyond financial contributions; she was a consistent presence, a voice of encouragement, and a model of compassionate leadership.

To honor all that she gave—and all that she stood for—we created a space that reflects the values she held closest to her heart: the transformative power of literacy, the strength of human connection, and the quiet joy of being fully present with a child.

Nestled just outside the front entrance of our Center, the **Jansing Legacy Library & Bench** offers more than a place to sit or borrow a book. It is an open invitation to pause—to share a story, to listen, to reflect, and to connect. Whether it's a parent reading to their child before drop-off or a passerby discovering a favorite book, this space was designed to inspire meaningful moments in the spirit of Mrs. Jansing's legacy.

Through this lasting tribute, we hope to continue the work she held so dear: nurturing young minds, supporting families, and building a community rooted in love, literacy, and lifelong learning.



iMPACT

by the numbers

15

BILINGUAL
STAFF
MEMBERS

24 children receive early
intervention services

210

students ages 1-5
were served during
the 2024-2025
academic year

12

The Center hosted
more than 12 family
events throughout
the school year



80

Over 80 children
received
technology training
through our Whiz
Kids Program

free
MEALS SERVED

Breakfast: 20,938

Lunch: 25,508

Snack: 24,343

Total: 70,789

every day, every child, *Every Step Forward*



The Early Learning Coalition (ELC), a state-funded organization, plays a vital role in supporting early childhood education by providing oversight, resources, and financial assistance to programs like ours. Each year, the ELC conducts evaluations of early learning centers through classroom observations and performance benchmarks to ensure children are receiving high-quality instruction and care.



The Center's overall assessment score has risen from **5.33 to 5.46** for the 2024–2025 school year. **This score is based on a 7-point scale.** Teachers across all age groups were evaluated through a variety of measures, and this upward shift — though small in number — represents significant progress in the quality of education we deliver. It's a reflection of the commitment, expertise, and hard work our dedicated staff pour into their classrooms every single day.

We're thrilled to share even more outstanding news — our official Kindergarten Readiness score for 2024-2025 school year climbed to **84%**, up from **76%** last year!

This important metric, released annually by the Office of Early Learning, measures how well our VPK

students are prepared for kindergarten. The score is based on statewide assessments conducted within the first 30 days of kindergarten, evaluating early literacy, math, and language skills. In many ways, it's one of the most tangible indicators of the long-term impact of our VPK program — and an 8-point increase is a milestone worth celebrating.

Even more remarkable, one of our VPK classrooms earned a **perfect 100% readiness score**. Every single child from that class entered kindergarten fully equipped to succeed. This achievement is a testament to the skill, dedication, and passion of our teaching staff, as well as the strong support systems we've built together to help every student thrive.

We're proud to share that the ELC's recent assessment of our educators at Hobe Sound Early Learning Center affirmed the strength and quality of our program. The results highlighted our commitment to excellence and the outstanding work of our teaching staff. With 90% of brain development occurring by the age of five, our highly trained and dedicated educators understand the profound impact they have in shaping a child's early learning journey. At HSEL, we take this responsibility seriously, knowing that the nurturing, engaging environment we provide today builds the foundation for tomorrow's success.



THE IMPACT OF HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



1. COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- ♥ Early Literacy & Numeracy Skills
- ♥ Brain Development
- ♥ School Readiness

2. SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL GROWTH

- ♥ Improved Communication
- ♥ Emotional Regulation
- ♥ Social Skills

3. INDEPENDENCE & SELF-CONFIDENCE

- ♥ Encourages Independence
- ♥ Builds Confidence
- ♥ Decision-Making Skills

4. ENHANCED MOTOR SKILLS

- ♥ Fine Motor Development
- ♥ Gross Motor Skills

5. BETTER BEHAVIOR & DISCIPLINE

- ♥ Routine & Structure
- ♥ Respect for Rules

6. LONG-TERM ACADEMIC & LIFE BENEFITS

- ♥ Higher Academic Achievement
- ♥ Reduced Dropout Rates
- ♥ Improved Career Prospects





voluntary **PREKINDERGARTEN**

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) was established in Florida following the passage of a constitutional amendment in 2002, and was officially signed into law by Governor Jeb Bush on January 2, 2005. This landmark program was designed to ensure that every four-year-old in Florida has access to high-quality early education, setting the stage for long-term academic success. Hobe Sound Early Learning Center (HSEL) has proudly offered VPK since its inception.

