

# Sheltering Arms

## Early Education and Family Centers Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020

When we began our strategic planning process in early 2014, we engaged families, partners, staff, board members, volunteers, and experts in the field to think big, to be bold and to share their greatest hopes and aspirations for our agency. This plan serves as a strategic compass for the next five years and beyond. It is designed to be actionable, inspirational and accessible to all members of our community.

Six "bold statements of strategic intent" have been formulated to provide the framework for the plan. These statements, crafted by our diverse team of key stakeholders, represent where we want to be as an agency and indicate a shift from where we are today in how we define operational excellence, our brand, financial sustainability, advocacy and influence, partnerships, impact, and data. The intent of this plan is not to solve a problem or fix a failure. Rather, it serves as a necessary next step forward in our evolution as one of the premiere early childhood agencies in the South.



### Our mission:

Sheltering Arms transforms the lives of children, their families and communities through model early childhood education and leadership in the field.

### Our vision:

Thriving communities where all families hold the power to create opportunity for themselves and their children.

## 1: Sheltering Arms Brand Promise

Sheltering Arms translates its legacy of two-generational impact into a powerful brand promise that is clear, reinforces an affirmative narrative of empowering children and their families and communities, and drives consistency in fulfilling the brand promise to children, families and staff. It positions Sheltering Arms as a leader, innovator and change agent in the field of early education and family engagement locally, regionally and nationally.

### Strategies:

#### A. Branding

We will contemporize the brand/message and implement an integrated marketing plan for our diverse audiences.

#### B. Brand Ambassadors

We will create brand ambassadors and incorporate high-tech, high-touch tools that encourage partners to share our vision, mission and impact with their networks.

#### C. Operational Alignment

We will align operations to consistently deliver on our brand promise for each child and his/her family, community partners and staff members across all Sheltering Arms centers.

#### D. Family Impact

We will execute an integrated, intentional, two-generation approach that includes parenting skills, health and wellness, financial literacy, job readiness and educational attainment for parents.



## 2: Financial Sustainability

Sheltering Arms maximizes existing revenue sources and identifies and secures diverse, new revenue opportunities. We will prototype different forms of social enterprise as viable avenues to further our mission and build on our financial foundation.

### Strategies:

#### A. Funding sources

We will seek innovative funding sources to optimize the balance of our revenue stream.

#### B. Donors as partners

We will engage donors at all levels as partners in our work.

#### C. Strategically aligned philanthropy

We will closely align fundraising with strategic priorities.

#### D. Maximize existing resources

We will leverage the power of current community partners and stakeholders, donors and volunteers to help facilitate our growth and vitality.

## 3: Operational Excellence

Sheltering Arms delivers a consistent experience of high standards for each child, family and staff member. Our team consists of highly skilled professionals who are committed to delivering high quality services. We master the disciplines of operational excellence and align our professional development to deliver our brand promise.

### Strategies:

#### A. High standards

We have clearly defined standards of educational excellence for our children and we will embed these principles across our internal systems.

#### B. High quality professional development

We will provide ongoing, high quality professional development opportunities for our staff.

#### C. High impact experiences

We will utilize internal and external resources to provide our staff with experiences that foster intellectual curiosity, a sense of community and commitment to carrying out our mission and vision.



## 4: Advocacy & Influence

Sheltering Arms has a unique, powerful, and informed voice. We partner with advocacy groups that shape the public perception and policies that affect young children and their families. As part of this collective voice, we are positioned to not only impact our own organization, but to raise the level of quality and influence the field nationally. Based on a foundation of shared values, our partners provide a gateway to services and other capabilities that expand our reach and impact – and we do the same for them.

### Strategies:

#### A. Advocacy

We will deepen and expand our partnerships with local and national advocacy organizations to inform policy agendas.

#### B. Position Statements

We will develop position statements on critical issues that affect early childhood education.

#### C. Partnership

We will leverage relationships with public agencies, community organizations and early learning organizations.

## 5: Impact and Data

Sheltering Arms measures our impact on children, their families and communities, and uses the data to achieve continuous performance improvement and to drive best practices throughout the organization.

### Strategies:

#### A. Measurable Results

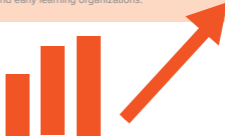
We will implement measurable outcomes to our operations and partnerships focused on results that benefit children and their families.

#### B. Accountability

We will design accountability systems that reinforce impact.

#### C. Data Driven

We will establish systematic alignment of data systems and accountability.



## 6: Our Role in the Field

Sheltering Arms elevates mastery in the field of early childhood education, leveraging our unique experiences as professionals, educators and innovators.

### Strategies:

#### A. Meeting the Needs

We will complete an analysis of needs in early childhood education.

#### B. Awareness

We will leverage our position in the field to engage and support our partners in executing policy work and community awareness efforts that promote the importance and impact of early childhood education.

#### C. Impact

We will expand and heighten the visibility and reach of the Georgia Training Institute and its impact on the field.

#### D. Thought Leadership

We will share best practices by positioning key leaders within the organization as thought leaders in the early childhood education space.