

A young girl with dark hair in braids is smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a grey t-shirt. The background is a brightly lit classroom with educational posters on the wall, a clock, and various toys and furniture.

2021 ANNUAL REPORT YOU CARED

AND WE ARE REBOUNDING.

**EDWARD
STREET**

Promoting Early
Childhood Success

www.edwardstreet.org



Message from Our Board Chair

In 2021, we bounced back.

As the year progressed, COVID's grip on our community gradually lessened. Children and families returned to in-person learning and activities. Parents and caregivers, early educators, and early childhood advocates harnessed pandemic lessons to improve programming, curriculum and initiatives, and fought for child- and family-friendly policy proposals.

With your support, our spirits rose as our community rose to the challenge.

You cared and young children rebounded with joy. With your support, we secured funding to distribute to providers. We delivered educational enrichments and wrap-around supports for children returning to classrooms and camp programs. After years of isolation and cautious contact, children reconnected with old friends and made new ones. Children, and the adults caring for them, found joy, and found it to be powerful and rejuvenating.

You cared and now educators are better-prepared and young children are more resilient. With your support, we developed training to help educators serve children who have experienced trauma, and to help all children recover from the pandemic. We commissioned specialized training in trauma sensitive practices and elevated classroom mentors to support educators who are new to the field.

You cared and the public took notice. With your support, we elevated the voices of those most impacted by early childhood challenges. Families shared their struggles accessing affordable, high-quality care. Early educators shared their difficulties remaining in a profession with persistently low wages. Providers related the impacts of workforce shortages and low, pandemic-era enrollment. Business leaders shared their hopes for more affordable and accessible childcare. Together, we brought our concerns to lawmakers, helping shape landmark legislation in early education and care.

Thank you for your support. We could not have done it without you. However, our work continues. Recovery is not measured in neat packets of time; it requires sustained investment. With your help, we can ensure all children have what they need to thrive. We'll continue forging new supports and advocating for families, businesses, the economy, and our community.

With gratitude and a renewed sense of joy,

Monica M. Thomas-Bonnick

Monica Thomas-Bonnick
Chair of the Board



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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Our Mission

Edward Street collaborates to improve the quality and impact of early education and care, enhancing the development of young children and strengthening families in Central Massachusetts.

Strategic Goals / 2017 - 2022

- **Support** a thriving early learning workforce
- **Advance** high-quality early learning environments
- **Influence** the investment in early education & care
- **Lead** cross-sector alignment for early learning

Board of Directors / 2020 - 2021

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DAVID NILES, Classroom Photography





SHIFTING FROM CRISIS TO RECOVERY

During the COVID health crisis, you cared. You cared enough to help us support children and families in new ways. And you kept caring as we all navigated into a new normal. In 2021, your support helped us pivot early education and out of school learning into recovery.

The return of in-person experiences over the summer of 2021 and into the return to school that fall, made three things clear: 1. Children and teachers wanted to be back having fun; 2. Adults were weary and anxious; 3. Programs had to navigate a myriad of safety protocols. Things got bumpy but colleagues kept showing up (virtually of course!) to figure out how to effectively navigate the challenges.

“In some ways 2021 feels like 100 years ago, and in others, it feels like just yesterday. We knew this day would come. People believe and behave as if the pandemic is over (rightly or wrongly), so it’s easy to forget (as one crisis upon another still impacts our children and families) the trials and tribulations of 2021. Navigating mask mandates, vaccine availability (and hesitancy), lack of any transportation (affordable or not), shifting community resources and priorities, and exhausted and diminishing staff teams – while trying to “be there” for our children and their families (who were also going through their own personal, financial, health and employment struggles) was daunting and, at times, soul-crushing.”