To further support our VPK students, HSEL developed a robust small group instruction program tailored to meet each child's unique needs. Through differentiated activities and personalized instruction, students receive focused attention that deepens their understanding and strengthens their readiness

skills. This targeted approach builds a lasting educational foundation that benefits children well beyond preschool.

The VPK school-year program includes 540 instructional hours. Research shows that children who attend VPK demonstrate enhanced language development, greater independence, stronger social skills, and improved performance on school readiness assessments.

At HSEL, all VPK students participate in pre- and post-assessments to measure growth throughout the year. The results from the 2024-2025 school year highlight not only the critical importance of VPK in preparing children for kindergarten, but also the unwavering commitment of our educators to nurturing each child's development and potential.



A NIGHT TO *remember:* VPK PROM 2025

The excitement was contagious as our VPK students arrived dressed in their finest—bow ties, sparkly dresses, big smiles, and even bigger energy. Our first inaugural VPK Prom was more than just a celebration; it was a joyful sendoff for a group of young learners who have grown, explored, and blossomed together throughout the year.

Prom was hosted at the United Methodist Church in Hobe Sound. The space was transformed into a magical environment, complete with twinkling lights, colorful decorations, and a dance floor ready for tiny feet. Parents and caregivers beamed with pride as they watched their children twirl, laugh, and pose for photos that will become cherished memories.

From the moment the music started, the room was filled with laughter and dancing. Teachers joined in on the fun, encouraging every child to show off their best moves.

Thanks to the generous support of our incredible community partners—**4C's Club, Caring Children/Clothing Children, and the United Way of Martin County**—our VPK graduates enjoyed a truly special (and completely FREE) shopping experience in preparation for their big Prom Night! Our students lit up with excitement as they selected dress clothes, fun accessories, and sparkly details to help them feel confident and celebrated. From vests and sunglasses to bows, bling, and everything in between, the joy on their faces was unforgettable.

We're so thankful for these dedicated organizations who recognize the importance of childhood milestones and continue to help us create magical, meaningful moments for the children and families we serve.



CELEBRATING THE VPK CLASS OF



A MILESTONE OF GROWTH, JOY, AND NEW BEGINNINGS

On a bright and joyful day at the First United Methodist Church, families, teachers, and students gathered to celebrate a momentous occasion—the **VPK Graduation for the Class of 2025**. With caps on their heads, smiles on their faces, and excitement in the air, our young graduates proudly marked the end of their preschool journey and the beginning of a brand-new chapter: kindergarten! The ceremony was filled with heartwarming moments as each child walked across the stage to receive their certificate, cheered on by proud parents, siblings, and loved ones.

Over the past year, these bright young minds have grown in incredible ways—developing skills in early literacy and math, exploring science and art, building social-emotional awareness,

and learning how to be curious, kind, and confident learners. With the support of dedicated teachers and staff, each child has laid the foundation for a lifelong love of learning.

Whether they were singing their hearts out, waving to the crowd, or proudly holding their diplomas, the VPK Class of 2025 showed us just how far they've come—and how ready they are for what lies ahead.

To our graduates: **we are so proud of you.** Your journey is just beginning, and we can't wait to see all the amazing things you'll do next. Keep asking questions, keep dreaming big, and remember—you will always have a home here with us at HSELC!



EASTER Bonnet Parade:

The Center was bursting with color, creativity, and cheer during our annual Easter Bonnet Parade & Contest! Students and teachers worked hard in the days leading up to the event to design and craft one-of-a-kind bonnets that reflected their imagination, artistic flair, and springtime spirit. Each bonnet was as unique as its creator—featuring everything from bunny ears and pastel florals to glittery eggs, chicks, and even silly surprises!

