



**Teaching Tree**  
Early Childhood Learning Center

*Nurturing children. Supporting families. Strengthening community.*

## **2018 ANNUAL REPORT**

### **Growing to Better Serve Our Community**

#### **Who We Are and What We Do**

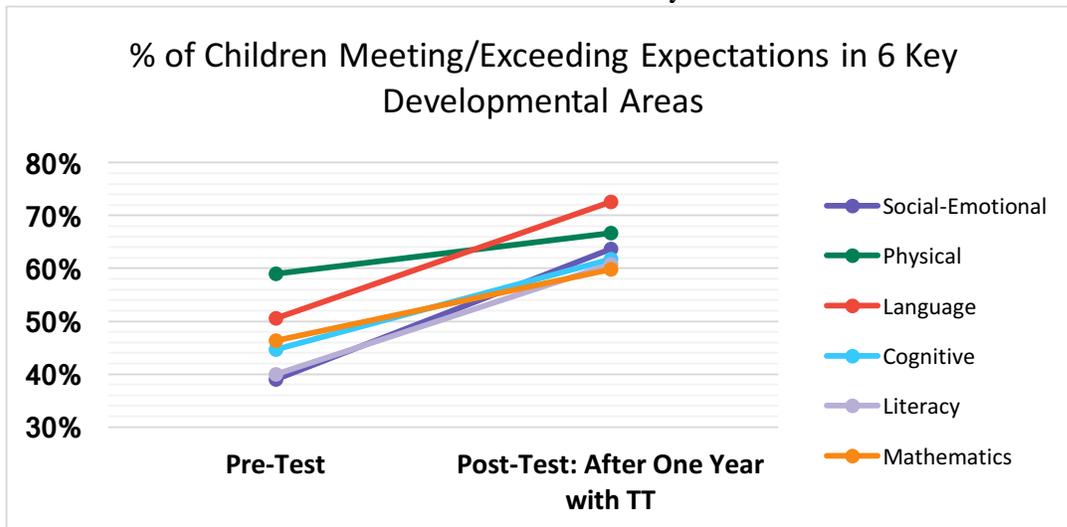
Teaching Tree Early Childhood Learning Center is a nonprofit organization serving families throughout Larimer County. Our mission is to provide affordable, quality early childhood care and educational programs in a culturally and economically diverse environment, ensuring a climate for individual growth, comfort, and security. Our roots reach back to 1970 when community members founded our organization in response to the need in Fort Collins for an affordable, quality childcare center to serve low- and middle income families. We opened a second center to address a similar need in Loveland in 1988. Today, these centers annually serve approximately 275 families throughout Larimer County.

#### **Focus on Quality**

Teaching Tree Fort Collins and Teaching Tree Loveland are Level 4 and Level 5 Colorado Shines-rated centers, respectively. These ratings, which are the highest Colorado Shines ratings possible, indicate that Teaching Tree is one of Colorado’s premier childcare providers. Our evidence-based school readiness program focuses on ensuring that our preschoolers graduate ready to succeed in school. Children who are ready to learn when they enter kindergarten are more likely to be reading by third grade and graduate from high school on time. Helping children succeed in school ensures their future employability in their career of choice and contributes to the economic vitality of our community.

#### **2018 HIGHLIGHTS**

**Increased our children’s skills in all six areas that are key to future school success**



### Helped close the achievement gap

- 12 low-income children enrolled full day at Teaching Tree and participating in the Colorado Preschool Program increased their resiliency, lowered their risks, and became learning ready.
- Graduated 46 preschoolers, prepared to start kindergarten with the skills to learn.

### Cultivated strong family partnerships

- Worked with families to foster their child’s development at home and at Teaching Tree.
- 97% of parents said their child’s growth has been supported and stimulated by participating in Teaching Tree’s school readiness program.

