



A BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE



ANNUAL REPORT FY21



"The pandemic has highlighted the critical importance of childcare... an essential good as important as our roads and bridges to keep labor forces working and our economy progressing."

LAUREN COOK
Chief Executive Officer

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends,

FY21 was quite the year! July 1, 2020 marked our grand-reopening following a mandated 3-month closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ellis team, supported by our Board of Directors and a few special parent volunteers, worked incredibly hard to prepare Ellis for a safe reopening.

Operations were transformed to reflect intense health and safety regulations from the Commonwealth, and families slowly returned to care. Ellis buildings were brought back to life thanks to the joyful children we serve, who were delighted to be reunited with their friends and teachers. We even welcomed new families with young infants to Ellis, at a time when regulations prohibited them from dropping off their children in classrooms. The Ellis community as a whole demonstrated considerable patience and understanding during a very difficult time, and we continue to endure the pandemic, and all of its unreliability, together.

Always with an eye towards the positive, I'm grateful the pandemic has highlighted the critical importance of childcare. It became clear quite early that childcare isn't a luxury, but an essential good as important as our roads and bridges to keep labor forces working and our economy progressing. With that in mind, Ellis continues to advocate for increased government investment in our sector, and we invite our friends to do the same.

With many thanks for your support of all kinds,

Lauren Cook

LAUREN B. COOK, Chief Executive Officer



Our MISSION

Ellis partners with families to provide high-quality early childhood education and out-of-school programs in a warm, nurturing environment. A recognized leader in our field, we support children across the socio-economic spectrum, treasure diversity in all forms, and celebrate the joy of childhood.

What Sets ELLIS APART

- ◆ Ellis is a local and national model for inclusive, equitable quality early education. Ellis stands out for being among the most socio-economically, racially and culturally diverse organizations serving the children of Boston.
- ◆ Ellis is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, putting it in the top 9% of early childhood programs nationally.
- ◆ Due to its high level of quality, Boston Public Schools (BPS) has elected to fund three Ellis preschool classrooms in connection with the BPS Universal Pre-K (UPK) Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI) programs.
- ◆ Ellis is beloved and has a waitlist of over 600 children due to our level of quality, rich diversity, and warm learning environment.



ELLIS BOARD CHAIR:

Coleen Downs Dinneen

We were thrilled when Coleen agreed to let us highlight her service in our Annual Report. Though, typical of Coleen, she made light of the incredible commitment and sacrifice she made by stepping in for me when I gave birth. I don't know of any director-volunteers who would come out of retirement in a pandemic to work on the front lines in service to an organization they lead. Coleen demonstrated a commitment to Ellis that is beyond measure and the Ellis community, and I, in particular, will be forever grateful. Thank you again, Coleen, for your incredible leadership and selflessness.

CEO, LAUREN COOK

When Coleen Dinneen arrived at Ellis in 2006 with holiday gifts for the children, she couldn't have imagined what was in store. "The kids just grabbed my heart and wouldn't let go," she says now. Coleen joined the board in 2007, became the Chair in 2019, and then, in a surprise twist, became the Acting Executive Director in 2020, when Lauren Cook went on paternal leave.

In March 2020, Ellis closed for three months under state mandate. In May and June, Lauren and Coleen worked closely with staff to prepare for reopening. So much was uncertain, from rules and regulations to risks. But families and children needed Ellis and Ellis stepped up, focusing on how to protect everyone.

Lauren's leave began at the end of August 2020, less than two months after reopening. Despite anxiety about COVID operations, Lauren knew she was leaving Ellis in good hands. Coleen was on site several days a week, and her mission was clear. "I was there to support the staff and to facilitate communication with the whole Ellis community," she says.

Coleen took responsibility for making timely decisions with imperfect knowledge. "With so much fluid and unclear, decisions were hard, and people were anxious. I collaborated with the staff on everything, but in the end, I was happy to be the one making the imperfect decisions that were the best we could do." Coleen's legal background was also invaluable in determining what ambiguous government regulations really meant for Ellis.