To add to the fun, a variety of prizes were awarded across several creative categories, including "Most Unique," "Best Teacher Bonnet," "Best Easter Theme," and "Most Humorous." The contest celebrated not only the talent of our little learners and dedicated teachers but also the spirit of community and joy that events like this bring to our school.

It was a day to remember—full of bright smiles, festive fun, and a whole lot of heart. We are already hopping with excitement for next year's celebration!

HALLOWEEN Parade:

The Center's highly anticipated annual Halloween Parade was once again a thrilling event—and it was nothing short of *spooktacular*! The air was buzzing with excitement as students and staff transformed into an imaginative cast of characters, bringing festive magic to our playground and halls.

From tiny goblins and graceful princesses to brave superheroes, cuddly animals, classic monsters, and everything in between, the costumes were as creative as they were adorable. Teachers joined in on the fun too, showcasing their Halloween spirit with themed group costumes, clever getups, and fun accessories that had everyone smiling.



Looking Ahead TO OUR Future

In early summer 2025, the Hobe Sound Early Learning Center officially adopted a new strategic plan—an ambitious and thoughtful roadmap designed to guide the Center through its next chapter of growth, excellence, and service to the Hobe Sound community. Developed through months of collaboration between the Board of Directors and Center leadership, the plan focuses on three core priorities: capital improvements, financial stability, and center enrichment.

At the heart of this work is HSELC's steadfast mission: *to provide families, regardless of income, an affordable early-education program incorporating nurturing, education and recreation to stimulate their children's healthy emotional and social development and help them to excel in school and life.*

According to Board Co-President John Boyer, the strategic plan is more than a list of goals—it's a deeply considered reflection of HSELC's values. "This plan represents a unified commitment to strengthening every aspect of the Center—from the buildings where our children learn and grow, to the financial foundation that ensures long-

term sustainability, to the exceptional educators and programs that make HSELC a cornerstone of the Hobe Sound

community," said Boyer. "The Board was fully engaged in this process, and we're proud of what it represents."

Led by the Board of Directors, the strategic planning process involved asking important questions about the Center's direction, sustainability, and potential. From the outset, the Board worked in close partnership with Head of School Ashley Azzi, Director of Development Rachel Sheperd, Director of Finance Petra Pitkonen, and other members of the leadership team to conduct a thorough evaluation of the Center's current state and long-term needs.

"The Board's role wasn't just to approve

this plan—we were active participants in shaping it," said Board Co-President Steve Bartram. "We wanted to ensure that our strategic priorities were realistic, measurable, and aligned with both our mission and the day-to-day operations of the Center."

In addition to the strategic plan itself, the Board also approved a complementary strategic financial plan. This financial framework outlines how the Center will support its goals through disciplined budgeting, reserve fund targets, and clear fundraising priorities—ensuring that progress is not only aspirational, but achievable.

"This isn't aspirational—it's operational," added Bartram. "The financial planning work ensures we're not just dreaming big, but delivering responsibly."

A major element of the strategic plan is a renewed focus on capital investment in the Center's facilities. While HSELC

has served generations of families with pride, its campus needs upgrades to meet evolving safety standards and modern learning environments. To that end, the Center will engage third-party consulting firms to conduct land studies, prepare a campaign planning study, and develop a donor engagement strategy to fund these improvements. A comprehensive facilities assessment will evaluate the current classroom spaces and prioritize future renovations based on safety, educational impact, and cost-efficiency.

"Our goal is to build a physical environment that matches the strength of our programming," said Ashley Azzi, Head of School. "We're creating spaces where children feel safe and inspired, and where teachers can thrive professionally."

The plan also establishes clear measures to ensure long-term financial stability, with Director of Finance Petra Pitkonen playing a central role in its execution. Working alongside the Board's Finance Committee and administrative leadership, Pitkonen is implementing new budgeting protocols, reserve fund policies, and a review of the Center's financial assistance structure to make sure it remains equitable, sustainable, and aligned with the Center's mission.