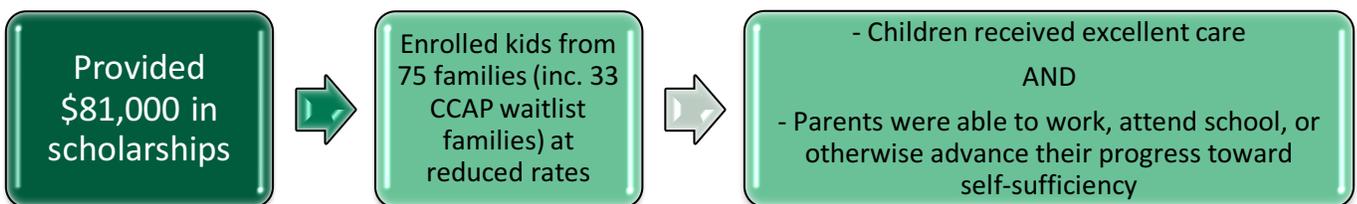
*“I have been impressed with how effective Teaching Tree has been in teaching my children to use their words for communicating frustration.” –Parent*

### Contributed to the growth of the whole child

- Implementing the Pyramid Model for Promoting Social and Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children, teachers created supportive early learning environments that contributed to children’s physical, mental, and behavioral health.
- Served nutritious, nourishing meals and snacks—especially important for the many children we served who experience food insecurity.
- Enriched children’s early learning experiences with ongoing, weekly, free classes in yoga, Mighty Kicks, speech and reading.
- Brought SummitStone Health Partners therapists into the classroom to work with teachers and families to address children’s potential mental health and/or behavioral issues and provide teachers with strategies for successfully working with the children’s challenging behaviors.
- Engaged 35 school-age children in a summer program that helped prevent summer slide.

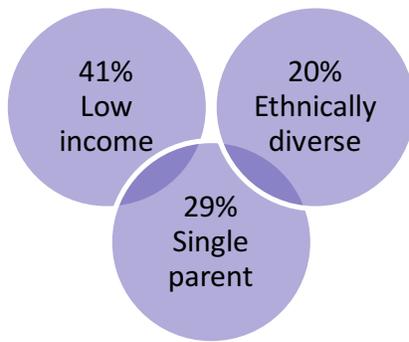
*“We think the Teaching Tree summer program is AWESOME! We've been so impressed, and Evan has had an amazing time. It's great that you leverage transit to shuttle the kids around town, helping them feel comfortable traveling around town while exploring many of the great things our community offers. We proudly recommend Teaching Tree to other families looking for child care.” – Parent*

### Strengthened low-income families’ efforts to rise above poverty



- Made it possible for 336 individuals in Larimer County to work and/or go to school every day, thereby enabling them to increase their skills and progress toward their career goals.
- Served 33 low-income families participating in the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program.
- Scholarship families paid as little as low as \$24/day for child care, as compared to full-pay rates exceeding \$50/day and for-profit rates averaging \$66/day.
- Families on CCAP’s waitlist paid just \$18/day.
- To further strengthen families, we provided comprehensive family services including nurse consultations, free dental- and vision screenings, mental health support, and speech therapy.

**Our families are:**



**Caring for our staff: Moved the needle on paying teachers a living wage and helped build our county's childcare workforce**

- Provided a career and ongoing training and advancement opportunities for 39 individuals employed at both Teaching Tree centers.
  - Introduced high school- and college students to the child care industry by providing them with internships and mentoring opportunities.
  - Provided over \$32,000 in tuition assistance to 13 Teaching Tree employees with children enrolled at Teaching Tree.
- Making care affordable for our early childhood specialists is a

key benefit that helps promote employee morale and longevity.

- Early childhood specialists play a critical role in nurturing young children but are among the nation's lowest wage earners. Teaching Tree has made it a priority to gradually increase pay with a goal of ensuring that all teachers are earning a living wage. In 2018, we provided teachers and aides with a 3% cost-of-living raise plus up to 3% performance raises. We also increased starting pay range for new teachers.
- Partnered with the Early Childhood Council of Larimer County and Front Range Community College in a cohort program to prepare more individuals to become early childhood specialists.
- Provided mentoring and paid work experience for 3 students participating in the cohort program.

