

Q & A Updates on Childhaven's ECLIPSE program

April 8, 2020

Childhaven has made the very difficult decision to not re-open the classroom component of our Flourish Program (also known as ECLIPSE) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Because many people have had significant roles in the history and operation of ECLIPSE, and we strive for organizational transparency, we developed this FAQ.

Why are we making this decision now?

Our leadership and board made this tough but necessary decision after weighing a variety of factors, including: mission, vision, values, goals, finances, and evolving community needs.

- ***Minimize transitions for families.*** Our ECLIPSE classrooms were already closed due to COVID-19 and it was uncertain when they could reopen. We can now focus our resources on supporting families with their basic needs, mental health and developmental therapies, as well as helping them to make alternative arrangements for childcare with other community-based providers.
- ***Better for staff to do it now.*** By not re-opening at this time, affected staff can immediately access greatly accelerated and expanded state and federal unemployment benefits.
- ***Financial considerations.*** In the short-term, without kids in the classroom, we couldn't collect reimbursement from the state and afford the 55+ salaries and benefits connected to ECLIPSE. In the long-term, because this particular program relies so heavily on philanthropy to cover about 60% of its expenses, the cost of sustaining it in the current unprecedented economic environment, where we are unable to reasonably estimate our philanthropic revenue, isn't prudent.
- ***Opportunity to re-build a more evidence-based, sustainable, and scalable model.*** In full transparency, the ECLIPSE program yields child and family results that are below the standards of newer, more effective programs. The science has evolved a great deal since this program was originally conceived in the mid-70s and we must evolve with it, re-building this program from the ground up. We hope to launch a pilot by the end of this year.

What children and families are impacted by this decision?

ECLIPSE was *one of* Childhaven's classroom-based therapeutic childcare/early learning programs. This was our smallest program serving about 90 children and families at the time of its closure. 100% of the children and families who have been participating in ECLIPSE are being exceptionally well cared for by our staff in our other programs which include: Wraparound Intensive Services (WISE); ECEAP and Head Start; Outpatient Mental Health Counseling; Early Intervention; Infant / Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation; Nursing; Music Therapy; and Embedded Family Navigation and Healthcare Coordination.

While we deeply regret that one of our programs won't be re-opening at this time, we still continue to serve more children and families than we ever have through our growing continuum of care.

What staff members are impacted by this decision?

Unfortunately, 58 Childhaven team members had to be laid off as a result of this program not re-opening *at this time*. Childhaven is extremely grateful for the ECLIPSE staff's many years of dedication to the children and families in our community. We are confident that many of them will return to work with us in one of our other programs.

While not re-opening ECLIPSE classrooms at this time certainly has the most impact on staff who are directly affected, our entire organization is feeling a great sense of loss. During this difficult period of

transition, many staff members are going above and beyond to reach out to the departing staff, as well as each other, to offer virtual support and encouragement.

How is Childhaven continuing to serve families and respond to the evolving community needs caused by COVID-19?

First and foremost, Childhaven is still taking new referrals for all programs. ECLIPSE eligible children can continue to be referred- we will work closely with families to provide wraparound care and distance early learning support, as well as help them access a community childcare placement if needed. All referrals can be directed to referrals@childhaven.org or by calling 206-957-4841.

All of our mental health therapists, developmental therapists, care coordinators, parent partners, nurse, and early learning staff have been successfully doing telehealth visits. We received a grant that enabled us to provide tablet computers for families who didn't have access to the technology necessary to have successful zoom visits.

Thanks to other generous donors, we have also been able to continue our partnership with FareStart and deliver meals to families in need.

We are also actively pursuing additional ways to support the community including:

- Outreach to other early learning and childcare providers who may have families that need additional wraparound support during this period of isolation.
- We have offered our vacant classroom facilities for childcare for essential workers. This is a community priority and the Seattle facility's proximity to hospitals is a great asset. **We are working hard to secure jobs and childcare slots for children served by ECLIPSE in this effort. Our infant and early childhood mental health consultants and early learning staff will be available to consult with these providers.**
- We are in ongoing conversations about how we can more deeply partner with other organizations that may not have the resources to weather a severe economic downturn. We firmly believe that Childhaven, other nonprofits, contractors, and community supporters must insist on a collective impact approach in order to maximize the physical, emotional, mental, and financial health and well-being of the children and families who need it most.

What's Next?

Although we have made the difficult decision to not re-open the classroom component of Flourish at this time, we want to be very clear: **Childhaven is continuing to serve the same children and families of our community and adapting our services to increase our impact.** Most of our programs have exceeded our growth expectations this fiscal year and we anticipate continued expansion as the need in our community grows.

We remain hyper-focused on our vision of ensuring that ALL children are safe and healthy; thriving physically, socially, emotionally and educationally; well-nurtured by family and community. And, just as we have for over 110 years, Childhaven remains committed to continuing to serve children and families who need it most.

We are already working with our state contractor and other community partners to redesign a therapeutic classroom and community-based model with the desire to open a pilot version by the end of

2020. We look forward to adding a new researched-based, financially viable, and community centered program to our continuum of care by the end of 2020.

In the long-run, our goals remain bold and ambitious. In order to BETTER SERVE MORE, we intend to:

- Go from serving 300 to 5,000 children and families
- Go from 3 to 6 primary locations, *in the highest need communities*
- Go from 0 to at least 5 High-Impact Partnerships

Who do we contact for additional information?

- Jon Botten, CEO, jonb@childhaven.org
- Megan Beers, Director of Programs, meganb@childhaven.org
- Kristi Nelson, Director of Philanthropy, kristin@childhaven.org
- Kelsey Sprague, Referral and Evaluation Manager, kelseys@childhaven.org