Families and children depended so much on Ellis that it was soon full (though with capacity reduced to meet social distancing requirements). "I am happy to say that we accommodated everyone who wanted to return," Coleen says. "We were able to rework space to make that happen."

One group increased in size and function: school-age kids who needed a full-day support system. Many families didn't have the time or technology to support their kids' remote schooling and relied on Ellis to fill the gap. Coleen's business world skills helped her solve infrastructure problems. She increased Ellis's WiFi support and rounded up laptop donations for the students. Soon Ellis had 36 all-day school-age students in 2 rooms, with 6 new teachers supporting that effort.

Coleen credits the Ellis team for the COVID reopening success. "I can't compliment them enough," Coleen says. "They were dedicated and selfless. They just needed me to back them up." With everyone working together, Ellis came through those dark days as a beacon of light for children and families.

Coleen has since stepped back to her normal role, but she is more attached to Ellis than ever. "It's been a real privilege to be associated with Ellis as long as I have. Ellis does so much to embrace kids and families, and to give kids the strong foundation they need in life."



"It's been a real privilege to be associated with Ellis as long as I have. Ellis does so much to embrace kids and families, and to give kids the strong foundation they need in life."

COLEEN DOWNS DINNEEN
Ellis Board Chair



PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT:

Boston Public Schools



Meaningful, long term partnerships help Ellis thrive. Boston Public Schools' (BPS) partnership has made a considerable impact on the families we serve, and on Ellis as a whole. Since 2015, BPS has recognized Ellis as a high-quality community-based organization, worthy of its investment to expand high quality Pre-K (K1) classrooms outside BPS school buildings. Working in partnership with BPS, three Ellis preschool classrooms receive considerable resources in the form of funding and programmatic support.

BPS funding makes it possible for Ellis to fairly compensate the well-qualified teachers in our BPS partner classrooms. We hope that, with continued philanthropic and government support, Ellis will be able to provide all our educators a livable wage, better reflecting the critical value of their work.

In our BPS Classrooms:

- ◆ All teachers have a degree in early childhood education and are prepared to teach in classroom settings to support students of all backgrounds and needs.
- ◆ Teachers receive ongoing professional development throughout the year to enhance their teaching.
- ◆ Expert coaches provide ongoing support to teachers.
- ◆ Students learn from the Boston Public Schools Focus on K1 Curriculum and Building Blocks Curriculum, which are national models in early childhood education.
- ◆ All classroom environments are age-appropriate and culturally responsive.
- ◆ Ellis has a Parent Engagement Coordinator available to provide support to families to meet their individual needs.

Ellis students in BPS partner classrooms experience play-centered learning in small classrooms; enjoy routines and grow comfortable with classroom structures; build positive relationships with other children and teachers; build social, emotional, critical thinking, math, and



reading skills; work independently and in groups to explore new ideas, question concepts, and share their feelings, becoming well-rounded students better prepared for school and life.

Research shows that children who attended the BPS Pre-K (UPK) program continue to outperform students who did not attend, and have long-term academic achievement. Ellis is proud to be part of this success, working in partnership with BPS. Says TeeAra Dias, the BPS director of Universal Pre-K's, "Boston Public Schools has partnered with Ellis Early Learning in the Universal Pre-K program since 2015. Ellis has been a valued partner in the development of UPK in Boston, which expands access to preschool and brings the BPS Focus on Pre-K curriculum to more of Boston's youngest learners."



LET'S TALK ABOUT *Race, Children & Boston*



Parents can talk with their very young children about race, Beverly Daniel Tatum told a group of Ellis supporters in our first-ever virtual event. Dr. Tatum, the former president of Spelman College and author of the bestselling book *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations About Race*, said parents don't need to wait until preschool to introduce their children to the diversity of the human family. Children as young as 6 months begin to distinguish differences. Picture books can help normalize the concept that people come in a variety of colors.

"It's not something to be afraid of – difference – but something that's part of our normal life together," Dr. Tatum said. "We can celebrate differences from the time of birth."