**Worked with other community partners to support children's development and break down barriers to quality affordable child care**

- Collaborated with the Early Childhood Council of Larimer County to address community childcare needs, contribute to policy, and stay informed of latest findings related to young children's development.
- Advanced the efforts of Directing Change to influence funding, programming, and policies to create a community where everyone can thrive.
- Worked with Be Ready partners throughout the county to ensure all children are ready to be successful when they enter school.
- Participated in Leap Coalition to strengthen systems to support young children's social development and emotional wellbeing in a culturally responsive manner.

**Engaged volunteers in advancing our mission**

- 165 volunteers donated 2,789 hours of their time, an in-kind value of over \$78,000.
- Volunteers served on our board, assisted teachers in the classroom, helped with fundraising activities, helped improve, maintain, and beautify our facilities, and much more
- Donors made in-kind contributions of goods valued at over \$25,000.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

### What it takes to run a quality early childhood program:

We have an outstanding and committed team of 39 teachers, aides, directors, and administrative assistants who undergo ongoing training and consistently deliver Teaching Tree's evidence-based school readiness program to as many as 150 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers at any one time. Personnel costs are 78% of our expenses and are critical to our mission and our success. Program supplies and expenses comprise 13% of our annual budget and ensure that we are able to provide nourishing meals and snacks for children each day and a safe, nurturing early learning environment that stimulates and engages children.

Each year, we budget for a surplus to reinvest into Teaching Tree's business model to meet short- and long-term organizational goals including:

- maintaining a reserve of at least 3 months of operating expenses;
- ensuring that we're able to continue providing a high-quality program;
- addressing facility needs;
- increasing capacity to better meet our community's needs.

At the end of 2018, TT had \$241,000 in operating reserves and \$500,000 in facilities reserves. The facility reserves are being applied directly to our \$2.1-million expansion project taking place in 2019. Maintaining adequate operating reserves helps Teaching Tree pursue opportunities and protects us from risk. In 2017, for example, we were able to purchase, train teachers, and implement the evidence-based Teaching Strategies GOLD and Creative Curriculum programs (and required computers and tablets), which allow us to collect data on children's growth. Teachers share this information with parents and use it to prepare lessons and activities that meet the needs of each child.

### How we pay for it

We charge fees for our quality early childhood program and also receive reimbursement from CCAP and government payment for Colorado Preschool Program children enrolled at Teaching Tree. Tuition revenue accounted for 78% of our 2018 operating budget. The other 22% came from grants, fundraising activities, and our participation in government-administered programs that aid low-income families and youth. Income sources included the City of Fort Collins and City of Loveland human services programs and the USDA food program. We also received funding from the Tony Grampas Youth Services Program, which supports programs that provide prevention, intervention, and education programs for children, youth, and their families and is designed to prevent youth crime and violence, youth marijuana use, and child abuse and neglect.

### In 2018 we raised \$557,00 in grant funds, donations, and sponsorships that supported:

- An evidence-based school readiness program;
- Nutritious meals and snacks;
- Childcare tuition assistance for low-income families working toward self-sufficiency;
- Free enrichment classes;
- Expansion of center in Fort Collins.

#### Teaching Tree Board of Directors

Fred Abramowitz; Shayne Brown, Secretary; Robert L. David; Adam Hertzler, Treasurer;  
Zachery Kulbeck; Kimberly Medina; Melinda Phipps; Jodie Riesenberger, President;  
Emily Voshall; Craig Vollmer, Vice President.