Edward Street – their leadership, expertise, connections, and compassion – stood between us and the fray. Convening meetings (a consistency in a world full of inconsistencies) was comforting. The sense of “you’re not alone: we’re in this together,” went a long way towards preserving our mental health. I’ll be forever grateful for the pandemic (odd to say) for deepening our connection to Edward Street - a network and valued resource for training, advocacy, and partnerships!” – **Pam Suprenant, Vice President of Youth Development & Community Services, YMCA of Central MA**

“Although the past two plus years have been challenging, I will forever remember how we as a community of childcare and youth-serving professionals came together for our kids and families. We had each other to share ideas and resources and to provide emotional support when things got hard. These collaborations will continue because we know together, we are stronger.”
-**Liz Hamilton, Executive Director, Boys & Girls Club of Worcester**

“If there’s one thing we’ve learned through the COVID 19 pandemic, it’s the importance of community collaboration to navigate the ever-changing challenges we’ve faced over the past couple of years. Rather than simply hunkering down and trying to survive the storm, we learned quickly that the “storm” wasn’t going away any time soon; we needed to work together and combine forces to navigate our way through. As the Executive Director of the Guild of St. Agnes, a large early education and care program in Worcester County, I am grateful for the role Edward Street assumed in bringing community members together. With their leadership, we have been able to collaborate with colleagues to find new opportunities for funding, programming, and training to support our teachers and families. We learned from each other, leaned on each other, and forged new partnerships which have become invaluable throughout the pandemic and into the future. Thanks to all at Edward Street for leading the way!” - Sharon MacDonald, President & CEO, Guild of St. Agnes

VACCINES ARRIVED FOR CHILDREN UNDER 5

We led with, “What would work best for young children?” How could we support families in understanding more about the vaccine? How could we help families easily access vaccinations? The Tuesday morning team worked collaboratively with city health officials to plan educational supports and child-friendly vaccination clinics on site at trusted programs where children and families go each day.

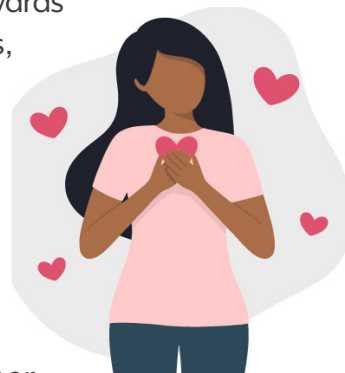


READY4K EMPOWERS FAMILIES

Putting information into the hands, and hand-held screens, of families is empowering. In collaboration with Worcester Public Schools, we were able to launch an innovative, research-based family engagement tool. Worcester’s early learning providers and elementary schools were able to enroll their families to receive three simple, yet powerful, text messages each week. Ready4K makes it easy for families to access simple, playful child development strategies to use at home to bolster learning through everyday activities.

BREATH DEEP...INHALE...EXHALE...AND AGAIN

Self-care. We all learned how important it was during the pandemic. And that is still true today. As leaders and early childhood professionals navigated back towards each other while still vigilantly fighting the virus, it was time to pause and take deep breaths. Be present. Ground our feet. And notice our response. With support from leading mindfulness consultant and author, Wendy O’Leary, we helped children and educators become more mindful and build practices into their programs. Practicing mindfulness moments became an important and strategic ways to begin our days back together. Because we know that “Breathing Makes It Better”.



Self-care is for their-care.

When educators and parents practice mindfulness, young children reap the benefits.

YOU ASKED... HOW DO WE RETURN TO JOY?

DESE GRANT RECOVERS JOY - With a community recovery grant from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Edward Street collaborated with Out of School Time programs to provide training, programming, and curriculum materials to augment learning and accelerate recovery. Students began to thrive and rediscover the joy in learning.

Summer learning ignited friendships and bolstered literacy and math skills. As children returned to camps, the Summer Literacy Initiative focused on friendships and building connections with new friends through a carefully curated set of books and related activities. Literacy and math games were on the menu too. WPS Literacy Coaches also worked more intensely with small groups of children on letter-sound recognition, decoding skills, and letter formation. The grant supported five summer sites in Central MA, which expanded the programs reach and impact.

WPS School Adjustment Counselors went to camp too! Working with the Remote Learning Hub Network, WPS matched counselors with summer programs to offer staff supportive strategies and stay connected with students over the summer.