As children develop language skills, they explore ideas about race. Taking an example from her own life, Dr. Tatum said her then 4-year-old son said a schoolmate asked him if his skin was dark because he drank chocolate milk. She used her son's question as an opportunity to talk about how people come from different parts of the world and look different. She was able to help him sort out his own thoughts – even if his questions persisted over a few days. "It's important for us to recognize that children have questions and if we don't answer them they remain unaddressed," Dr. Tatum said.



Ellis's first ever-virtual event was held in November 2020, amid a series of racial justice protests. Racism is a form of unfairness and it's difficult to talk about because parents want to protect their young children from that reality, Dr. Tatum said. But, even at age 3, children understand the concept of fairness.

"You can talk to kids in a very matter-of-fact way," Dr. Tatum said. "It is possible to have hard conversations and answer questions in an age-appropriate way."

The event included the presentation of Ellis's Ida B. Eldredge Vision Award to Attorney General Maura Healey for her work on behalf of children in Massachusetts. The framed award featured Ellis children's drawings of a rainbow and people playing basketball and skateboarding. "This is such an awesome picture and so emblematic of the hope Ellis gives to so many young people and, I think, what we all aspire to in this time," Ms. Healey said.

Common Start

In the Spring of 2020, the Massachusetts State House proposed new legislation that could make Massachusetts the first state in the nation to provide state-funded support for early childhood education. The Common Start Bill would publicly fund childcare, raise teachers' pay, and reduce or eliminate parents' out-of-pocket costs.

The world of childcare is built on a fragile structure, and it is hard to access. Early educators' wages are so low that many can't afford to join or stay in the field, and yet the cost of providing quality care for young children is so high that many families are priced out.

The COVID-19 Pandemic turned a delicate situation into a crisis. For teachers, it compounded an already difficult job with real public health risk. As a result, new teachers aren't coming to the field, and veteran teachers are leaving it. COVID safety regulations have put more demands on teachers and early education providers, and have added to built-in costs. Today, nearly two years into the pandemic, there are fewer teachers in the field, fewer childcare options available, and early childhood education costs more for parents.



Common Start would change the equation. It would treat early childhood education like public school funding: a common good that is essential for society. Common Start advocates understand this bill doesn't represent a cost but an investment, and is not a luxury but a necessity. Like public transportation or public roads, publicly-funded childcare unleashes economic opportunities. It allows more caregivers to remain in the workforce and start businesses, causing tax revenues to increase. Children get the start they need to learn and to succeed in life, and everyone in society benefits.

FROM OUR FAMILIES

Aleathia Graham and Randy Beaton

Aleathia Graham began looking for childcare for her oldest son, Tafari, in 2013, and as a first-time mom, finding childcare felt scary. When Aleathia found Ellis, she felt comforted by the consistent, positive family reviews she'd heard and the strength she saw in Ellis's diversity, and she knew that Ellis would work for her family. She felt immediately secure with her choice.

Aleathia and her husband Randy's children, Tafari (10), Lola (7) and Aryelle (3), have all attended Ellis. They love that Ellis feels like a community where everyone knows each other. When Aryelle (Ari) began at Ellis in 2018, Aleathia was worried about sending her preemie newborn into childcare. "I was terrified," she remembers. But already knowing the Ellis community, Aleathia quickly built trusting relationships with Ari's teachers. "Ms. Cari was able to pay attention to all of Ari's individual needs as a preemie, as well as care for all of the other children in her class. She's amazing."

Aleathia especially values the strength in Ellis's community, and in the last nearly ten years of being part of the Ellis family, Ellis has become a constant in her life. "Because I wear so many hats, working and going to school at the same time, I never have to worry about Ari when she's at Ellis. I know she's safe."



FROM OUR FAMILIES

Carreau and Jonathan Ryder



When looking for childcare, Carreau and Jon Ryder were deeply drawn to the mission and intentionality of the Ellis community, the quality of its programs, and the warmth with which each member of the community approaches their work. "We love that our children run in at the start of each day and we love collecting them at the end of each day and seeing how their minds and hearts have been filled with new experiences and knowledge." They say that their experiences are all the more substantial thanks to the variety of students with whom they are building bonds each day. "Both of our children started at Ellis as infants. Their first steps, early friendships, love for adults outside of family, and sense of self have all unfolded under the watchful eyes of our Ellis friends."

