

ELEVATED

EDWARD STREET 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



PARENTS & CAREGIVERS



PROGRAMS & EDUCATORS



OUR COMMUNITY

**EDWARD
STREET**

Promoting Early
Childhood Success

www.edwardstreet.org

ELEVATED

WITH YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT



Dear Friend,

In 2022, we elevated, thanks to your help.

We elevated children. We elevated parents and caregivers. We elevated early childhood programming and early educators. And we elevated our community by raising voices, raising awareness and improving family and educator resources and access to those resources.

We could not have done it without you.

Central to our work in 2022 was post-pandemic recovery and reintegration. Young children, facing growing social-emotional challenges, had fallen behind age-appropriate development; early educators needed new, innovative support; families needed resources and an invitation to return to play.

And we *all* needed to rediscover joy.

With your support, we met these needs in 2022. Early childhood and out-of-school-time programming was improved through new and existing initiatives, and post-pandemic challenges met their match as we responded in real time to challenges facing families and educators. All the while, we celebrated our community's vibrant return to in-person learning.

Your generous contribution helped us:

- Return the Day of Play Family Festival to Elm Park after two years of virtual celebrations. Thousands of families rekindled the joy of play and being together.
- Provide educators with new resources to support social-emotional learning in young children.
- Partner with Worcester Public Schools to bring school adjustment counselors to programs, where they modeled techniques for staff and connected with students in need of additional support.
- Raise educator and family voices as we advocated for bold legislation that will transform the lives of thousands of educators, families and young children.

Twenty pages is hardly enough space to share what we accomplished in 2022, but we're excited to bring you a few of the highlights. Because of you, Edward Street is able to C.A.R.E. — Convene, Advocate, Respond, and Educate — for young children and families every single day.

Thank you for ensuring we can make a difference. Thank you for helping children reach their full potential.

With sincere gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Monica M. Thomas-Bonnick".

Monica Thomas-Bonnick
President of the Board

Strategic Goals

2017 – 2022

2022 marked the culmination of a five-year strategic plan in which we elevated children and early educators.

EDWARD STREET

Promoting Early Childhood Success

• **Supported** a thriving early learning workforce

• **Advanced** high-quality early learning environments

• **Influenced** early education & care investments

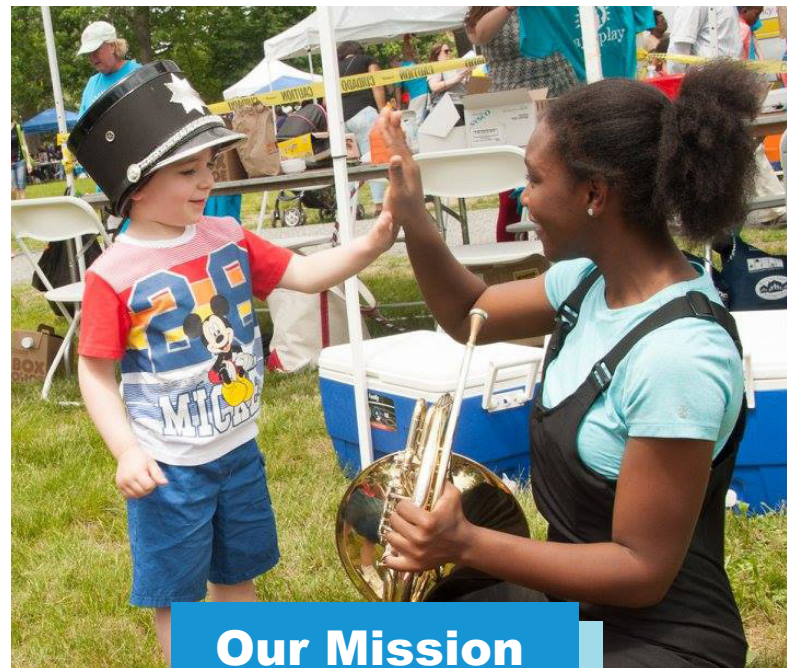
• **Lead** cross-sector alignments for early learning

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

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Our Mission

Edward Street collaborates to improve the quality and impact of early education and care, enhancing the development of young children and strengthening families in Central Massachusetts.

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POSITIVE PLAYTIME

Goodbye, pandemic – time to learn and play!

Talk about a beacon of hope!

After two years of shutdowns and remote learning and work, Edward Street's 2022 *Day of Play* celebrated our community's return to in-person activities.

The timing could not have been better.

The pandemic had deeply impacted learning and growth. Isolated from peers, extended family, professional early educators, early education and care curriculum, and, in some cases, healthy nutrition and medical care, young children missed out on academic, social-emotional and physical development. Childhood anxiety spiked under the weight of unpredictability as families faced new health and employment challenges.