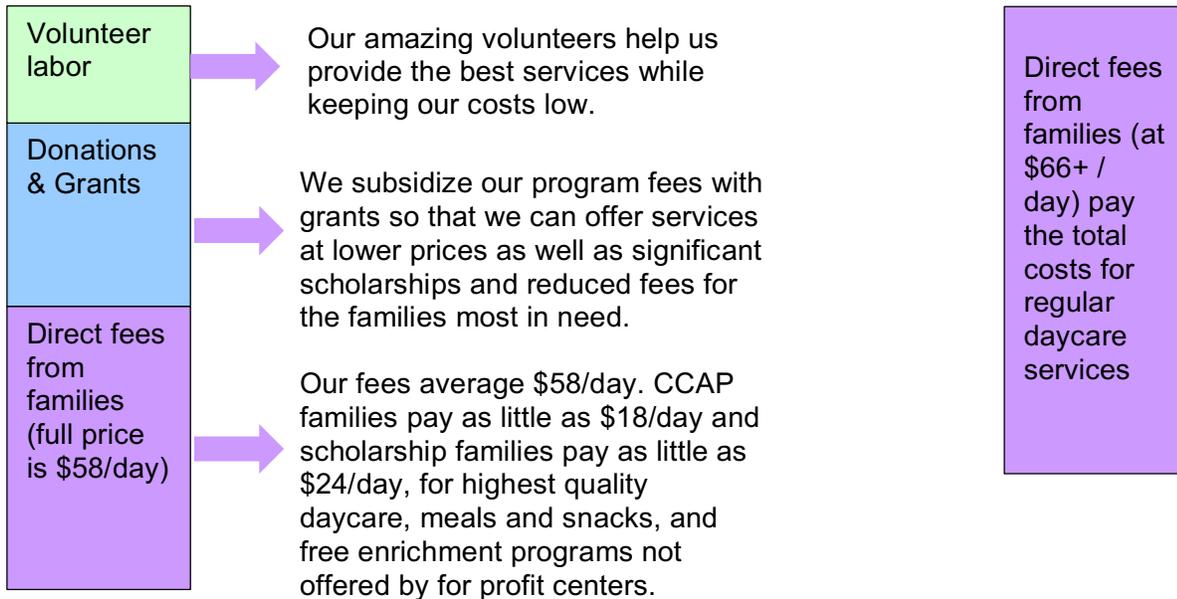
## Teaching Tree

versus

## For Profit Centers

As a nonprofit dedicated to providing low-income families with a high quality option for child care and helping those families contribute to our local economy, we don't charge the full cost of our services. Instead we use a number of cost reduction and fundraising strategies to cover costs.

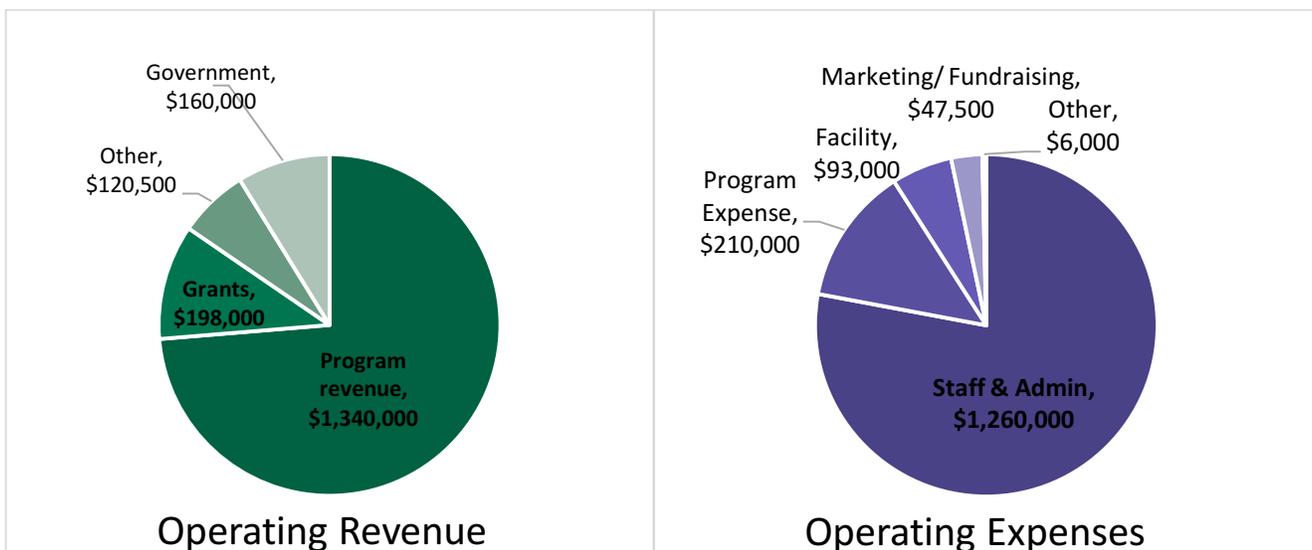
For profit child care centers charge families fees that more than cover their costs, and are too high for many families to afford.