When thinking of the Ellis team, Carreau and Jon reflect that Ellis teachers have been extensions of their family, guiding their children (now ages four and 18-months) and helping them learn about milestones as they grow as parents. "Ellis teachers have been particular blessings throughout the pandemic. Though we knew our children would learn a great deal at Ellis, we never anticipated how much we would learn thanks to this remarkable organization - both as parents and as citizens."

Partners in OUR WORK

CORPORATE AND FOUNDATIONS

Aberdeen Standard Investments
Adage Capital Management
AllWays Health Partners
ART Engineering Corporation
Bain Capital
The Baupost Group Charitable Fund*
Berkshire Partners LLC
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
Brookline Bank
Bushrod H. Campbell and Adah F. Hall Charity Fund
Cabot Risk Strategies
Cruz Development
Dean Foundation for Little Children
Dellbrook JKS
Delta Dental
DGC (DiCicco, Gulman, & Company)
DHK Architects*
Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation*
EY
Fish Family Foundation*
Foundation M
Franklin Square House Foundation
Hingham Institution for Savings
Keller Williams Realty
Kirkland & Ellis LLP
KPMG
The Kraft Family Foundation*
Liberty Mutual Foundation
Loomis, Sayles & Company
McPhail Associates, LLC
McCall & Almy*
Mutual of America
Natixis Investment Managers
Northern Benefits
PNC Bank*

PUBLIC FUNDING

Boston Public Schools
City of Boston Mayor's Office of Women's Advancement*
Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

DONORS

\$10,000+

Reuben and Christine Ackerman
Kathy Betts and Chip Lewis*
Coleen and Ted Dinneen*
Suzanne Dwyer*
David and Wendy Giunta
Marian and Winlow Heard*
Emily and Tim Hughes
Larry and Dianne Hughes*
Lisa and Roger Krakoff*
Christine and David Letts*
Judith Moore
Alison and Frank Quirk
Mark and Etta Rosen
Kim Sinatra*
Will and Erin Tetler*

\$5,000-\$9,999

Warren and Renee Besser*
Amy Donovan*
Catherine and Keith Farrow
Elizabeth Gay
Steve Pomper and Blair Hewes
Emily and Tim Hughes
Carreau and Jonathan Ryder
Andrew Schneller and Lisa Sunwoo
Kristen and Derek Vicino

\$1,000-\$4,999

Jim Alexander and Tom Stocker*
Michael Caljouw
Bill and Carolyn Aliski*
Joseph and Marylynn Antonellis
Beverly and Dale Bearden
Christopher and Christine Blier*

Heather Blier
Catherine Brewster and
Marc-Andre Giasson
Graham Brewster
Paige Brewster and Ben Snow
Chip and Janine Broadhurst
James Broadhurst
Kathy Burns
Michael Caljouw
Brenna Callahan
Fernanda Campbell*
Carol and William Caporizzo
Jonathan and Jamie Carlson
Michael Cargo
Lauren and Andrew Cook*
Joe and Nes Correnti
William Cozean
Frank and Beth Davis*
Fernando and Charlene Domenech*
Shane Dunn and Elizabeth Bernardi
Michael and Barbara Eisensohn*
James Ellis
Todd Ellis
David and Diann Frantz
Daniel and Jill Garrison
Molly and Colin Gorman
Jane Greenwood and Arthur Hughes
Laura Grover
Elizabeth Harris
Kelly and Bilal Janjua
Karen Johnson
Patricia and Matthew Keenan*
Whitney and Matt Kimmell
Emily Kolle
Ben Krass and Mary Holper