Then came Edward Street's Day of Play, with its annual focus on "positive play." On a sunny day in September at Elm Park, Edward Street and our partners encouraged creativity, self-discovery, problem-solving, teamwork, relationship-building, dexterity, STEM skills, and literacy through interactive activities for young children in the arts, construction, movement, mindfulness and more. Families also enjoyed fun and engaging performances.

More than 5,000 people attended! With your support, we inspired positive play in homes, childcare centers, and out-of-school-time programs.



Speaking out about unaffordable childcare

Massachusetts childcare costs are the second highest in the United States, with families spending 20-50 percent of household income on care. Even for families who can afford it, access to high-quality learning and care is severely limited in many neighborhoods.

Unaffordable, inaccessible childcare comes at a great cost to young children—not to mention families (who can't work without reliable care), and businesses (which can't grow without a steady workforce). So, we made sure their voices were heard by lawmakers and leaders across Worcester County and statewide. Online, we encouraged our community to share their views directly with lawmakers and to attend rallies and speeches.

“Edward Street has the voice of the child. The voice of the family. Families are very busy and don’t always have time to advocate for themselves or learn the process, so the children’s voice that Edward Street provides is incredibly important. They can share that family perspective.”

– Darlene Belliveau

Director of Children’s Services at the YWCA of Central Massachusetts



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PROGRAMS & COLLABORATIONS

More Ready4K than ever before

The research is clear. High quality childcare curriculum makes a dramatic, lifelong difference in the lives of young children — even more so when programs regularly engage with parents and caregivers.

That’s why Edward Street led a coalition of public and private stakeholders to bring Ready4K to childcare providers and families.

Ready4K is a text messaging platform that updates families on their child’s learning and growth in areas like communication skills, motor skills, personal-social development and problem-solving skills, with suggested at-home activities and parenting strategies that aid development. Parents and caregivers also receive vital information about local wraparound supports, such as healthcare, food access, and housing, and notices about family-friendly events. They even learn about parental self-care.

Edward Street introduced Ready4K in 2022 and the response has been overwhelmingly positive. During the 2022-2023 school year, programs engaged with 4,444 families via more than 336,000 Ready4K text messages. Ninety-two percent of families say Ready4K helped their children learn and grow, 100% say it improved their relationships with their children, 87% say it improved their parenting confidence and 94% say they feel more supported.

Thanks to your support, today’s young children will be better prepared for kindergarten and beyond.

Ready4K adds an extra two months’ worth of learning and growth over a 10-month, school-year time frame, on average. For Worcester’s young children this is like taking advantage of a limited time offer. Millions of neurons are formed in the first five years of life, making it a prime opportunity to get started on crucial life skills, including cognitive ones like problem-solving and physical ones like dexterity.

“The [Ready4K] text messages are all very helpful and it’s good to have the support. It takes a village to raise children, but the village also is helpful for parents”

– Worcester parent



Social-emotional needs grew...

Post-pandemic, it didn't take long for youth-serving staff to recognize that children's social-emotional needs had grown. Children were having a harder time focusing on tasks, and group disruptions were more frequent than before.

Fortunately, stakeholder meetings convened by Edward Street led to an unprecedented solution: Worcester Public Schools' Office of Social Emotional Learning would make WPS adjustment counselors available to after school and vacation programs.

... Our partners responded

Soon, 25 adjustment counselors were regularly visiting programs — and the benefits keep multiplying. Adjustment counselors who work directly with children are also role modeling effective strategies for program staff who support youth year-round. Better still, by partnering to address social-emotional needs early in life, adjustment counselors and program staff are giving children a fair chance at success through middle school and high school.

“It’s one thing for staff to have training and to get the tools they need, it’s another thing entirely to learn directly from Rachel (a WPS adjustment counselor) as she models de-escalation and intervention techniques. Staff feel seen and heard, which also supports program leadership in its goals.”

– Pam Supernant, Vice President of Youth Development & Community Services, YMCA of Central Massachusetts



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EDUCATOR SUPPORT

Trauma-sensitivity training delivered

Traumatic events that occur in childhood, known as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), increased during the pandemic, with potentially dire consequences for young children.

According to data compiled by Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, Founder of the Center for Youth Wellness and the former Surgeon General of California, and the Burke Foundation, children with a high ACEs score face a 20-year decrease in life expectancy; children who experience four or more ACEs are 7.4 times more likely to suffer from alcoholism and 12.2 times more likely to attempt suicide; and children who experience two or more ACEs are nearly three times more likely to repeat a grade.

