

CAP Center Spotlight

THE EXCHANGE FAMILY CENTER DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

The Exchange Family Center (EFC) of Durham, NC, has been providing support to children and families since 1992, when local Exchange Clubs collaborated to found the center.

EFC celebrated its 25th anniversary this past summer at the EXcelerating CHANGE gala event. Executive Director Rachel Galanter reflected on the center's history and affectionately referred to the agency as a "scrappy underdog" in the early years. The founders started with a first-year budget of \$64,759. The commitment and generosity of the local Exchange Club members not only opened the doors to the center, but kept them open during some challenging times. EFC served an average of 16 families a month in 1993, its first full year of operation.

Jerry Dodd, treasurer of the board of directors and member of the Exchange Club of Greater Durham, NC, has been serving on the agency board since its founding. He reminisced to earlier years at the anniversary celebration, "If you would've asked me years ago if we would've been here today, I probably would have said, 'Hmm, I'm not sure.'"

Over the years, EFC has gained numerous funders and has built ongoing partnerships with government, non-profits, The National Exchange Club, and the greater community. Today, the center has an annual budget of more than a million dollars. It served nearly 2,000 people last year.

EFC partners with families and childcare professionals so they can better support and guide children in each stage of development, birth-age 17. The agency is home to **three programs** utilizing best practice and evidence-based models to strengthen families, reduce child abuse and neglect, and prevent trauma. All EFC's services are available free of charge, in English and Spanish, and in the home or classroom to make them easy to access.

The Family Support Program provides in-home parenting coaching for caregivers with children, up to age 12, using the Exchange Parent Aide model (see page 16) along with evidence-based parent-child interventions, such as Triple P, Attachment Bio-Behavioral Catch-Up, SafeCare, and Parent-Child Interaction Therapy. Parenting coaches and family therapists work with families to strengthen parent-child relationships, increase parents' understanding of child development, and integrate new strategies into daily life.

The Early Childhood Outreach (EChO) Program provides support for childcare providers and families when children age 5 and younger exhibit challenging behavior in the classroom. EchO Consultants partner with teachers to reduce challenging behavior by enhancing social emotional development. EFC also provides training and coaching for childcare professionals.

The Parenting of Adolescents Program provides support for families with youth, ages 10-17, at-risk for or involved in the juvenile court system. Family therapists work with families to reduce problem behavior, strengthen parenting skills, improve family communication, and rebuild emotional connections.



EFC measures the impact of all services and the programs all make significant and sustainable changes in children's lives. The agency is known to professionals as a leader in prevention programming. Caregivers overwhelmingly report EFC's services were a positive experience and recommend the agency to a friend, coworker, or family member. Galanter shared, "Research demonstrates that children's long term health and success is adversely impacted by toxic stress that results from trauma, poverty, and racial inequity. However, having a nurturing, responsive teacher or parent can buffer children from those negative impacts and allow children to thrive now, and as they grow. I'm thrilled EFC is there to partner with parents and teachers as they learn how to help their children be resilient."

EFC is looking forward to continued growth over the next 25 years. The agency's services are in constant demand, with more than 200 children currently on the waiting list for services. The agency is committed to making a difference throughout Durham County and is working diligently to expand services. The continued partnership of Exchange, funders, donors, and community partners will help to decrease the waiting list and make services more accessible to those who need them.

