

Good News

from our funded partners

**Regular Board Meeting
May 1 2025**



Children's Board
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

www.ChildrensBoard.org

Big Brothers Big Sister of Tampa Bay

1-to-1 Mentoring (Middle)



Big Sister Jaclyn and Little Brother Jacory have been matched for nearly eight years! Over the years, they've developed a strong bond and affectionately refer to one another as "Big & Little J." Their journey together began in 2017, when they went skating and sparks flew!

Initially, Jacory was slightly disappointed to be paired "with a girl because they don't like sports." Jaclyn quickly showed him that "girls can be fun and participate in sports." Now, Jacory feels grateful for his Big Sister, and their match has blossomed into a genuine, joyful friendship.

Their time together has been filled with fun activities and valuable learning experiences. Jacory introduced Jaclyn to gardening, and now they regularly swap plants. Other memorable activities over the years have included painting pottery, cheering on the Rays, building sandcastles, and cozy homework sessions at bookstores.

As Jacory transitioned into high school, their connection grew even stronger. During the pandemic, they used technology to ensure they stayed connected.

Soon, Jacory will have a special role in Jaclyn's wedding ceremony and has already been involved in planning for the big day!

Their story is a testament to how a meaningful match, nurtured with time and effort, can blossom into a lifelong friendship. We are honored to watch Jacory and Jaclyn grow and learn together. And who knows—we might just see Jaclyn standing by Jacory's side on his big day!

Healthy Start Coalition of Hillsborough County

Healthy Families Hillsborough

Healthy Families hosted their annual family picnic and graduate celebration on Saturday, May 3, 2025, at Rowlett Park. The event welcomed 60 parents—including 22 fathers—along with their 85 children. Attendees enjoyed various outdoor games, such as ring toss, potato sack races, and tug-of-war. Children also had fun exploring a play tent area, getting their faces painted, and playing with a parachute. Fun fact: The potato sack race was the most popular event, with nearly every child participating and enthusiastically cheering each other on!

Healthy Families participants typically enroll prenatally or at the birth of their child and can remain in the program until the child turns five. These families develop strong bonds with their Family Support Specialists over the years, making them feel like family!



Positive Family Partners, Inc.

Learning Connections



Learning Connections is a free program designed to help students in 3rd through 8th grade develop stronger thinking and learning skills. It is available to families living in specific zip codes, funded by the Children's Board of Hillsborough County, and administered by Positive Family Partner, Inc. (PFP), located at 7402 N. 56th Street, Suite 300B in Tampa. Anyone interested in learning more about this valuable program should contact Dr. Pat Grosz, Executive Director at PFP.

Specially trained providers use the Feuerstein Instrumental Enrichment (FIE) method to assist students facing challenges with learning, attention, processing, and organizational skills. Difficulties in these areas can negatively affect a student's self-esteem, emotional regulation, and ability to follow through on homework, chores, and daily activities.

Through Learning Connections, we transform struggles into achievable tasks. We teach students "how to think—not what to think," fostering success in school and life. We turn frowns into smiles as students learn to confidently manage their educational experiences.



Family Healthcare Foundation

Connecting Kids to Care

Testimonial

Both my son and I rely heavily on Health Insurance Marketplace coverage, especially since I have medical conditions that require ongoing care. Marketplace insurance enables us to access essential services that would otherwise be financially out of reach. For my son, these services include behavioral therapy, developmental support, and regular specialist visits—all critical to his growth, progress, and quality of life. This support helps him develop life skills, improve his communication, and maintain structured routines that he depends on daily.

Without this insurance coverage, we would face heartbreaking decisions between seeking necessary medical care or risking financial ruin. The emotional and financial toll would be devastating—not only compromising our health but also threatening my ability to support my family.

A Connecting Kids to Care Navigator assisted this mother in identifying affordable coverage options.



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Safe Baby Plus

Testimonial

I am reaching out regarding Adriana. You have an amazing person on your team, someone with so much knowledge and experience in teaching moms the safest way to put their babies to sleep. She was also incredibly kind and provided us with a Pack 'n Play where my baby can sleep safely during the day while I handle other tasks. My favorite thing about it is that I can easily take it just about anywhere! It's very convenient, and it reassures me knowing my baby always has a safe place to play and sleep.

I truly mean it when I say Adriana is heaven-sent. A few weeks after meeting her, I reached out again, and she was extremely supportive, making me feel so much better. At the time, I had no idea what postpartum depression (PPD) was or how difficult it could be for a mom. The resources Adriana provided are helping me slowly but surely feel like myself again. I honestly don't know where I'd be right now if it weren't for her and all the valuable knowledge and information she's given me.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you so much for all your support and help.

And here's my baby girl enjoying her Pack 'n Play! 😊
— Bella



Adriana Maldonado

United Food Bank and Services of Plant City

F.E.E.D. Food, Educating, Empowerment for Development

Testimonial



Figure 1: Bay News 9

<https://baynews9.com/fl/tampa/news/2025/05/01/health-y-nutrition-program>

Ms. Flores knows that we need food to survive and get through the day, and that is why she's taking part in the food education course.

"We have to drink water and eat healthier to have a better lifestyle in the future," she said.

Flores immigrated from Mexico almost two years ago. She says she grew up eating whatever was available, not learning about proper food portions. This course is helping her understand what a balanced diet is, and in turn, she can share that information with her

family. She said her mother suffers from obesity and diabetes.

"Right now, it's important to practice what we learn, for my daughter, so that she learns how to eat better, and because it can lead to obesity," Flores says.

Unidos US reports that without affordable access to healthy food, Hispanic communities face an epidemic of diet-related illnesses, with 70% of Latinos more likely to suffer from diabetes and 30% more likely to die from it. Program Manager Deborah Foos says it is important to talk about family health history.

"When you go to the doctor, and you take your children to the doctor, that they know what illnesses are in your family to see if there is something happening in your children," she said.

The program is funded by the Children's Board of Hillsborough County. They also bring in pharmacists to talk about medications and families leave with a box of food to get started.

For Flores, it means eating more fruits, vegetables and drinking more water so she can be healthy for her kids.

"If we don't start making a change now, what good will it be for us in the future?" she said.

Changing the narrative for her family for generations to come.

The program lasts for six weeks long and is offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays.