

# LAUGHLIN CHILDREN'S CENTER STRATEGIC & SUCCESSION PLAN: 2017-2020

THE MISSION OF LAUGHLIN CHILDREN'S CENTER, a non-profit community resource, is to provide families with a bridge to successful learning through one-on-one and small group instruction, psychological and academic evaluations, individual and family counseling, speech-language services, occupational therapy, and the NAEYC-accredited Village Preschool.

Our professional staff uses an individualized approach to unlock each child's potential, and espouses the attitude embodied in the writings of Anna Gillingham: "If a child cannot learn the way I teach, I must teach the way he learns." Our core values include taking the whole child into account; providing a personal—and personalized—approach when working with children, families, or donors; encouraging parental involvement; and being accessible to all families and children.

To achieve this mission, the Center needs to reach goals in four action areas, each focusing on a specific business perspective:

## Action Area 1: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- a. Research and implement best practices
- b. Incorporate innovative methods
- c. Investigate collaborations and partnerships

## Action Area 2: ADMINISTRATION

- a. Strengthen management of operational processes
- b. Keep abreast of technology
- c. Implement employee succession plan

## Action Area 3: DEVELOPMENT

- a. Increase dollars from donor sources and expand current donor base
- b. Maintain and improve donor relationships
- c. Develop fundable opportunities

## Action Area 4: MARKETING

- a. Develop programs for new customer groups
- b. Enhance the visibility and recognition of the Center
- c. Maintain and improve customer relationships

The following strategic plan represents a belief that the Center currently operates from a position of relative strength: its functions are, by and large, healthy:

- Service-Related Revenue has grown from \$267,000 in FY 2007 to a projected \$600,000 in FY 2017.
- The Operating Budget has grown by \$500,000, or 50%, in the past ten years.
- The percentage of the annual operating budget underwritten by the Endowment has decreased, from 56% of the operating budget, to 41% in the past decade.
- The number and breadth of programmatic offerings has grown, with Occupational Therapy, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, Orton-Gillingham Instruction, and a variety of interdisciplinary programs adding richness and depth to the Center's service.
- Administrative and Human Resource functions have been standardized and reflect best practices within the nonprofit sector.

Given the short duration of the plan, as well as the current state of the Center, the following four Action Areas represent a desire to maintain current levels of service while studying trends, emerging therapies, and community-expressed needs, as well as implement a succession plan culminating in a change in executive leadership at the end of Plan Year II, rather than a vision for a new or dramatically different direction for the Center.

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## Action Area 1: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Goal: Achieve Learning Excellence

The Center's best and strongest asset is its clinical staff; keeping high-quality, high-performing teachers and clinicians in frontline positions is extremely important to the ongoing health and efficacy of the Center. To that end, efforts will be undertaken over the next three years to discover new approaches and methods for delivering services, honing existing services and service-delivery models so that all children can succeed, and investigating ways to continue and grow the list of partner agencies with which the Center works.

### Objectives:

- Research and implement best practices
- Incorporate innovative methods
- Investigate collaborations and partnerships

### Outcomes:

- An ongoing refinement of service array, to include new programs where appropriate, as well as improved methods of delivering existing services
- Increased clinical participation in workshops, conferences, and seminars, both as participants and providers
- Continued conversations with existing collaborative partners, as well as discussions with potential collaborators

### Potential Outputs:

- New programs or approaches
- Expanded hours of operation
- Reinstatement of speaker series
- New off-campus sites for delivering services
- New programs that take advantage of "down time" during the day (e.g., during school day)

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## Action Area 2: ADMINISTRATION

### Goal: Achieve Operational Excellence

Operating the Center at maximum efficiency means that more income can be used to fund the mission of the Center, rather than its administration. In order to keep administrative costs low while maintaining high levels of support for clinical services, it is vital that operational processes be as cost-effective as possible, whether that is the amount paid for supplies or the amount collected from an insurance provider for services rendered. Keeping the “back room operations” running smoothly allows the clinicians to concentrate on providing the best quality diagnostic and therapeutic services possible.