Edward Street responded to the rise in ACEs with tailored support for early educators.

Edward Street Master Teacher Jo Ann Borinski led a series of trauma-sensitivity trainings that helped educators identify and appropriately and effectively respond to each child's unique needs.

Research shows that Jo Ann's efforts will benefit our community for years to come. If ACEs were treated early and effectively nationwide it could lead to 1.9 million fewer cases of heart disease, 21 million fewer cases of depression, and 2.5 million fewer instances of obesity later in life.



Rising childhood anxiety meets its match

Breathe. Listen. Look. Use your senses. Now you're in the present moment. Now, you're ready to learn.

In 2022, when programs reported increased levels of childhood anxiety, Edward Street offered mindfulness classes for educators, in partnership with educator, author, public speaker, and Edward Street board member Wendy O'Leary, M.Ed.

Now, these educators are modeling mindfulness techniques with children. Living in the present moment reduces distractions that impact learning and growth and helps children build positive relationships with peers and adults.



“It was good to hear, from an expert, that our littlest children are having the biggest feelings. We know this, we see this, but we don't always know what to do about it. Wendy provided useful tips and ideas for regulating and de-escalating children in the classroom. It was exactly what we needed, and we need a lot more of it. Wendy's voice, her words, everything about her, releases my stress.”

– Sarah, Early Educator



Their passion. Our connections

Yolanda Ramos and Llanet Montoya were working in early childhood when Edward Street met them. Now, they're helping children, families and communities in whole new ways.

Yolanda Ramos

Mental health provider and consultant Yolanda Ramos has always worked with children and families. Since meeting Edward Street, her career is blossoming — and so is Worcester's early childhood community.

On the advice of Edward Street, Yolanda applied for and was awarded a statewide fellowship on advocacy, hosted by Strategies for Children. In her role for the organization's Advocacy Network, she trains parents to advocate for child- and family-friendly policies. She also contributes to the Early Childhood Agenda, a statewide approach to building a strong and sustainable early childhood system by focusing on priorities and actions.

Edward Street also connected Yolanda with the Together for Kids Coalition (TFKC), an Edward Street affiliate, where she is now a consultant. In 2022, Yolanda and TFKC undertook the ambitious Welcome Babies Project — phase one of the organization's push to establish a continuum of care from prenatal to age eight for Worcester's children.

"We reviewed Worcester and discovered serious gaps [in care] as well as opportunities for interventions and solutions," Yolanda said.

Yolanda also collaborates with the Latin American Business Organization. She generates support for affordable, accessible, high quality childcare by reminding business owners of its importance to families and the economy.

"I'm a true believer in what people can do, and the time to act is now," she said. "Because every child matters."

"It was Eve and Kim who really supported me and recommended me to TFKC, and that really opened the door to the advocacy work I'm doing in the community."

— Yolanda Ramos, Mental Health Consultant with TFKC, an Edward Street affiliate



Llanet Montoya

When Llanet Montoya first opened a family childcare center (FCC) in Worcester, she knew little about U.S. culture and our childcare system. She was only beginning to learn English.

Then she met Joanne Gravell at the Center for Childcare Careers (a Seven Hills Foundation affiliate) and everything changed. Joanne introduced Llanet to Edward Street and other early childhood partners, which led her to enroll in the Early Childhood Leadership Certificate program jointly offered by Quinsigamond Community College and Worcester State University. Meanwhile, she earned credits towards a master's degree through Edward Street's scholarship program, gaining leadership and advocacy skills along the way.

Soon, Llanet was growing her career in new and unexpected ways. She began providing informal support to other FCCs in the region, which led to her role as a mentor in Project Flourish's FCC apprenticeship program.

Offered in 2022, the FCC cohort helped providers gain educator and business skills and navigate the state's childcare system during challenging economic times. "The economic situation that we're living in right now is impacting every program. Inflation is impacting stability and administrative work is taking time away from working with children," she said.

Today, Llanet is Program Development Specialist at the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, where she supports FCCs not only in Central Massachusetts but across the state.

Thanks to your support, Edward Street was there for Llanet every step of the way.

"There was always someone there to answer my questions and empower me to overcome the challenges I was facing," she said.

"Edward Street came with support and training, and since then it has been a blessing. They empowered me to know and understand that I was making a difference, and that our childcare program is needed and supported."

– Llanet Montoya, Program Development Specialist, Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care



Staffing crisis, meet Edward Street

Low pay and a lack of professional status have led to chronic staffing shortages in early education, and children and families pay the price.

In 2022, Edward Street removed barriers to entry by helping develop a new apprenticeship program, supported career growth by mentoring and training educators, and advocated for fair wages and professional status.

