Exceptional Children's Foundation


This report represents Exceptional Children's Foundation's responses to Charting Impact, a joint project of BBB Wise Giving Alliance, GuideStar USA Inc, and Independent Sector. Charting Impact uses five simple yet powerful questions to encourage strategic thinking and help organizations share concise information about their plans and progress toward impact.

Exceptional Children's Foundation
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Mission:
Our mission is to provide the highest quality services for children and adults who are challenged with developmental, learning and emotional disabilities -- empowering them to reach their greatest potential.

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1. What are we aiming to accomplish?

PEOPLE FIRST We place the highest value on the people involved in our organization (students, consumers, clients, families, employees, volunteers, supporters and friends). We respect and appreciate each person's unique abilities and contributions. SERVICE EXCELLENCE We strive to provide progressive educational, therapeutic, employment, residential and community programs to our students, consumers and clients. We are committed to recruiting, developing and retaining professionals and volunteers who are highly skilled and possess the values consistent with those of ECF. INTEGRITY We provide services and conduct business with strict adherence to the highest values of society. We are committed to maintaining those high standards in all that we do. EMPOWERMENT We are committed to providing our students, consumers and clients the tools they need to make the best choices in their lives. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY We honor and embrace our fiduciary responsibility to manage our resources efficiently and effectively, and to remain accountable. COMMUNITY BUILDING & ADVOCACY We are committed to educating and encouraging the general public and legislators to include people with developmental, learning and emotional disabilities in all aspects of community life. Our services and programs are designed to maximize choices and opportunities for the people we serve. LIFE-LONG LEARNING Understanding that each individual learns differently, we are dedicated to offering a wide range of experiences and opportunities to encourage individuals to discover and develop their unique talents and abilities.

2. What are our strategies for making this happen?

In February 2016, the Exceptional Children's Foundation (ECF) celebrated its 70th year of providing the highest quality services to children and adults with disabilities – empowering them to reach their greatest potential. As the organization grew from a handful of parent volunteers in 1946 to a modern nonprofit with more than 3,600 clients and families, 15 program sites across Los Angeles County and nearly 400 employees, ECF President and CEO Dr. Scott Bowling, ECF's Board of Directors and the ECF's Executive Leadership Team recognized the need for ongoing strategic planning. When Dr. Bowling took the helm of ECF is 1999, the organization was facing a number of economic and organizational challenges. To ensure that the organization remained competitive, relevant and focused on its mission, Dr. Bowling and the ECF Board of Director's implemented and oversaw four strategic planning initiatives. Using three-year Strategic Plans, ECF has achieved 85 percent of the strategic objectives from completed plans, including: • Increasing ECF's operating budget from $9.6 million to over $25 million • Significantly expanding ECF's service population to record levels • Expanding the number of ECF Program sites from 11 to 15 • Enhancing the agency's IT infrastructure and electronically connecting all 15 program sites • Strengthening the agency's safety and quality assurance programs and reducing workers comp incidents and claims • Strengthening ties with the community and increasing fundraising goals and outcomes by over 100 percent • Strengthening the ECF Board of Directors by diversifying community and professional representation and by establishing more structured practices and protocols

3. What are our organization's capabilities for doing this?

ECF is the only organization of its kind in California. Through organic growth, mergers, acquisitions and partnerships, ECF now provides comprehensive services throughout an individual's entire lifetime. At every stage in life, ECF has something to offer. With 15 program sites throughout Los Angeles County, ECF offers a wide-array of opportunities for infants, children, students and adults with special needs including our Early Start programs for children under three, a K-12 nonpublic school for students with special needs, a Developmental Activity Center for adults, four professional Art Centers for adults with creative interests, a continuum of training programs that create Pathways to Employment and support participants once they are hired into community-based jobs, and residential facilities and support. There is no question that our people, including ECF's staff, management team and board of directors, make ECF an effective and innovative organization. But it's our clients that deserve much of the credit. While we provide the support and services they need, it's our clients' determination, courage and humanity that allows them to excel. Everything we do at ECF is motivated by our primary goal: empowering our
clients reach their full potential. And although we are a nonprofit, we nurture an entrepreneurial spirit that encourages innovation. This philosophy has helped us grow from a small parent run organization to a complex organization serving thousands of clients across 15 program sites. We have achieved close to 85 percent of the goals set forth in our last four strategic plans, including doubling our client base, increasing our program offerings, expanding our network of support and diversifying our funding streams. Despite our success, there are many more families that still need and want our help. With the financial support of donors like you, more children and adults with special needs will benefit from our programs.

4. How will we know if we're making progress?
At ECF, we measure success through client outcomes. Since 1946, we've transformed the lives of tens of thousands of people with developmental disabilities. In our annual client and community surveys, we consistently receive the highest marks for program quality, the professionalism of our staff and our ability to make a difference in the lives of our consumers. We've received numerous awards and an accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. And because we are determined to make every dollar count, more than 88 percent of our budget goes directly to client services and programs.

5. What have and haven't we accomplished so far?
ECF has grown from a small, parent run group with one program into a complex agency with 15 locations, thousands of clients, and nearly four hundred employees. Over the years, we have built the only organization of its kind in California. We now provide a continuum of services for those with special needs across an entire lifespan. Each year, Our Early Start therapists and teachers make more than 30-thousand home visits to families of children dealing with developmental delays and disabilities. 90 percent of the students at our school have perfect attendance despite their learning and behavior challenges and nearly all of our graduates go on to college or find a job. We have close to 100 clients with special needs working in the community and earning a pay check with the help of our Supported Employment Program. Our four Art Centers provide professional level art training with our clients' work being displayed at exhibitions all over the country. And our developmental activity centers provide life skills training and enrichment to hundreds of adults with developmental disabilities.