Student projects ignited Woo Labs. Student-centered, culturally appropriate project-based learning launched in five programs and served 775 students in the Summer of 2021. This innovative model centers on student interest, hands-on learning. Children built water filtration systems, traced their ancestry, constructed animal habitats, and learned key construction skills. The grant supported Worcester Education Collaborative's launch of five pilot sites: African Education Community, Boys & Girls Club of Worcester, Girls Inc., Mass Audubon, and the YWCA of Central MA.

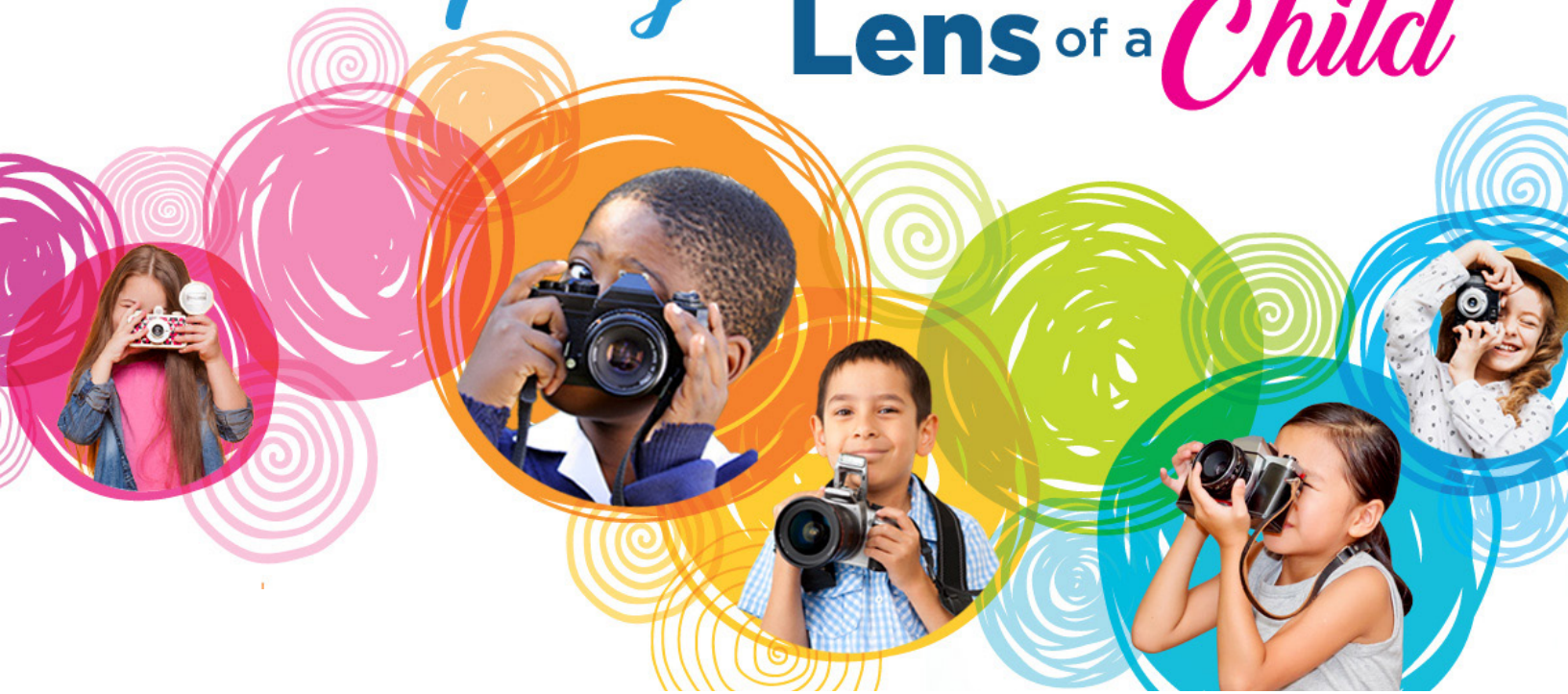
Edward Street is so grateful to our partners who continue to provide high quality programming for young students: Boys & Girls Club of Worcester, Girls Inc., Guild of St. Agnes, Rainbow Child Development Center, YMCA, YWCA, and Worcester Comprehensive Education & Care.



