



Family Partnerships of Central Florida

BREVARD | ORANGE | OSCEOLA | SEMINOLE

Family Partnerships Connections

Families Impact

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Giving Back

Families Impact

Family Partnerships Launches New Podcast



Family Partnerships of Central Florida has launched a new podcast! The goal of the podcast is to bring community leaders and child-welfare experts together to discuss ways we can better support children and families with reunification and support services.

In our first episode, Family Partnerships President and CEO Phil Scarpelli spoke with three youth champions about how best to assist children inside and outside the classroom. Click [here](#) to view the episode.



Brevard Parent Continues Building Family and Life Connections

Bonnie Ferguson, her husband, Ray, and their six biological children, have made a significant impact as a foster and adoptive family in Brevard County. In 12 years, they have welcomed 32 children into their home – 25 were reunified with family, and seven joined the Fergusons' family forever through adoption. In 2022, Bonnie established [Equipped & Encouraged](#), a nonprofit organization devoted to supporting foster and adoptive children and families through enhanced church and community engagement.



While the Fergusons' lives have been touched in many ways through the children and families they have served, one child stands out for her profound impact in their early years of fostering. Evelyn "Evie," whom the Fergusons adopted in July 2017, received a severe medical diagnosis with a life expectancy of 12 months soon after she was placed in their home in early 2015.

"Evie was such a tremendous blessing," said Bonnie, fighting back tears. "She passed

away in November 2017 after outliving her life expectancy three times over. She changed our lives in so many ways. Fostering and adopting a medically complex child wasn't part of our plan, but God knew that we needed her as much as she needed us."

After Evie's diagnosis, Bonnie had to complete training to be licensed as a medical foster parent, and she had to learn how to operate many complicated medical devices. "It was a little scary at first, but once you get past the initial fear, it simply becomes part of your routine."

Today, the Fergusons are parents to 13 children, saying it can be chaotic and, at times, difficult, but it is immensely rewarding. "Our children deal with the effects of relational trauma every day," she said. "It's important that we do all we can to help them develop healthy connections and heal."

Through her nonprofit, Bonnie is connecting local churches with foster families who need their support. She is currently working with 15 churches. "We'd like to make that 35," she says, "or 10 percent of the more than 350 churches in the county. 35 churches wrapping around and strengthening foster families could make a tremendous difference for the children in their care."

With the help of church and community partnerships, Equipped & Encouraged provides holistic care to foster and adoptive families. Services include church-hosted parent nights out, peer-to-peer support groups, trauma training for churches and organizations, family care packages, practical supplies, and Christmas giving. This fall, E&E is taking the lead on a funded fellowship awarded to Brevard County by the [Christian Alliance for Orphans](#). This grant work will involve local churches and agencies in analyzing data gaps in foster care to enhance levels of assistance.

"There have been a lot of changes in foster parenting since I began in 2004," Bonnie says, "but the goal of helping children lead safe and fulfilling lives hasn't changed."

Fider Family Changes Lives Through Foster Parenting

Wendy Fider was 10 when she knew she wanted to help children who needed a temporary home or assistance. While hearing a community educator speak about foster parenting and remark that, "no one wakes up and wants to be a foster parent," Wendy knew something was very wrong with the statement. "I spoke up and told him, that's not true for me!"

She became a foster parent in 2017, achieving her lifetime dream. Her and her husband, Deuel, have gone on to care for seven permanent foster children, keeping them for approximately two years each until reunification with biological families. Last year, the Fiders adopted a child who they received from the hospital when he was 10 days old and who is now four.

The family lives in Palm Bay, Florida, where Deuel works as an engineer and coaches basketball at a local high school, while Wendy serves as a stay-at-home mom. The Deuel family also have two biological children at home.

"All our foster children have been reunited with their families except the child we adopted," she said. "The best part of fostering is building relationships with the biological families, because I think that connection is so important for the foster child to see. After the child leaves our home, we become a part of their extended family forever and we cherish that."



Wendy says that during COVID, they were encouraged to take on their first foster placement. "I actually had a Family Partnerships' child-welfare advocate contact me, who knew we had space, and encouraged us to take another child," she said.

For their selfless service, the Florida Department of Children and Families recognized them in 2025. “We’re living our passion of helping children through a difficult time,” said Wendy. “We know how important it is to give back and fill the void for these children who are often lonely and confused when they enter the foster system. They’ve been blessings in our lives, and I encourage other families to open their homes to foster children.”

National Center for Innovation and Excellence Prepares for Fall Wraparound Training



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The National Center for Innovation and Excellence is a recognized leader in high-fidelity wraparound certification and child-welfare training across the United States. Their expert team delivers high-fidelity, trauma-informed care training that is both Florida accredited and nationally certified with a proven track record of impactful results.

Just this month, 21 students completed their four-day High-Fidelity Wraparound 101 Training and are now equipped to make a greater impact in their communities. Don’t miss your chance to join their next training in November! Registration is now open, get the details [here](#).

Community Events



Family Partnerships
of Central Florida

BREVARD | ORANGE | OSCEOLA | SEMINOLE

STEP INTO FOSTERING: OPEN Q&A NIGHT

FOSTER HOPE.
FOSTER LOVE.
FOSTER A CHILD.

Whether you're just
curious or ready to start,
this is a great place to
begin your journey!