"We're building a financial model that reflects our values while positioning the Center for responsible growth," said Pitkonen. "That means asking smart questions, evaluating how we use proceeds from events like our annual Chili Cookoff, and developing a structure that provides stability and flexibility."



Boyer praised Pitkonen's leadership in translating strategic goals into financial systems. "Petra brings clarity, discipline, and strategic thinking to every conversation. Her leadership will be essential in ensuring we meet our goals without compromising our fiscal health."

The plan also calls for meaningful investment in what makes HSELC truly special: its teachers and programs. A renewed commitment to programmatic enrichment includes investigating formal accreditation, expanding scholarship and professional development opportunities for teachers, and funding innovative initiatives designed by the staff to enhance learning and classroom experience.

"Our teachers are on the front lines of what we do every day," said Azzi. "We want them to feel empowered and supported in bringing forward ideas that can elevate learning."

Rachel Sheperd, Director of Development, sees the plan as a vital tool for engagement and donor

confidence. "This plan gives us the structure and clarity we need to connect with donors in a meaningful way," she said. "We can point to specific initiatives—capital improvements, teacher development, scholarships—and say, 'This is what your gift will do.' That's a powerful message."

Sheperd noted that the plan also reinforces the Center's reputation as a serious, well-run organization with a long-term vision. "Donors want to invest in places that are thinking about the future. This shows them that HSELC is prepared, focused, and ready."

Now that the plan has been formally adopted, the focus shifts to execution. The Board will maintain strategic oversight, ensuring the Center stays aligned with its stated goals and guiding principles. At the same time, the Board stands ready to support Azzi and the senior administrative team in carrying out the plan's initiatives. The next phase will be a hybrid effort—one that blends the strategic direction of the Board with the daily leadership, creativity, and problem-solving of HSELC's talented staff.

"This is a long-term commitment," said Bartram. "The process doesn't end with a vote—it begins with action. We're confident in our team, and we're here to support them as they lead the way forward."

With clarity of purpose, a strong team in place, and a community of supporters standing behind it, Hobe Sound Early Learning Center is well positioned for what's next.

"This plan is our shared vision," said Azzi. "And now it's time to bring it to life."



The Mary King Award of Excellence, established in 2021 in honor of Mary King's dedicated service as Executive Director of the Hobe Sound Early Learning Center, recognizes an exceptional teacher or staff member each year. This prestigious award includes a monetary prize and celebrates individuals who embody the values Mary championed during her leadership. Recipients are those who demonstrate remarkable collaboration with colleagues, strong leadership, and meaningful contributions to the overall culture and environment of the Center. Honorees also consistently show initiative, openness to growth, and a commitment to improving practices that support HSELC's mission and the children we serve.

For the past eight years, Miss Brandy Roberson has been an integral part of our team, embodying the true spirit of dedication, leadership, and compassion. Always willing to lend a helping hand, Brandy never hesitates to step in wherever she's needed, ensuring that our students and families receive the highest level of care and support.

Brandy's commitment to professional growth is

evident in everything she does. Currently pursuing her degree in Education, she has also attended Conscious Discipline conferences to deepen her expertise in social-emotional learning and classroom management. Her passion for continuous learning has not only strengthened her own skills but has also inspired those around her. As a mentor, Brandy consistently sets a positive example, guiding fellow staff members with patience, encouragement, and a strong sense of community.

Brandy's classrooms consistently excel in quality measures, earning top scores on CLASS assessments and social-emotional evaluations through Tykes & Teens. Beyond the data, her success shines through in the strong, trusting relationships she builds with families—resulting in exceptional parent satisfaction and a supportive environment where children thrive.

Outside the classroom, Brandy continues to uplift and empower her peers, reminding us all of the importance of teamwork and shared purpose. Her positivity and unwavering dedication are felt across the Center every day.



Connecting FOR a Cause

Our center is deeply committed to supporting the whole child, and that includes ensuring every student has access to early intervention services when needed. Through strong partnerships with community agencies like **FDLRS (Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System)** and Early Steps, we're able to connect families with vital developmental support at the earliest and most impactful stages.