- **Family childcare apprenticeships:** To support family childcare centers Edward Street assisted the Seven Hills Foundation's Center for Childcare Careers in developing a new apprenticeship program for 2022. Project Flourish's first family childcare cohort helped educators gain knowledge and confidence while earning Child Development Associate credentials on their way to teacher certifications.
- **Embedded Master Teacher:** As she has since 2012, Edward Street's Master Teacher Jo Ann Borinski was embedded in several Worcester early education and care programs, where she mentored and trained early educators.
- **Early educator advocacy:** Alongside organizations like the Common Start Coalition, Edward Street rallied legislative support for livable wages and urged social media audiences to do the same.



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COMMUNITY RESOURCES

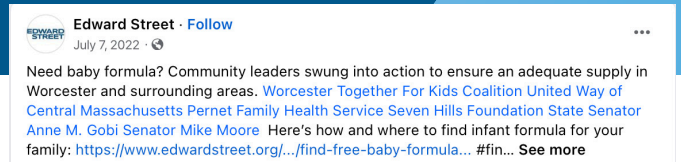
National crisis gets a local solution

When the national infant formula shortage reached Worcester, it threatened babies' healthy development. Our community needed to act quickly.

Edward Street, the Worcester Community Connections Coalition (a Seven Hills Foundation affiliate), the United Way of Central Massachusetts, the Together for Kids Coalition (an Edward Street affiliate), and several other organizations and individuals acquired 175 cases of infant formula and made them available through local food pantries. Edward Street's blog and social media channels informed local families of pickup locations.

Better still, in the process, Edward Street and our partners created a communications network among pantries and infant formula advocates to ensure formula access and awareness moving forward. This is welcome news for families who rely on infant formula (exclusively or in combination with breastfeeding) for a variety of reasons, including difficulty breastfeeding, infant food allergies, and the lack of breastfeeding support and acceptance in workplaces.

Thanks to your help, more children are getting the nutrition they need, including families in underserved, BIPOC communities, where food insecurity is an ongoing concern.



Resources for parents & caregivers in need of baby formula.

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Promoting Early Childhood Success



Families and educators get a boost online

The right information, pointing to the right resources at the right times, can make all the difference in the life of a busy parent, educator, or childcare provider.

Thanks to your support, our social media channels, blog, monthly Day of Play newsletter, and websites (edwardstreet.org and worcesterdayofplay.org) shared parenting tips, positive play activities, information about wraparound supports, continuing education opportunities for early educators, community event notices, action items for voters, parenting inspiration, and more.

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EDWARD STREET'S JOURNEY

A year of listening and learning

Diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging — DEIB — is more than an item to cross off Edward Street's to-do list. It's fundamental to our mission of promoting early childhood success, dating back to our founding as a daycare in 1887.

Still, we are always learning and growing, just like the young children we serve.

That's why Edward Street partnered with Valerie Zolezzi-Wyndham of Promoting Good, LLC in 2022. With Valerie's support, we improved our understanding of our community's DEIB needs and the DEIB perspectives of our staff and Board. We searched for new ways to positively impact our community.

"Edward Street is a tremendous advocacy leader in the city, so we worked to identify ways they can amplify diverse leaders," said Zolezzi-Wyndham. "They may be able to improve staff and board diversity, and how else can they help to promote leadership of color in Worcester? They had done some of this work previously. We focused on concretizing and amplifying it."



"Diversity is what makes us human. We need to encourage children, families, and educators to be proud of themselves. Diversity of thought is also important — there's a feeling in the community that you need to assimilate, but I would love for Edward Street to say, 'We take you as you. We're going to help and support children where and how they are right now.'"

— Angela Avoyrie, Unum Underwriter and Edward Street Board Member

Diversity should be front of mind, explained Board Member Amina Bristol, Assistant Director of Student Inclusion & Belonging, College of the Holy Cross. "We serve the Worcester area, which is a very diverse community, and we need to be mindful of the role that identity plays in the lives of young children and educators," she said.

"DEIB infiltrates our work in early education," said Edward Street Board Member Eric Roldan LICSW, Executive Director of Outpatient Services at Arbour Counseling Services and a former family child-care center provider. "From overall policy efforts to connections with local childcare providers and educators, we need to be supportive of their work and their challenges."

DEIB continues to inform our work, as we strive to impact our community every single day.

"As a well-respected nonprofit in Worcester, Edward Street's leadership on inclusivity can help other organizations grow as well," said Zolezzi-Wyndham. "They can be a role model at policy tables and in their advocacy work by sharing their power with community members."

New Board members, fresh ideas

Youth and experience? In 2022, we learned we could have it all.

