

GEER GRANT FINDINGS AND RESULTS





Mississippi Families
for Kids

As I embark upon a new year, I am excited about my position as the Executive Director of Mississippi Families for Kids. I stepped into my role in January 2022, and already the work with partners has been extremely exciting. I am looking forward to continuing the collaborative relationships we have with the Early Childhood, Infant Mental Health, and Help Me Grow state systems. This work will greatly enhance the lives of children in our state. I am tremendously honored to be in a position to lead the agency in achieving its mission, goals, and objectives. It is our mission to foster and improve the well-being of children and families through building strong families and communities. We are dedicated to fostering the safety, permanency, and well-being of at-risk children and youth. Social services and mental health are top priorities for the agency as we strive to make sure families and communities have the support they need.

Amid these challenging times, MFFK continues to provide services and support to caregivers and respite families across the state of Mississippi. President Hays Collins along with the founder and former Executive Director Dr. Linda West, and with the support of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, Wendy's franchisees, private funders, and individual donors, have ensured that we continue to serve all of our families impacted by the pandemic. Not only have we continued to provide existing services, but have been fortunate to enhance and increase the quality of service provision through multi-program growth. The agency was able to adjust the way we provide services through utilizing innovative methods such as telehealth and videoconferencing, which allowed us to reach and stay connected to our families and communities in ways we could never have imagined.



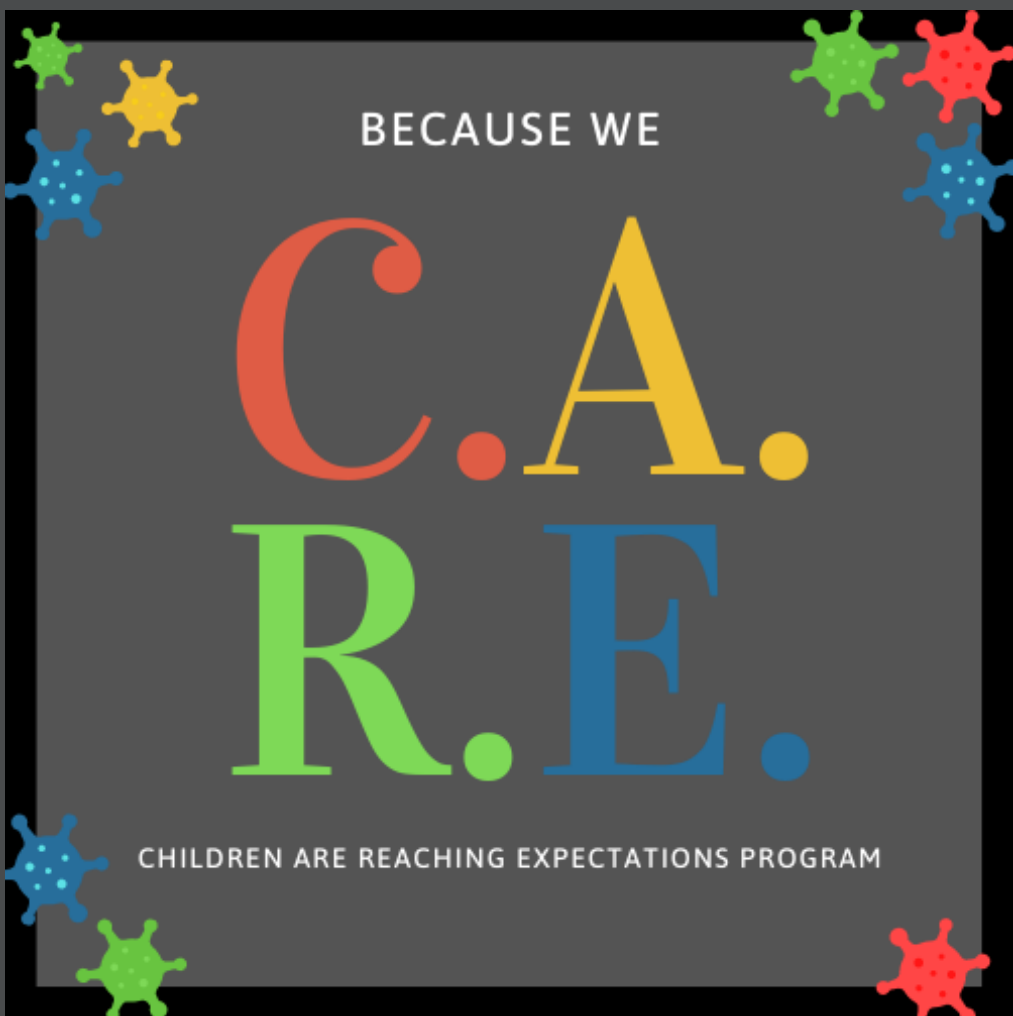
NADEANE CATTRELL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