### Overview of 2018 Annual Operating Budget

Operating Budget	2018	2017
Income	\$1,819,000*	\$1,594,000
Expenses	\$1,616,500	\$1,421,000

\*Total income was \$1,962,500 and included \$143,500 for capital improvements.



***Thank You to 2018 Our Major Donors (\$1,000 and up)***

Advanced Medical Imaging Consultants	Kiwanis
Anschutz Family Foundation	Nordson Corporation Foundation
Sam S. Bloom Foundation	OtterCares Foundation
Bohemian Foundation	Poudre Valley REA
Buell Foundation	Qualistar Colorado
City of Fort Collins	Realities for Children
City of Loveland Human Services Commission	Rotary Club of Fort Collins
Community Foundation of Northern Colorado	Run Rabbit Run LLC
Early Childhood Council of Larimer County	Tony Grampas Youth Services
Food Bank for Larimer County	United Way of Larimer County
Foothills Rotary Club	Virginia Hill Foundation
Give Next	Saunders Heath Construction

**THE VISION FOR 2019**

Access to affordable child care is critical to a strong economy and sets the foundation for a child’s future educational success. The shortage of available, quality child care is one of our Larimer County’s greatest barriers to attracting and retaining the talent needed to support employers in our community. Exacerbating this issue is the high cost of child care. In 2019, Teaching Tree will work with other community partners to add six new classrooms and two new natural playgrounds to our center in Fort Collins. This \$2.1-million capital expansion, funded with \$500,000 from reserves and the rest from fundraising activities, will enable us to serve an additional 114 children, for a total licensed capacity of 215, beginning in early 2020. The project, which is the outgrowth of a partnership with United Way of Larimer County and the City of Fort Collins has engendered strong support from the community, individual donors, and private foundations.

*“In my opinion, Teaching Tree effectively maximizes the use of available funds in upholding a high standard of child care and education. Only additional funding could improve on this.” –Parent*

**HOW YOU CAN HELP**

**Donate.** Your contribution to Teaching Tree will increase the quality and availability of child care in our community, benefit at-risk children, and help bring in matching grant dollars. Consider also our **planned giving** opportunities.

**Volunteer.** Serve on our board or committees, help with fundraising events, assist in our classrooms and/or with our capital campaign.

**Advocate.** Children are our most precious resource and our hope for a vibrant future. Learn more and spread the word about the importance of affordable, quality early care and education. It’s an investment that pays off to the entire community!

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Teaching Tree Early Childhood Learning Center**, 424 Pine St., Fort Collins, CO 80524, (970) 493-2628, [www.teaching-tree.org](http://www.teaching-tree.org).

**Anne Lance**, Executive Director, (970) 493-2628, [alance@teaching-tree.org](mailto:alance@teaching-tree.org).

**Tara Streeb**, Resource Development Coordinator, (970) 493-2628, [tstreeb@teaching-tree.org](mailto:tstreeb@teaching-tree.org).