PLAY ON!

Day of Play Turned 10! With your support, the joy of play and learning continued online for the 10th Annual Day of Play Family Festival with 10 days of performances and activities. We brought back some of our original play partners from our first festival and welcomed new partners who shared activities, videos, and performances. Worcester Family Partnership helped bring the festival story – Tiny T. Rex and the Impossible Hug – to more families with recorded readings in Arabic, Bengali, and Mandarin Chinese. Through partners across the city, Edward Street distributed 500 Play Bags so that children had materials to “play along” at home. The learning continued all year with our Day of Play Newsletter and a new suite of activities posted to our website each season.

Play through the Lens of a Child

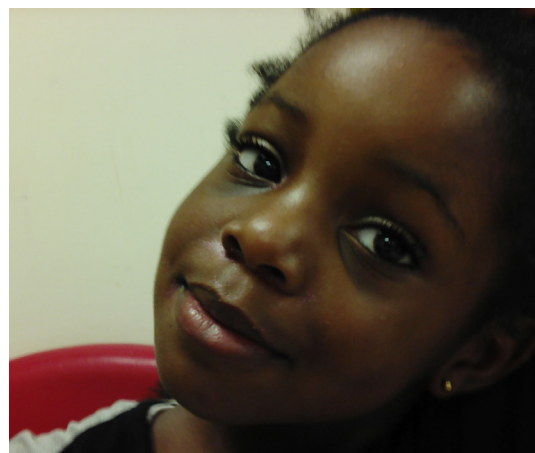


THROUGH THE LENS OF A CHILD

We learned a lot about what children think about...their friends, the outdoors, and...their shoes. To celebrate the Week of the Young Child, Edward Street Master Teacher, Jo Ann Borinski, introduced digital photography to preschool classrooms across Worcester. Then she stepped back and let the children tell stories. The result was a spectacular display of artistic, touching, and humorous pictures. Children created scenes, posed their friends, and took photos from their 3-foot-tall perspectives.

In April during the Week of the Young Child, the Printer's Building hosted a stunning exhibit of the children's photos. The curated exhibit from Worcester's youngest photographers enlivened the building. Children, families, and visitors paused to enjoy a fresh perspective. The full exhibit lives virtually on Edward Street's website.

Special thanks to our young photographers from the Guild of St. Agnes (Granite Street), Rainbow Child Development Center, Webster Square Day Care Center, Worcester Comprehensive Education & Care, and the YWCA of Central MA. Thanks to David Niles Photography for video production. This project was supported in part by a grant from the Worcester Arts Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council.



YOU ASKED...

HOW CAN WE FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGE THE SYSTEM?

RIDING THE RADIO WAVES; RAISING COMMUNITY VOICE TO ISSUES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

We connected with Public Hearing founder, Joshua Croke, to pitch how high quality early education and care is part of a community's commitment and ACTION to build a thriving, equitable and joy-filled community – how it is the critical foundation to school and life success – and how it is the best investment to close the opportunity gap. Josh was intrigued. Their work has focused on eliminating the school to prison pipeline. We talked about intervening earlier to ensure children could thrive in school and life. Josh and the team produced a mini season on early childhood education and care. We invite you to listen to the podcasts directly from Public Hearing's website or through your podcast app.



EPISODE 5 FEATURED VANESSA MARTINEZ' STORY.

Vanessa is the Assistant Director and Subsidy Manager at the YWCA of Central MA. She is also a Mentor with Project Flourish, an apprenticeship program supporting professionals new to the field. She is a bilingual Latina who moved to Worcester when she was 3 months old. She reflected on her family upbringing and the less-than-traditional path she chose as she pursued a career.