FREDNIKI WHITE
CLINICAL SERVICES DIRECTOR

As Clinical Director, I have been fortunate to have hands-on experience working with the clinical team serving children, parents, and educators in the community during the pandemic. Having a certified and trained clinical team has been truly beneficial to the community. This grant has given Mississippi Families for Kids the capacity to provide much needed support centered around prevention, intervention, and implementation of evidence-based tools to aid in areas of depression, anxiety, and separation anxiety.

It is evident that the clinical team was able to help children, parents, and educators overcome daily stressors through bi-weekly parent training, monthly teacher training, and weekly support sessions to children. My team was able to hit the ground running each day to make sure that the community was served during this pandemic. This project and the appreciation shown from families and educators has been one of the most rewarding experiences.



With the Governor's Emergency Education Relief grant (GEER), we were able to provide C.A.R.E. services from early 2021 to the end of 2022. The C.A.R.E project was designed to address the impact that the Coronavirus Pandemic has had and continues to have on students, caregivers, and educators in Mississippi with specific focus on Metro Hinds County and communities hit heavily by COVID.

By focusing on early identification and intervention for children ages 3-20, we were able to help them further cope socially and emotionally. The innovation of this project sought to expose participants to positive ways of resolving conflicts, promote positive classroom behaviors, and enhance social skills. An evidence-based curriculum was adopted to redirect inappropriate behaviors into desired emotional intelligence - bridging the gap COVID brought between educators, providers, schools, and caregivers.

C.A.R.E. SERVICES

Screenings

For indicators of developmental, social-emotional, and behavioral challenges

Peer Support & Training

For caregivers to learn strategies to navigate loss, trauma, and home dynamics

Functional Assessments

For assessing individual needs and developing a plan for intervention

Student Support

For navigating a **"NEW"** way of life and the stressors it brings by providing consistent individual, group, and family therapy over an 18-22 week period

Educator Trainings

For learning best practices for online classroom behavior mitigation, distress indicators, communication techniques, self-care and well-being, as well as improving involvement



CHALLENGES of C.A.R.E.

COVID restrictions led to pivoting to virtual and limited in-person engagement



The transitions of virtual vs. in-person life

Apprehension (lack of trust)



Caregivers relocating and contact information being out-of-date

CHALLENGES of Our Community

Children

- Emotion regulation
- Making and maintaining friendships
- Conflict resolution
- Loneliness due to isolation
- Grief/loss
- Fear/anxiety
- Self-esteem issues

Caregivers

- Fear/anxiety
- At-home learning
- Potential development of negativity/suspicion
- State of being without and not having enough
- Grief/loss
- Stressful atmosphere in home/ability to communicate

Educators

- Stress and anxiety
- Behavior management
- Staying motivated
- Adjusting to new teaching methods
- Self-care and balance
- Understanding children's experiences
- Staffing shortages
- Limited resources



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

1

ENSURE THE EDUCATIONAL POTENTIAL OF CHILDREN AGES 3-20 DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR.

- Promote the use of prosocial strategies among participants that support academic success. Provide therapeutic services to 150 student participants.

2

PROVIDE INTERVENTION SERVICES TO CHILDREN SHOWING EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIORAL CONCERNS AND AT RISK OF SUSPENSION FROM LEARNING INSTITUTIONS.

- Reduce the frequency of oppositional, defiant, and aggressive behaviors among student participants.
- Decrease negative disciplinary actions participants experience because of behavioral concerns.

3

PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS AND EDUCATORS TO USE INTERVENTIONS THAT ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL.