### Objectives:

- Strengthen management of operational processes
- Keep abreast of technology
- Implement employee succession plan

### Outcomes:

- Annual review of existing operation's manuals and job descriptions
- Profitability studies of current and expanded services
- Research into upcoming requirements for IT upgrades, such as EHR, HIPAA compliance software, etc.
- Monitoring IT advances and addressing aging or insufficient infrastructure within the Center's IT systems
- Putting into play in a timely manner the attached succession plan to guarantee a seamless transition of leadership

### Potential Outputs:

- Up-to-Date operation's manuals and job descriptions
- Strong correlation between employee skill sets and job responsibilities
- Reducing the shortfall between value-of-services and service-related revenue
- An IT Five-Year-Plan with target dates for upgrades, expansions, projected costs, potential funders
- A smooth transition of leadership, including communication plans for board, staff, and community
- A succession framework for future staff and board retirements

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## Action Area 3: DEVELOPMENT

### Goal: Expand Donor Base

Although support from the endowment is becoming a smaller percentage of overall income in the operating budget, opportunities to increase the frequency and effectiveness of the Center's development efforts exist. Exploring a more robust donor-relations program, implementing a planned giving campaign, and updating the Center's development calendar all represent possible sources of new charitable dollars, as does a push to expose more foundations to the good works of the Center.

### Objectives:

- Increase dollars from donor sources
- Maintain and improve donor relationships
- Develop fundable opportunities

### Expected Outcomes:

- Meeting or exceeding budget forecasts for donations and grants
- Relationships with new funders and strengthened ties with existing individual, corporate, and foundation donors
- Increased opportunities for current and prospective donors to give

### Potential Outputs:

- An annual development calendar, including regularly-scheduled donor cultivation activities
- Development of a signature fund-raising event
- More responsive donor-tracking software
- A planned giving campaign

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## Action Area 4: MARKETING

### Goal: Expand Brand Identity

Concerted efforts to heighten brand awareness of the Center have resulted in a look and tone that is recognized in the local community; adding to that geography insures that the client census remains high into the future. Opportunities to present to groups of parents and professionals will continue to make the Center a front-of-mind choice when the need for services arises. Additionally, improving systems so that client families feel highly satisfied with the intake, therapeutic, and discharge processes will assure both strong word-of-mouth referrals as well as repeat customers. Finally, adding breadth and depth to the current array of services means the Center stays fresh.

### Objectives:

- Develop programs for new customer groups
- Enhance the visibility and recognition of the Center
- Maintain and improve customer relationships
- Build the Center's brand as the industry authority within the region

### Expected Outcomes:

- Hosting focus groups of parents, professionals, and others to determine what new therapeutic approaches might fit within the Center's wheelhouse
- Hosting feedback sessions around the Center's client processes, to better determine satisfaction and develop more customer-centric models of service delivery
- Annual review of existing PR efforts, and an examination of other potential outlets for marketing the Center
- Providing high-quality information sessions for families and professionals to heighten brand awareness and solidify the Center's reputation as a leader in the field
- Continued exploration of partnerships with outside organizations for off-site therapy

### Potential Outputs:

- An annual schedule of focus groups for various constituencies
- New programs or approaches
- Refined processes
- Reinstatement of speaker series
- A realigned marketing plan
- New off-campus sites for delivering services

# LAUGHLIN CHILDREN'S CENTER STRATEGIC & SUCCESSION PLAN: 2017-2020

## Succession Plan

A smooth transition of leadership is the hallmark of a well-run organization. Given the 20-month timetable facing the Center, we expect to be able to find, hire, and train an assistant executive director (AED) who will transition into the role of executive director in a seamless manner, reassuring staff, supporters, and the community that the operations of the Center will continue apace, despite the change in personnel.

In order to accomplish this seamless transition, it is the intention of the strategic planning committee to apply for a capacity-building grant through the Forbes Funds (or other foundations interested in infrastructure support, as needed); this grant would allow for the hiring of the AED sometime during the fall of 2017, providing the staff and board with nine to 12 months to on-board the successful candidate, as well as review performance prior to the retirement of the current ED. Learning the intricacies and idiosyncrasies of the organization is vital to a strong performance as the CEO.

This onboarding will also allow for ample opportunities to introduce the AED to staff, funders, and community partners, so that the final transfer of roles is an occasion for excitement rather than one of concern or anxiety. The timetable set out below also provides for the possibility that the original candidate for the AED role turns out to be ill-suited for the position.

### PROPOSED SUCCESSION & TRANSITION TIME LINE

1. Fall 2016: Explore possibilities of grant-funded Assistant Executive Director (AED) position
2. Jan 2017: Submit Grant Request (9-12 months of salary for AED)
3. Spring 2017: Advertise for AED
4. Summer 2017: Interview candidates for AED
5. Sept 2017: Hire AED
6. Feb 2018: Six-Month Evaluation for AED--*Continue with current candidate or start second search*
7. 31 Aug 2018: Hand off ED role