- ✓ No pressure, just information
- ✓ Materials and resources
- ✓ Informal conversations

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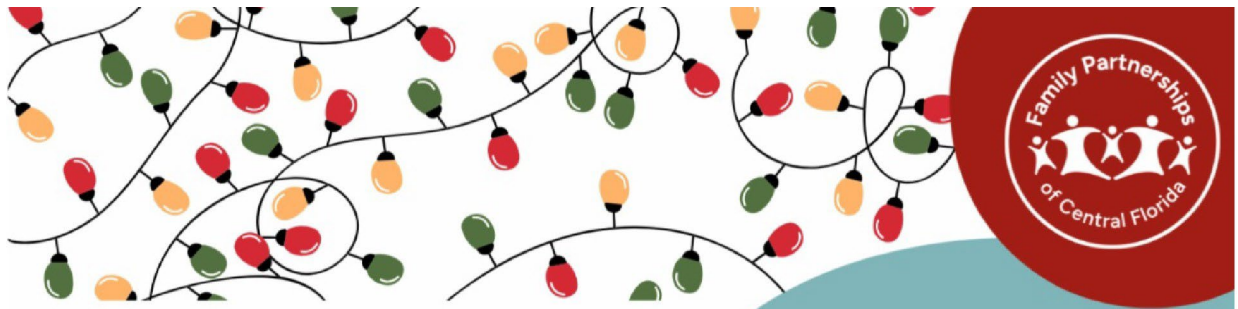
Click [HERE](#) to Register

Protecting Children, Strengthening
Families, Changing Lives.



WEDNESDAY
19
NOVEMBER
6-8 p.m.





Holiday Wish List Drive



Every year, Family Partnerships of Central Florida join forces with local partners to ensure every child in our care has a gift to open on Christmas day.

The investments they make show the children we serve that their community cares about them. It's the season of giving, reflecting and having the opportunity to change a child's life with a special gift.



Ready to sponsor a child and create some magic this holiday? Email us at [community'..relations@familiY.P-artnershiP-s.com](mailto:community_relations@family.P-artnershiP-s.com)





Mark your calendars - Family Partnerships annual golf tournament is scheduled for April 17 at Eagle Creek Golf Club in Lake Nona. Additional information will be available soon at: [Events - Family Partnerships of Central Florida](#)



Partners

Family Partnerships of Central Florida awards new case management contracts in Orange and Seminole Counties; renews contract in Osceola

Going into its second year of serving as the lead child-welfare agency for four Central Florida counties, Family Partnerships of Central Florida has modified its partner team providing dependency case management services in the counties it serves.

Family Allies, the in-house case management team for Family Partnerships, is continuing services for Brevard County.

In Seminole County, Family Partnerships awarded Thompson Child & Family Focus to provide case management services under a three-year contract, with a start date of Sept. 15, 2025. In Orange County, Camelot Community Care was awarded a three-year contract starting in August 2025. In Osceola, Gulf Coast Jewish Family Community Services was awarded a three-year contract on Sept. 1, 2025 to continue case management services for Family Partnerships.

“We’re excited to work with all these outstanding community partners who provide invaluable services to foster children and families,” said Christopher Goncalo, Family Partnerships director of Contracts and Compliance. He noted that each of the three-year contracts come with one-year renewal options after the initial award period.

Phil Scarpelli, Family Partnerships chief executive officer and president, said caseworkers are the frontline staff who provide the most direct connections to protecting children and strengthening families, noting that attraction and retention of caseworker talent is a priority for the state and Central Florida.

“These partner organizations are part of our extended child-welfare family, professionals who give of themselves on a daily basis to help the most vulnerable population. It’s one of the most noble callings in our world,” he said.





Family Partnerships of Central Florida (FPOCF) was honored to have Pastor James Grady (center) of Elevation Church with us yesterday at our facility in Rockledge. FPOCF and Elevation Church recently solidified our collaboration to help assist children and strengthen families in need in Brevard, Osceola, Seminole and Orange Counties.

Last month, during Elevation Church's Love Week, they made a generous donation to assist with programming and support of foster-care youth. We look forward to our continued partnership – providing hope and lasting impact to children and families throughout our communities. Also pictured are FPOCF President and CEO Phil Scarpelli and FPOCF Director of Community Development and Engagement LaChrista Jones.

Foster Youth and Families Celebrated at Annual DCF Conference

Family Partnerships President and CEO Phil Scarpelli is pictured with four graduates from the [Florida Youth Leadership Academy](#) (FYLA) at the DCF Conference. The graduates are from Circuits 9 and 18.





Ann Lindsey-Mowery (pictured third from left), FPOCF's director of Diversion and Prevention, facilitated an informative panel discussion with engaging mothers who have journeyed through the child-welfare system.



Zharia Lennear (center) of Family Partnerships was recognized with 2025 Rising Impact Award at the DCF Conference. Zharia works as a lead dependency care manager at Family Partnerships. She is pictured with DCF Deputy Secretary Kate Williams (left) and DCF Secretary Taylor Hatch.



Phil Scarpelli and John Watson, legislative analyst at DCF, at the FYLA graduation.

405 Youth Assisted through Back-to-School Events



Thank You To Our Amazing Back-to-School Donors and Volunteers!



Foster parent Kamesha Bullock speaks with [WFTV Channel 8 Forever Families](#) about our Brevard back-to-school event.

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