

**Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF)**  
**Equity-Focused Policy Research: Building Cross-Cutting Evidence on Supports for Families with Young Children**

*“Examining equitable access to early learning resources and family strengthening supports in Miami-Dade County.”*

Through the *Examining equitable access to early learning resources and family strengthening support in Miami-Dade County* research project, we plan to leverage administrative integrated data systems (IDS) and local and state program partnerships, to examine local policy initiatives’ focus to increase equitable access to high-quality early care and education as they overlap with other service systems (access to nutrition, affordable housing, and family income supports). Leading from a strengths-based, developmental-ecological model the research team will build upon existing community partnerships. The interdisciplinary team includes researchers from the University of Miami (UM) and University of Florida Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies (UF-AZC), state and local policymakers, and 3 organizations representing low-income communities of color. We focus on a recent investment from The Children’s Trust in Miami-Dade County (an independent taxing district established by voter referendum in 2002 with the mission to fund and invest in programs that improve the lives of children and families in Miami-Dade) in a two-generational model. *Thrive by 5 (TB5)* was launched in 2018 to complement State-wide early childhood expansion and quality improvement initiatives. We will incorporate access to childcare mapping tools, local- and State-level cross-sector integrated data systems, to address priorities aligned with the RWJF call for equity-focused policy research during and after COVID-19.

In support of the purpose for this research project, faculty from the University of Florida, led by Herman Knopf, Ph.D., will provide guidance on research methodology, advise on data curation processes, develop methodology for geospatial and statistical analyses, and assist in report development and dissemination activities.

Specifically, the UF faculty participating in work will:

- Provide Guidance for the process for securing and linking child level data across early childhood supporting systems including: Child Care Subsidy, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and other locally funded initiatives.
- Lead the analysis of policies related to childcare access, nutrition and income supports in Miami-Dade
- Guide development and implementation of geospatial analyses for the project.
- Collaborate with UM Faculty in the development and implementation of statistical methodology for the project.
- Participate in bi-monthly research team meetings.
- Provide guidance on the use of the Florida Index of Child Care Access to identify community level patterns of demand/supply in the County, and within the 3 targeted communities
- Collaborate with UM team to develop and disseminate research findings to local, state, and national policy and research audiences