FDLRS provides comprehensive screening and evaluation services for children ages 3 and up who may be experiencing developmental delays or challenges. When a child qualifies, they may receive a range of specialized services—including **speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and behavioral support**—some of which can be scheduled here on our campus during the school day. This seamless integration ensures children receive the help they need in a familiar, supportive environment without disruption to their daily routine. These early interventions are crucial, as research shows that identifying and addressing developmental concerns in the preschool years leads to better outcomes academically, socially, and emotionally.

For children under age 3, we work closely with **Early Steps**, Florida's early intervention program for infants and toddlers. This agency offers evaluations and, if needed, in-home or center-based therapies for young children with developmental delays. By partnering with Early Steps, we are able to support our youngest learners and their families as early as possible—laying the foundation for long-term success. These partnerships reflect our belief that



OUR VALUED COMMUNITY PARTNERS

early intervention is not just a service—it's a lifeline, giving children the tools they need to thrive and families the support they deserve.

Through the *Help Me Behave* program offered by **Helping People Succeed**, students at Hobe Sound Early Learning Center receive targeted support in developing positive behaviors. Specialists partner not only with teachers but also with families to observe, identify, and address behavior patterns that may be impacting a child's success. By providing consistent strategies for both home and school, this program fosters self-regulation, cooperation, and problem-solving skills, creating a strong foundation for learning and growth.

Another trusted partner, **Tykes & Teens**, brings additional expertise in supporting children's social-emotional and behavioral needs. Their licensed therapists collaborate with teachers and families to create individualized plans that may include counseling, emotional regulation strategies, and behavioral interventions. This comprehensive approach ensures that each child's unique needs are met, helping them build the confidence, resilience, and emotional skills necessary to thrive in school and beyond.

A decorative dotted line in a light teal color starts from the left edge, curves upwards and then downwards, ending on the right edge. It frames the title text.

on THE *Road* TO *Learning*

At our Center, we believe that strong family engagement is the foundation of early childhood success—and that begins with access. Our unique bus transportation system breaks down barriers for families who lack reliable transportation by providing daily rides. Our bus provides transportation for both parents and children in the morning and afternoon, giving families the opportunity to stay connected with teachers, stay informed about their child's day, and remain actively involved—regardless of transportation or work schedule challenges. With flexible pickup times in both the mornings and afternoon, our routes can accommodate working parents who need to leave early, as well as those with later schedules or multiple children. This added flexibility ensures that all families have reliable access to our center in a way that supports their unique needs.

Additionally, our bus provides afternoon transportation for students attending Hobe Sound Elementary School, offering a critical support

for families who may otherwise face challenges. Beyond the school day, the bus is also available to our families for transportation to medical appointments, school functions, and community resource events, reinforcing our commitment to removing barriers and ensuring every family has access to the support and opportunities they need to thrive.

At the heart of this system is our beloved bus driver, Mr. Jorge, a retired police officer and war veteran who has been a part of our center for three years. His calm presence, dedication, and commitment to service extend far beyond the wheel. His daily interactions help foster a sense of safety, consistency, and connection for every family on board. This transportation program is more than a convenience—it's a powerful expression of our commitment to the families of Hobe Sound. By eliminating transportation barriers, we open doors for deeper family engagement, educational continuity, and a stronger, more connected community.

**Thank you to Hobe Sound Community Chest, Inc. and The Loblolly Foundation for making this possible! Your generosity ensures that children who might not otherwise have access to quality early education now have the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive.*

Conscious Discipline



We are proud to implement Conscious Discipline as our social-emotional learning framework. More than just a curriculum, Conscious Discipline is a relationship-based, trauma-informed approach that equips both children and adults with the tools to build emotional intelligence, self-regulation, and healthy connections. It is woven into every part of our daily routine, creating a school-wide culture of safety, compassion, and resilience.