- Provide training and support to 300 caregivers, educators, instructors, and childcare providers.

“As a peer support specialist of equal standing, I use lived experience to support others. During any conflict using effective tools, the ability to face our fears and sharing experiences raises a presence of relief and support that compels us to move forward in healthy growth and development. We are a community, and we need each other! The project gave me the ability to serve the community and engage with other caregivers, helped frame a positive atmosphere at home, and engage in daily activities as we navigated through this experience.”

**- Monique Harvin
MFFK Peer Support Specialist**

150

STUDENTS ENROLLED

300

**EDUCATORS AND
CAREGIVERS REACHED**

15

IMPLEMENTATION SITES

ENGAGEMENT DATA



92

Student Sessions

In schools, after school programs, daycares, and virtually



85%

Engagement from 75 Caregivers



20

Enrolled in Incredible Years Virtual School Group (Dina)



45

Educator Trainings

95% found them helpful and will implement what they learned in their classroom

GEER IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

- The C.A.R.E. project granted access to community support within educational and administrative settings
- The C.A.R.E. project implemented under the GEER grant enhanced the daily functioning and well-being of educators, children, and families - ultimately improving our community
- The C.A.R.E. project brought an awareness to early identification, prevention, and the need for mental health services before, during, and after crisis (e.g. COVID, pandemics, grief/loss) through developmental screenings, interventions, and trainings
- The C.A.R.E. project provided access to services and supports for caregivers. Caregivers are often giving of themselves but face challenges and need support. The GEER grant made available the support of positive well-being for caregivers during and after COVID-related challenges

THE IMPACT GROWS

JPS Partnership

Multiple Jackson Public School locations have requested a continuation of therapeutic and educator training services.

Child Protective Services Partnership

Caregiver training on life skills, anger management, behavioral remedies, relationship-building for reunification, and disciplinary alternatives are being requested.

Clinical Services Staff

We are expanding our reach by hiring qualified staff and training on continuous intervention C.A.R.E. implementation practices to meet the overwhelming feedback from our community.

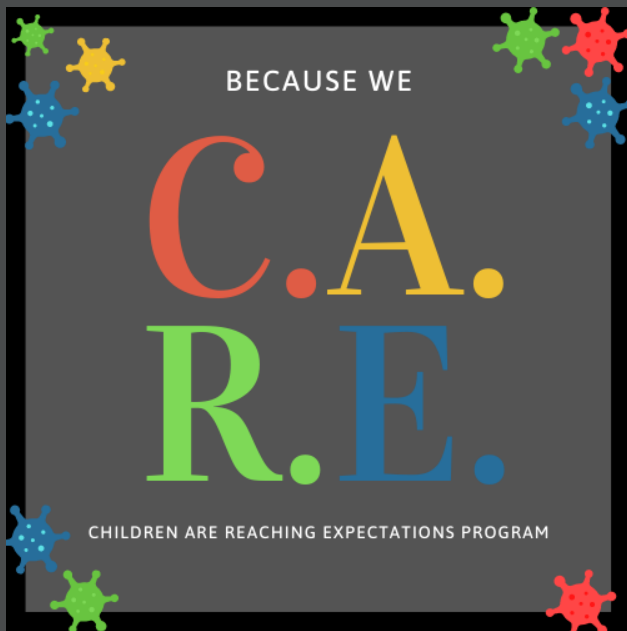
Caregiver Training

Trainings for caregivers continue to be requested, including outside of our current service area.

Connections

Increased connections have led to ongoing services for those that were enrolled in C.A.R.E. including counseling, developmental and educator trainings, and peer support where we offer a single point of contact for children and families.

WHAT NOW?



THANK YOU TO THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE FOR MAKING C.A.R.E. POSSIBLE THROUGH THE GOVERNOR'S EMERGENCY EDUCATION RELIEF GRANT (GEER).



MFFK mission

Since our non-profit inception in 1998, we've had the same goal: provide Mississippi with free or at cost permanency planning programs that promote stronger families and a more engaged and informed community.

MFFK offers educational development opportunities, training, activities, and support like counseling to families and children so children can stay in their family of origin or find a forever home.



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