Domenica Perrone, Miranda Sgariglia, and Jennifer Madson joined our Board of Directors and brought with them an infusion of ideas and fresh perspectives.



Jennifer Madson

Central Regional Director for Mass Audubon, Jennifer has an extensive professional background in youth development and health equity work in the Greater Worcester area. A dedicated Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice advocate, Jennifer is excited to continue her work with Edward Street. Jennifer received her degree in International Development and Social Change, with a focus on Youth Development, from Clark University.

As a parent of two young children and active community member in Worcester, Jennifer is committed to being a voice on behalf of high quality early childhood programs.

Domenica Perrone

Clark University's Director for the Office of Community Engagement and Volunteering, Domenica was previously Project Manager for the Commissioner of Health and Human Services (HHS) of the City of Worcester, and before that worked with the Latino Education Institute at Worcester State University and as a Research Assistant for the Collaborative for Youth and Community Justice at Clark University. She graduated in 2020 from Clark University with a Masters in Community Development and Planning and an MBA. Domenica has a passion for educational equity and social justice for BIPOC communities. She is committed to working with Worcester organizations, leaders, advocates, and youth toward these goals.



Miranda Sgariglia

A special education teacher at Dudley Middle School in Dudley and mother of a young son, and new baby daughter, Miranda understands the challenges that parents of young children face. She joined Edward Street's Board of Directors to help raise the voices of early educators, caregivers, and young children in Central Massachusetts and statewide.

Miranda aims to be a participant in change in our community rather than a spectator. "Children are our future," she says, "and the care and support they receive should reflect this."

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BY YOU... IN 2022!

Invest in young children, invest in community

Edward Street donors Warner Fletcher, Mary Fletcher, and Gerald Gates understand the significance of the first five years of life for children and communities.



Gerald Gates

“Early childhood is just vitally important. The experiences children have during those years makes an imprint on them for the rest of their lives. If their educational, nutritional, and housing needs aren’t met when they’re young, challenges become deeply ingrained and more difficult to address down the road. This has been proven over and over again.”

“If you’re interested in the lives of young children and helping position them for their happiest, healthiest, and most productive lives, it’s natural, once you learn about Edward Street, to want to support them and their mission.”

Warner and Mary Fletcher

“We support Edward Street because of the important role the organization plays in meeting crucial early childhood needs in Worcester. The new University Commons Early Education and Care Program (developed by Edward Street partner The Guild of St. Agnes) is a wonderful example of complementary meshing: the creation of early childhood spaces paired with the development of early childhood educators through nearby Worcester State University.”

“If we as a community are not willing to invest in facilities and people that ensure high-quality early education and care, then we will only have to confront greater challenges down the road, which earlier treatment would have ameliorated, at a greater cost to us all.”



Sponsors & Funders | 2022

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Our sincere gratitude to all who made a gift during the year.

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EMILY HENDRICKS-BRAMLEY, Graphic Design

DAVID NILES, Day of Play Photography

Financial Report – June 30, 2022 and 2021

ASSETS

	2022	2021
Current		
Cash	94,223	174,332
Contributions Receivable	184,762	54,127
Prepaid Expenses	9,818	5,167
Contract Retainer	1,250	–
Interest Receivable	15,660	13,958
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	305,713	247,584
Property and Equipment		
Computer Equipment	24,428	24,428
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	22,361	21,258
Net	<hr/> 2,067	<hr/> 3,170
Investments	<hr/> 2,315,987	<hr/> 2,876,443
Total Assets	<hr/> <hr/> 2,623,767	<hr/> <hr/> 3,127,197

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	152,533	78,479
Refundable Advance	-	12,779
Total	<hr/> 152,533	<hr/> 91,258
Net Assets		
Without Donor Restrictions	2,342,412	2,858,327
With Donor Restrictions	<hr/> 128,822	<hr/> 177,612
Total	<hr/> 2,471,234	<hr/> 3,035,939
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<hr/> <hr/> 2,623,767	<hr/> <hr/> 3,127,197



Since 1883, Edward Street has worked towards ensuring young children have high quality early learning programs. Quality guides our work, and partnerships and community collaboration drive it.

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IN 2022!



“They’re at the table. They’re asking the questions. They’re making sure early education and care is on every agenda in every meeting they’re at. Historically, we haven’t been on the agenda. Historically we’re the forgotten field, so I appreciate that we have an organization that’s devoted to advocacy for the field and support for program directors. Edward Street is truly a wonderful resource for our community.”

– **Darlene Belliveau**

Director of Children’s Services at the YWCA of Central Massachusetts

KEEP IN TOUCH!

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Childhood Success

