

A letter from our Founder Rick Hulefeld:

Dear Friends,

In May, 1977 a small group of civic leaders who lived or worked in Covington incorporated a single child care center that would later give birth to Children, Inc. Like other beginnings, our early years were precarious. There were issues of quality, safety and above all, funding. For example, there was a big building that needed a sprinkler system with an even bigger price tag. But there were also dedicated Board Members and degreed staff. I began as Director of the Cathedral Child Development Center in June of 1979. In those early days we begged donations, asked our friends and family to help paint, and fixed the center one room at a time. We never stopped believing that we could make a difference for children.

We continually asked how we could make our services better for children and their families. Success led to the next opportunity. We began to ask what else do families with young children need. And so our network of 70 family child care homes was born, quickly followed by the largest network of after school programs in Kentucky, then new early learning centers for the IRS and Toyota, centers on-site at local high schools so teenagers with babies would stay in school, a center for families at risk of homelessness, and Montessori centers. Over the years we added weekly home visitation for first-time, low-income moms. We have become the largest provider of early childhood centers that are both 3 STARRED and nationally accredited.

Our work now leads us to create music that is distributed nationally by Kaplan Early Learning Company, and to train early childhood professionals across the country how to build social and emotional strengths in young children. Our Service Learning coordinators have trained over one thousand teachers in two thirds of Northern Kentucky schools to instruct tens of thousands of children how to use service and civic engagement in their daily lives. We are partnering with the University of Louisville and the Mayerson Foundation to develop new ways of teaching children to be more persistent and choose more challenging tasks. There is so much for all of us to learn to support the optimal development of young children. Who could have imagined the last thirty years? There are so many friends, so many amazing partnerships. I am looking forward to imagining tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Rick Hulefeld  
Executive Director  
Children, Inc.