“This has been my passion since I can remember. Working with children and families is what I wanted to do my whole life; this is where I belong.” Through the discussion, Vanessa shared examples of struggle, help and hope. Educators need support with livable wages commensurate with the education and work they do. Families need security in knowing they can afford care to continue their education and employment goals. A key support for families is partnering to provide supports from across the community so children can thrive. “Partnering up with families and working together – collaborating. We all want the same outcome for their child.” When asked what legislators and leaders need to understand about the importance of high quality early education, she shared a simple metaphor.

“The way that I see it is just like an architect and contractor, when they build a house or a structure, they focus first on the foundation. Once they focus on that foundation, then [it] can hold the structure. Early childhood educators are the first people... in the life of the child aside from the parents who are building that foundation from birth all the way up through age 8. Children thrive by being nurtured, by being taken care of, and by having those daily interactions with early childhood educators.”



EPISODE 3 WITH ANH VU SAWYER

“It was Eve Gilmore with Edward Street. She was the first person to open my eyes to the importance of early childhood education...It is a struggle for many refugees to pause and say this is our human right to seek early childhood education and care for my child from prenatal through 5/6 years old when they start going to school... I think love and care and respect and paying attention to cultural nuances are unquantifiable. We cannot measure it, but it is so important for early childhood development.”



SPECTRUM NEWS 10

RALLY IN SUPPORT OF COMMON START LEGISLATION IN MASSACHUSETTS

ELM PARK RALLY PUTS PUBLIC ON NOTICE

On a crisp November day, more than 100 educators, children, families, leaders, and politicians met at Elm Park to share stories and a vision. The Common Start legislation, crafted with input from dozens of organizations across the state and informed by hundreds of family and educator voices, provided a road map for stabilizing and advancing an equitable early education & care system.

Your support led to sustained advocacy and the legislature created the Early Education & Care Economic Review Commission to study the issues and design a set of recommendations for reimagining a high quality equitable system. Edward Street provided testimony to the Joint Committee on Education in support of the Common Start Legislation. Our testimony landed in a “Recipe Book for Legislators” that was delivered to every legislator on Beacon Hill.

The Common Start bill is the first comprehensive bill to address the affordability, access and quality of early education and care, alongside workforce needs. It lays out core tenants that will help all young children thrive. We hope legislators will view this bill as a roadmap for what we can – and should – do for young children.

TFKC REIMAGINES OUR COMMUNITY WITH A SYSTEM OF CARE

A new mother struggles with postpartum depression... A single father needs services for his two children, a daughter with cerebral palsy and a son in need of childcare... Parents of two young children battle substance use disorder.

What do these Central Massachusetts families have in common? They’re either unaware of available support systems, ineligible due to income restrictions, or afraid of being stigmatized as poor or burdensome. Meanwhile, children could be missing key developmental building blocks.

The Together for Kids Coalition (TFKC), a collaboration of early childhood advocates led by Edward Street, is working on a solution. TFKC proposes a fully aligned system linking families with childcare providers, public and private youth services agencies, community leadership, advocacy groups, health care providers and business leaders.

With support from a Worcester Reimagination Grant from Worcester Together Funds, TFKC is working on the building blocks. First up, universal screenings and age-level benchmarks. “At one, three and five, every Worcester child thrives.” One step is to widen family eligibility to help reduce the stigma associated with accepting help and increase engagement across all income levels.

“Early childhood tends to be a scattered, unaligned set of resources that families need to figure out how to navigate, which is further complicated because providers don’t know each other exist. The question is, how can we streamline this for families?” – **Dodi Swope, Project Director, TFKC**

OUR IMPACT- WITH

With your support we have made great strides in advancing support for early childhood. Your support is ushering in good change for our community.

1. WE ARE BRINGING NEW FUNDS TO THE COMMUNITY

- \$5 million in new dollars.
- Our collective work attracted new state department grants and philanthropic dollars.
- Together we raised the profile of early education during the pandemic, with lasting effects.

