



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BCM Invests \$3 Million Towards Early Childhood Education

Baptist Community Ministries (BCM) is excited to announce that it will invest \$3 million in grant funding towards Early Childhood Education over the next three years to advocate for quality seats for all children ages 0 – 5 in the Greater New Orleans area.

“All of our city’s early learners deserve safe, supportive, educational environments, and that need is even more critical for children in low-income and marginalized communities,” said Inman J. Houston, President & CEO of BCM. “We are grateful to partner with some incredible organizations to bolster early childhood education programming at a time when the need is greater than ever.”

BCM is partnering with three local organizations – Agenda for Children, Louisiana Policy Institute for Children, and New Orleans Baptist Association – all of which align with BCM’s goal to impact, uplift, and help our community to grow stronger.

Providing Early Childhood Education opportunities improves not only education but also behavior and social-emotional skills, and sets a foundational framework for a lifetime of interest in learning.

Childhood development in a classroom setting also helps early learners develop ways to communicate effectively with their peers, problem solve, and prepare for primary school.

Over 68% of children in New Orleans’ most vulnerable neighborhoods live in households below the [ALICE Threshold](#), representing the minimum income level necessary for survival. Their families cannot afford a barebones survival budget, including housing, health care, food, transportation, and child care. By advocating for quality Early Childhood Education seats, working families will have a stable environment for their children to receive a holistic educational experience while helping parents to be able to work normal hours and miss fewer workdays.

“Implementing quality Early Childhood Education seats will benefit our city’s children, their families, and our community as a whole,” said Christy Ross, Senior Vice President of Grants at BCM. “BCM is dedicated to creating an educational space for children in our community to not only live, but thrive.”

Agenda for Children and Louisiana Policy Institute for Children strategically prioritize important facets of early childhood education, such as giving workforce preparation, providing consistent professional development and skill-building opportunities, and encouraging long-term field retention for teachers.

“We are grateful and honored to be included in BCM’s investment alongside two key partners in the early care and education sector,” said Jennifer Roberts, CEO of Agenda for Children. “We are eager to work with them to support our partners, colleagues, and community in understanding the essentialness of a child’s first 1,000 days and increasing access to high-quality early care and education for all children across our region.”

“We are thrilled by this strategic investment of BCM, which will allow us to continue to advocate on behalf of Louisiana’s young children in new and innovative ways,” said Libbie Sonnier, Executive Director of the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children. “Working in partnership with passionate groups like BCM, our fellow grantees, and others is how we will ensure a Louisiana in which all children have what they need to be ready for success in school and in life.”

New Orleans Baptist Association will facilitate a learning collaborative with local faith-based Early Childhood Education centers, expanding broad-based systems and policy approaches.

“We commend BCM for recognizing the potential in churches to meet our community’s growing needs for early childhood education space and workers,” said Jack Hunter, Executive Director of New Orleans Baptist Association. “We are eager to work to enmesh this initiative into already existing institutions of grassroots family support.”

Successful implementation of BCM’s investment will help close the achievement gap, improve health outcomes, and scale Early Childhood Education programs in underserved neighborhoods.

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About Baptist Community Ministries (BCM):

BCM is a 27-year-old private foundation providing philanthropic services and promoting the health and well-being of our community members in the Greater New Orleans area. BCM partners with local nonprofits and other organizations in an effort to build a healthier community and has awarded over \$230 million in grants since its inception. In addition, BCM provides direct services through two operating divisions – Chaplaincy Services and Congregational Wellness. By doing so, BCM is able to extend its reach deeper into the community to help those in need.

Learn more at www.bcm.org and find us on social at @bcmnola.