



**The Need:**

Without access to an affordable, high-quality pre-school education, many Hobe Sound children—especially those from low-income families—are not prepared when they enter elementary school.



- An estimated 34.8% of Hobe Sound’s children from birth to age 4 live at to below 200% of the poverty rate.
- Only 47.4% of Hobe Sound children birth to age 4 attend preschool.
- Recently, only 54% of Hobe Sound’s kindergarteners were assessed “ready to learn.”

Research confirms preschool benefits children, especially those from low-income families, resulting in:

- Higher rates of high school graduation, employment, median annual earnings, home ownership and intact families.
- Lower rates of teenage pregnancies, arrests, and use of social services.
- Every \$1 invested in preschool education now saves \$16 in human services later.

**Our Accomplishments:**

The Hobe Sound Community Chest’s Strong Start initiative (HSSS) provides the necessary resources to enrich the lives and outcomes of Hobe Sound’s birth-to-4 age population. HSCC has set an ambitious goal that 90% of this population will receive early childhood education by 2025. Here are some of the accomplishments so far:

- HSSS, with generous help from Cornelia T. Bailey Foundation grants, has awarded 25 scholarships to the Hobe Sound Early Learning Center to families with financial need.
- HSSS, also with help from the Cornelia T. Bailey Foundation, provided enrichment programs in art, music, and physical education at Dunbar and the Hobe Sound Early Learning Center. The programs contributed to a rise in school readiness scores by 21%.

- HSSS brought the Library Foundation's Ready, Set, Go! program to two high need neighborhoods in Hobe Sound. Twice a week, the program provides school readiness instruction in the neighborhood's community centers. More and more, the children from these programs are moving on to 5 day-a-week instruction at Hobe Sound Early Learning Center.
- HSSS, utilizing a generous gift to the Chest capital reserve from the Joan Madeira estate, provided Hobe Sound Early Learning Center with two new, modular classrooms in her name to enroll 28 additional students, 14 of which receive the HSSS scholarships mentioned above.
- HSSS facilitated the addition of Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms at Hobe Sound Early Learning Center and Dunbar Early Learning Center. These 4 additional classrooms provide no-cost early learning to 48 children from families in poverty. HSSS also provided scholarships, allowing children to stay in the program all day.
- HSSS also provided scholarships to 12 students in the Hobe Sound Elementary School Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten program. VPK is a free preparation program for 4-year-olds who enter kindergarten the following year. These scholarships allow the children to stay for a full day of school. 100% of the children who stay for a full day are kindergarten ready.
- HSSS is addressing the health, housing, and technology needs of these families through partnerships with Volunteers in Medicine, Little Lights Dental Program, Habitat for Humanity and other organizations serving Hobe Sound.