One of the key components of Conscious Discipline is recognizing the three brain states—survival, emotional, and executive—and responding to children based on their current state. Teachers are trained to identify these states and guide children through them using co-regulation strategies that build trust and teach lifelong skills. Every classroom features a Safe Place, a cozy, inviting area designed for children to practice calming strategies like deep breathing, muscle relaxation, and visual cues. Rather than using time-outs or exclusionary discipline, children are supported in identifying their feelings and learning how to regulate them in a developmentally appropriate way. Teachers model empathy, use connected language, and guide children through conflict resolution using tools like the Time Machine, I-Statements, and the Five Steps to Self-Regulation.

To ensure fidelity and deepen our collective knowledge, staff members are sent to week-long Conscious Discipline trainings throughout the year. These intensive experiences allow teachers and administrators to dive deeper into the methodology, reflect on their own emotional responses, and bring back best practices to share with their teams. As a result, Conscious Discipline is not just something we do—it's something we live every day. It shows how we interact with children, collaborate with families, and support one another as professionals. Through this commitment, we are building a school culture where emotional safety is prioritized, positive relationships are nurtured, and every child is seen, valued, and empowered.

COOKING UP COMMUNITY



HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR CHILI COOK-OFF

The 8th Annual Chili Cook-Off brought the spice—and the spirit—on January 18, 2025! Our amazing community continues to show up in full force to support the event each year! Officially sanctioned by the Chili Appreciation Society International (CASI), this year's competition was packed with flavor and fierce talent.

More than 20 chefs from near and far competed for top honors, serving up their best recipes to a crowd of over 300 guests. The Jupiter Narrows Band kept the energy high with live music, while the Kids' Zone offered fun and games for our youngest attendees. Bonner Mobile Bar kept the drinks flowing, Almar/Jacksons Pools created a relaxing lounge area for guests to unwind and enjoy the event in comfort, and the Legendairy Treats Ice Cream Truck satisfied every sweet tooth.

Thank you to our chefs, judges, attendees, and volunteers—your support made this event a resounding success.

Congratulations to all of our winners!

save *the* date

January

17

2026

CHILI COOK OFF WINNERS

CASI:

1. JT Williams
2. Fat Boy Chili
3. Granny B's
4. Fire Pit Chili
5. Chili Cats
6. Candi Kisses Chili
7. Ancho Mama Chili
8. Rocky Raby
9. Shredded Heat
10. Feral

OPEN:

1. Fire Pit Chili
2. Ancho Mama Chili
3. Shredded Heat

FAN FAVORITE:

Ancho Mama Chil

SALSA:

1. Chilaxin'
2. Bill Hatsfield

CROWD PLEASER:

Chilaxin'

BEST BOOTH/SHOW CASI:

1. Ancho Mama Chili
2. Chili Cats
3. Shredded Heat

BEST BOOTH/SHOW OPEN:

1. Chilaxin'
2. Ancho Mama Chili
3. G Chili

EVENT SPONSORS

Presenting \$5,000

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A heartfelt thank you to our amazing sponsors! Your generosity and unwavering commitment to our mission make a meaningful difference in the lives of the young children we serve every day!

FUNdraising FOR THE *Holidays*



Disguise a PUMPKIN

This fall, The Center launched a brand-new festive fundraiser—**Disguise a Pumpkin!** Each classroom put their creativity on display by decorating a pumpkin to be auctioned off. From spooky creatures to favorite characters and everything in between, the pumpkins were a true showcase of imagination and teamwork.

Families and friends had the chance to bid on their favorites, with **all proceeds going directly back to the classrooms.** Thanks to the success of this fun initiative, teachers were able to purchase age-appropriate, developmental supplies to enhance learning experiences for their young students. We loved seeing the excitement this new tradition brought and can't wait to do it again this year!



POINSETTIA sales

Each year, The Center embraces the spirit of the holidays by launching our beloved Poinsettia Fundraiser—a cheerful tradition that brings beauty to homes and offices while supporting our mission. Vibrant, festive blooms are purchased by local businesses, organizations, and families who look forward to brightening their spaces and giving back to a great cause.