Kate and Tom Kush
Garrett and Erin Larivee
Shenkiat Lim and Cynthia Schoettler
Jose Luengo and Margit Liander
Francis Lynch III
Li Ma
Ian and Teri Macduff
George and Cordelia MacPherson Carroll
George Marootian
Sophia and Cameron McCully
Melissa and Edwin Menard*
Caroline Michel
Richard Moran and Borgna Brunner
Kris and Blake Mumby
Marleen Nienhuis and Walter Newman
Kelsey Pegden and Brittany Bahamon
Dannielle and Keith Pinson
Charles and Carolyn Price
Regina Quirk
Norin and Fahim Razzaque
Gena Rhee
Marilyn Rosh
Saurabh Saraf and Amar Kumar
John Sanford
Michael and Susan Scannell*
Laura and Tom Schumacher
Chris and Jana Shumate
R. Michael and Susan Scott
Beatriz Pina Smith
Bill and Susie Taylor
Will and Erin Tetler*
Marta and Lucvan Dam*
Susannah and Andrew Wardly
Roselee and Jim Wayman
Erika Wilkinson and Andrew Lynch*

ELLIS

\$600K

Raised in 5 Weeks!

Following a thorough due diligence process, the Ellis Board of Directors and leadership team made the decision to expand to Jamaica Plain (JP). Like the South End, JP is home to a broad spectrum of incomes and identities and is a community where Ellis's unique model could flourish. However, the vacant space at 555 Amory Street needed a thorough update which would be costly. In order to secure the lease in time, Ellis had to urgently fundraise to be able to expand and realize its vision to serve more families in need of care. Thanks to the incredible support of old and new friends, even more children will thrive together at Ellis for generations to come.

PriceWaterhouseCoopers
PURE Insurance Foundation
Ropes & Gray LLP
SRT Realty LLC*
State Street Corporation*
Tech Networks of Boston
The Mount Vernon Company, Inc.
TJX Foundation Inc.
Trinity Financial
United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley
William E. Schrafft and Bertha E. Schrafft Charitable Trust

The Year in NUMBERS

BALANCE SHEET: JUNE 30, 2021

ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,269,682
Restricted cash—Endowment	\$ 180,874
Accounts and pledges receivable	\$ 709,467
Prepaid expenses	\$ 27,258
Property and equipment - net	\$ 10,527,778

TOTAL ASSETS \$ 12,715,059

LIABILITIES

Notes payable, current portion	\$ 52,297
Accounts payable	\$ 120,383
Accrued expenses	\$ 199,341
Deposits	\$ 37,499
Long Term Debt	\$ 4,086,918

TOTAL LIABILITIES \$ 4,499,438

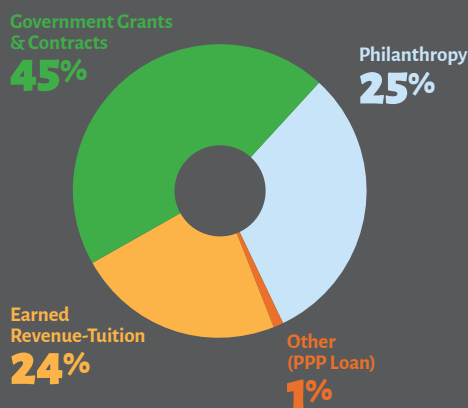
NET ASSETS

Without donor restrictions	\$ 7,699,443
With donor restrictions	\$ 516,178

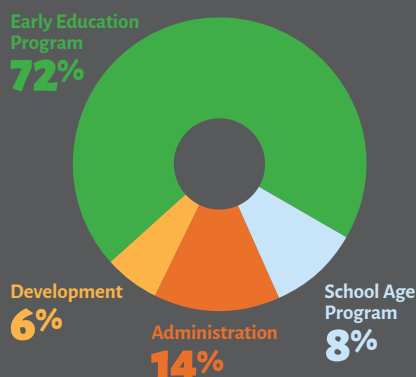
TOTAL NET ASSETS \$ 8,215,621

TOTAL LIABILITIES, NET ASSETS \$ 12,715,059

FY21 REVENUE: \$5,482,371



FY21 EXPENSES: \$4,572,095



*Member of the Fund for Expanding Educational Equity, making possible Ellis Early Learning's Expansion to Jamaica Plain

