



ALL-AMERICA CITY FINALIST

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLA.

Community Snapshot

Miami-Dade County encompasses the glittery abandon of South Beach and the grinding challenges of Liberty City. The urban intensity of Hialeah and the horizon-to-horizon agrarian expanses of Homestead. The caffeinated bustle of Miami and the leafy residential refuge of Miami Lakes. Bounded by the Atlantic to the east, the Everglades to the west and the Florida Keys to the south, Miami-Dade County covers 2,000 square miles and is home to 35 municipalities. County residents have roots in scores of countries and speak Spanish, English, Creole and Spanglish. More spicy stew than melting pot, community members proudly and visibly respect their various heritages, yet they unite to create a vibrant society and culture.

Community Solutions Action Plan

The Children's Trust has created a comprehensive strategy to ensure grade-level reading based on the following focus areas:

- **School Readiness:** The Children's Trust seeks to enhance the quality of child care as well as voluntary pre-kindergarten, promote holistic early childhood health and development and advance early childhood literacy by increasing reading opportunities. The organization will also support English language learners and their parents with tools to advance family literacy and will craft legislation and policies that support child care as a quality learning environment
- **Student Attendance:** The Children's Trust will benchmark and increase attendance, realign existing truancy prevention/intervention strategies, increase parental engagement in neighborhoods and schools and craft and advance state legislation to hold parents accountable for their children's regular attendance
- **Summer Learning:** The Children's Trust will increase access to quality summer programs and coordinate with schools and library systems to promote books on summer reading lists, set up corporate sponsorships and coordinate volunteers and incentives to make summer reading books widely available to children

Partnerships

The Children's Trust formed *Read to Learn*, a communitywide initiative with the goal of ensuring that all children read at or above grade-level by third grade. Partners include the Miami-Dade Public Library System, Miami-Dade Family Learning Partnership and The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 2.5 million residents
- 347,000 students
- 77 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals
- 67 percent of students read at grade level (state test)
- 36 percent of third-grade English language learners read at grade level (state test)
- 78 percent graduation rate
- 61 percent are ready for kindergarten
- 96 percent of students attend school daily
- Summer learning programs are available

GOALS

- Increase percentage of students reading at grade level to 88 percent
- Increase average attendance to 95 percent
- Increase school preparedness to 90 percent
- Maintain or improve reading level of K-3 students over summer to 95 percent

"[We] recognize our fundamental human responsibility of creating and fostering the best possible environment for the healthy and complete development of our children. That is our first priority."