We're so grateful for the overwhelming support and look forward to this heartwarming tradition each holiday season. It's a joyful way to raise funds, spread kindness, and celebrate the magic of giving.



BRINGING IMAGINATION TO LIFE THROUGH ART and MUSIC

On May 7, 2025, the Center proudly hosted our second *Annual Art & Music Night*—a joyful celebration of creativity, family, and community! Families gathered for an interactive evening led by Miss Jodi of *Music Together* and Miss Teresa from *ArtReach* at the Lighthouse ArtCenter Gallery. Children sang along to beloved songs and brought their imaginations to life through hands-on art activities.

In the days leading up to the event, we held a silent auction featuring a variety of exciting packages—from family exploration packages, dining experiences, original artwork and party rentals, and more! Final bids were placed during the event, and many families went home with amazing items in hand.

A highlight of the evening was our beloved *Annual Step Stool Auction*. Each year, beautifully decorated step stools—crafted by **Sands Construction** and uniquely designed by our talented teachers and students—are auctioned off to support our classrooms. Proceeds from the auction go directly toward purchasing educational materials and supplies, enriching the learning environment for all our students.



WHY ART & MUSIC MATTER FOR YOUNG CHILDREN:

- Builds Confidence
- Supports Cognitive and Language Development
- Encourages Emotional Expression
- Strengthens Fine and Gross Motor Skills
- Promotes Cultural Awareness

Thank you to everyone who joined us for this colorful, musical, and meaningful night!

Thank you DONORS!

Your generosity is laying the foundation for a brighter tomorrow. Because of you, more than 200 students are receiving the support they need to learn, grow, and thrive!

Legacy Society

\$250,000

Mrs. Shelley Bush Jansing
(Jansing Cook Foundation)

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\$45,000-\$50,000

Bloomberg Philanthropies
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Early Learning Coalition of
Indian River, Martin, &
Okeechobee Counties
Hobe Sound Community
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MAKE AN *Impact* TODAY!



GIVE A GIFT *Today!*



Annual Gifts: Including HSELC in your annual charitable contributions ensures there will always be resources to continue our high quality, educational programming.

Monthly Giving: You can impact more children and help HSELC receive a consistent source of revenue year-round.

Gifts in Honor or Memory: Honor someone special or remember a loved one by giving a gift in their name.

Special Gifts: By giving a gift to honor of someone special, you embrace a meaningful way to celebrate a birthday, wedding, anniversary, retirement, or notable achievement.

Matching Gifts: Many employers will match a gift to HSELC made by an employee, employee's spouse or a retiree.



Mary King Award of Excellence: This Fund was established in 2021 in honor of Mary King, the long-serving Executive Director of the Hobe Sound Early Learning Center. This fund shall provide an annual monetary award to one Hobe Sound Early Learning Center teacher or staff member each academic year who demonstrates Mary's exemplary standards.

Matching Gifts: Many employers will match a gift to HSELC made by an employee, employee's spouse or a retiree.

Events: Sponsor or purchase tickets to a Center event.
Gifts of Stock & Securities: There are advantages to donating stock directly to HSELC rather than liquidating and donating. You can claim the full market value of the stock on the day it was given, and you do not have to pay capital gains tax when stock is donated.

In-Kind Donations: In-kind donations are important and provide vital budget relieving goods or services. In-kind donations are tax-deductible at the depreciated value of the donation and allow the Center to concentrate our resources to fund our children's programming.

Bequests & Planned Gifts: Your lifetime of good work can become a legacy. Estate provisions often can make gifts possible that might not have been possible during your lifetime. Deferred gifts can be made through bequests in a will or trust, and include gifts of appreciated stock, bonds, mutual funds, life insurance or another planned giving vehicle.

ways to give

Visit hobesoundearlylearningcenter.org

Call 772-546-5462

Send Gift to 11580 SE Gomez Avenue
Hobe Sound, FL 33455



HobeSoundEarlyLearningCenter

Foundations For A Brighter Future



11580 S.E. GOMEZ AVENUE, HOBE SOUND, FLORIDA 33455

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