

## Children, Inc. History

### 30 years of gratitude:

In May of 2007, Children, Inc. completed its 30th year of service. In its earliest days, we were known as Cathedral Child Development Center. We began with little and we were frequently beset by overwhelming challenges.

Rick Hulefeld remembers his first week on the job in June of 1979. On his first day as executive director, a committee of volunteers from United Way made a surprise visit and informed him that if we did not improve quickly our funding would be cut off. On the second day the assistant fire chief stopped in to share his frustration that there had been no progress on installing a sprinkler system throughout our entire building (which would cost one third of our annual budget). By the end of the week, the licensing inspector from Frankfort was sitting at his desk asking why the extensive list of licensing violations from her last visit had not been addressed. He went home that night thinking this would be the shortest job he had ever held.

But there were also teachers who were good and board members who cared deeply. And there were children who needed us to succeed. Long hours and improvement after improvement made with little money led to more support. For the past thirty years the Jergens Foundation, The Greater Cincinnati Foundation, and the Fifth Third Family of Foundations have said "yes" every time we have come to ask for their help. For the past thirty years, there have been dedicated board members, including early board pioneers like the O'Haras, Von Lehmans, Wilsons, Hollis and Enwrights. For the past thirty years United Way has been an extraordinary partner. Today, like thirty years ago, we are blessed with teachers who are so very good.

We will not forget the early lessons. We continue to be very careful with money, remembering well what it was like to have little. We know that our survival depends upon continuously improving what we do and so we keep asking what will make our work better. We learned that we must keep asking what else families with young children need to be successful. We continuously search for new ways to support young families. And we learned early on that we needed to collaborate to be successful. Each day we partner with over 100 different organizations.

Our gratitude was born out of a keen sense of the fragility of our beginning. Our gratitude has been nourished by the blessings of our many friends and partners. We remember with deep gratitude how we have succeeded together.