Our Team

AS OF JUNE 30, 2021

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Coleen Downs Dinneen, *Chair*
Michael J. Scannell, *1st Vice Chair*
Fernando J. Domenech, Jr., *2nd Vice Chair*
Suzanne L. Dwyer, *Treasurer*
Marta van Dam, *Clerk*
James G. Alexander
Warren Besser
Kathleen V. Betts
Frank L. Davis, III
Amy L. Donovan
Todd S. Ellis
Lawrence Hughes
Samia Kazi
Melissa Menard
William Tetler
Erika Wilkinson

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Brenna Callahan, *Co-Chair*
Shane Dunn, *Co-Chair*
Elizabeth Bernardi
Christopher Blier
Farrell Boucher
Jonathan Carlson
Tina Chen-Xu
Catherine Farrow
Molly Gorman
Emily Hughes
Kelly Janjua
Whitney Kimmel
Garrett Larivee
Kristina Mumby
Gem Mutlu
Dannielle Pinson
Laura Schumacher
Christopher Shumate
Kristen Vicino
Josh Zakim

ELLIS LEADERSHIP

Brenda Barreto (20+ years)
Lauren Cook
Yaskara Cruz
Patricia D. Keenan
Claire McNally
Thomas Monks (20+ years)
Meisha Reece (15+ years)
Tiffany Sheets (15+ years)
Maria Teixeira (20+ years)
Aiyauna Terry (15+ years)
Shawntell Usher-thames



ELLIS TEAM

Fartun Abdi
Alexandria Anderson
Adliz Santana Baretto
Liz Torres Barreto
Amanda Beland
Bohan Cao
Shanisha Carr
Jeannie Chalek (5+ years)
Hsuan-An Chou
Kathleen Coelho
Jendriana Concepcion
Rosa Cruz (5+ years)
Lawrence Dablah
Jennifer Daniels
Jennifer DaSilva (10+ years)
Alejandra De La Cruz
Kelsey Devine
Sugenis Dias (15+ years)
Antonia Diniz
Juleann Diniz Gomes
Colleen Donovan
Ivone Dos Santos
Natalie Dumart
Shanika Edourd (5+ years)
Yasmin Elliano-Anderson
Keyla Feliz Guerrero
Sheila Foster
Gene Gomes
Ruana Gomes
Jusiella Gonzalez Montoya
Maurice Hallett (15+ years)
Tammy Hillery (25+ years)
Georgia Hinds
Ernest Imoisi
Tashalee Jackson (5+ years)
Maysie Jean-Louis
Aletssandra Jesus (5+ years)
Alevitssandra Jesus (5+ years)
Khaleia Johnson
Clifford Kwong
Kasslyn Landry

Delaney Lawrence
Deborah Martins
Gina Medor
Julia Mehl
Carishmar Moore
Kaymani Mullings
Sonya Nesbitt
Emily O'Brien
De'Monique O'Garro
Exavier Perry
Malice Pires
Leyla Pizarro
Tiaja Powell
Desiree Reed
Mavis Riley
Xena Rocha
Carolina Rodriguez
Ajka Sakanovic
Kiya Savannah (5+ years)
Kalicia Sears
Jamalia Sheets
Kimberly Skelton
Jennifer Slash
Fabienne Souza
Jessica Stagnitta
Lisa St. Hill (15+ years)
Shirley Strickland (15+ years)
Melanie Sullivan
Jessica Supreme
Katherine Thomas
Jamilith Valentin (5+ years)
Alysha Vick
Laannah Victorian-Butler
Bryan Vreeken
Matthew Wallace
Selesteel Warzewick
Shamika White (10+ years)
Cheri Williams
Rachael Willis
Alexandra Keenan Wolff
Maryan Yasin


ELLIS
EARLY LEARNING

58 BERKELEY STREET, BOSTON, MA 02116
(617) 695-9307 • www.EllisEarlyLearning.org

Connect with Us

 www.facebook.com/EllisEarlyLearning

 @EllisEarlyLearn

 @EllisEarlyLearning