2. WE ARE ACTING

- Co-founded the Central MA Chapter of Common Start Coalition.
- Held rally at Elm Park urging high quality affordable childcare for all children.
- Advocated for restructuring parent fees to eliminate cliff effects for families that begin earning just a little bit more as the minimum wage increases.

3. WE ARE DEVELOPING EDUCATORS

- Master Teacher Project supports 20 educators, impacting 200 toddlers and preschoolers.
- Co-created local apprenticeship model – Project Flourish – to mentor new educators.
- Facilitated professional learning circles for educators to support social-emotional health.
- Launched Trauma Informed Practice Training Series for early childhood and youth-serving staff in partnership with Worcester Education Collaborative.

TH YOUR SUPPORT!



OUR COLLABORATION



— CONNECTING SILOS

YOU CARED

AND COMMUNITY LEADERS MOVED FROM SILOS OF CONCERN TO STRATEGIC COLLABORATIONS

With your support, we collaborated to respond to early childhood challenges and the needs of underserved populations in new and profound ways.

This work happens with your support and those of scores of colleagues across Central MA. In 2021, we joined in creating cross-sector solutions and advocating for children.

- Mayor's Governance Council on Children, Youth & Families
- Worcester Together
- Commonwealth Funders Collaborative's Early Education Advisory
- Common Start Coalition
- Early Childhood and Out-of-School Time Advisory to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Greater Worcester Community Foundation Early Childhood Advisory Council
- Massachusetts Partnership for Infants & Toddlers
- Together for Kids Coalition
- Worcester Education Equity Roundtable
- Worcester County Chapter/MA Association for the Education of Young Children

YOU CARED... AND WE



E ARE REBOUNDING.



Financial Report – June 30, 2021 and 2020

ASSETS

Current	2021	2020
Cash	174,332	93,063
Contributions Receivable	54,127	5,851
Prepaid Expenses	5,167	2,930
Interest Receivable	<u>13,958</u>	<u>17,213</u>
 Total	 <u>247,584</u>	 <u>119,057</u>
 Property and Equipment		
Computer Equipment	24,428	24,428
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	<u>21,258</u>	<u>20,099</u>
Net	<u>3,170</u>	<u>4,329</u>
 Investments	 <u>2,876,443</u>	 <u>2,479,167</u>
 Total Assets	 <u><u>3,127,197</u></u>	 <u><u>2,602,553</u></u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current	78,479	10,764
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	<u>12,779</u>	<u>9,740</u>
Net Assets	91,258	20,504
Without Donor Restrictions	2,858,327	2,504,093
With Donor Restrictions	<u>177,612</u>	<u>77,956</u>
 Total	 <u>3,035,939</u>	 <u>2,582,049</u>
 Total Liabilities and Net Assets	 <u><u>3,127,197</u></u>	 <u><u>2,602,553</u></u>



Since 1883, Edward Street has worked towards ensuring young children have high quality early learning programs. Quality guides our work, and partnerships and community collaboration drive it.

Sponsors & Funders / 2021

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City of Worcester's Division of Public Health
Davis Advertising
Davis Publications Charitable Trust
Greater Worcester Community Foundation
Guild of St. Agnes
Hester N. Wetherell Trust
The Hanover Insurance Foundation, Inc.
UNUM
Webster Five
Webster Square Day Care Center
Worcester County Chapter of Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children
Worcester Family Partnership
YWCA of Central MA

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			Charles & Gayle Weiss

Our sincere gratitude to all who made a gift during the year.

In-Kind Community Partners

Crocodile River Music
Steven Schwartz
Leo Spinner
Media Boss
WICN Studio 50

THANK YOU



FOR CARING.

“Understanding the complexities and nuances of early education and care – at the local and state level – and always looking forward to advocacy and the bigger picture, Edward Street balances the needs of right this minute with the belief that we can do better in the long term.”

– Pam Suprenant

Vice President of Youth Development & Community Services
YMCA of Central MA

KEEP IN TOUCH!

Follow us on facebook and linkedin

**EDWARD
STREET**

Promoting Early
Childhood Success

