

Mainspring Schools
Annual Report
FY 2019–2020

RESIL IENCE

/rəˈzɪljəns/

noun

the capacity to
recover quickly
from difficulties;
toughness.

Dear Friends,

What a year.

As of this writing, it appears that between **20-30% of Texas child care centers have permanently closed** as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The early spring shut-down, the limited access to child care for many families all summer, and the lingering uncertainty as we rounded into fall created a financial rip-tide that has battered education providers at all levels.

We are so grateful to have started the 2019-2020 fiscal year with fiscal and operational stability and your unwavering support. The Mainspring building was closed for five months in the spring and summer of 2020, but our organization remained open and active. Mainspring teachers met with their students via Zoom, shared lesson plans with parents, and made regular deliveries to family homes of food, diapers, books, and supplies. We distributed funding directly to families who needed it.

We reopened in September, with guidance from Austin Public Health and Texas Child Care Licensing, and with a comprehensive safety plan in place to keep our community safe.

Mainspring has survived. We are stronger. We are getting through this difficult time together.

We remain committed to delivering the highest-quality, most forward-thinking early childhood education and family services in Texas, to students from diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, and socio-economic levels. Our strong, long-standing relationships with funders, donors, board members, supporters, partners, volunteers, families, and staff helped fuel our organizational resilience.

That's why we have made resilience the theme of this year's annual report. In the following pages, we will showcase the science of resilience, especially in early childhood education, and stories of resilience from our families, teachers, and program.

Thank you for being part of the Mainspring community!



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Jason Gindele
Executive Director

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→ The **mission** of Mainspring Schools is to provide children and their families with a community for high quality early education and holistic support so each child and parent has the tools necessary for success in school and life.

Our **model** is comprised of three structural commitments:

01

Innovative Learning

- Low child-to-teacher ratios
- Child-directed learning
- Focus on social, emotional and executive function skills

02

Physical & Emotional Health

- Farm-to-table meals
- Trauma-informed education and care
- Research-based social skills curriculum
- Ample outdoor play and wellness learning

03

Family-Centered Engagement

- Parent education on topics like nutrition, discipline, personal finance and relationships
- Individual and group counseling

Program Impact

Enrollment

95

Tuition Subsidies

75% of our students receive some form of tuition subsidy, through the Texas Workforce Commission, Early Head Start, the Texas Education Agency (via AISD), the Housing Authority for the City of Austin, the Women's Fund (via Austin Community Foundation), and other sources

Scholarships

We provide a small number of scholarships each year, usually reserved for families in crisis or to bridge the gap in accessing tuition subsidies. This year, of course, more families have experienced not only more crises but more types of crisis.

Meals Served Annually

45,000

Parent Support Group Meetings

For much of 2020 and into 2021, Parent Support events shifted to intimate, Zoom-based meetings.

Parent Suppers

The pandemic temporarily sidelined our monthly parent suppers, but we are working on a plan to re-engage in a virtual way until it is safe to meet again together in person.

Partners

United Way, The Housing Authority for the City of Austin, Austin Independent School District, Child Inc., Commercial Brokers Association of Austin, Austin Diaper Bank, Forklift Dance Company, Anthony Basini, BookSpring, Pollyanna Theatre Co, Trail of Lights Foundation, Eagle Scouts, Greater Austin Contractors & Engineers Association, National Charity League, AmeriCorps, School in the Hills, Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, Young Men's Service League, American Association of University Women.

Direct Parent Support

Between March - August 2020, we distributed over \$16,000 in funding directly to families who needed it most. Of that, \$15,000 came from the UnitedWay All Together ATX Fund for COVID relief. We delivered \$5,000 in supplies and diapers, thanks to our partnerships with the Austin Diaper Bank and School in the Hills, as well as generous community friends, and have kept our food pantry stocked with nutritious groceries, hygiene products, toilet paper, and other basic supplies.

Impact Story – Staff

Daniel Carson has been the Kitchen Manager at Mainspring since July 2018. His kids are in 10th, 5th, 2nd grades, and the littlest, Daniel'la, is in our 3-year old Honeybee classroom.

Daniel



In the first month of the shutdown, we were thinking, “Oh we’re going to go take a trip.” We thought it would be over within a month. My older kids’ school closed down the Friday before spring break. Mainspring closed that Wednesday. The kids were hoping to go back, but they didn’t get to. Online school for the rest of the spring was stressful. My wife is an essential worker with the City, so she was working 12 hour shifts, overnight. The rest of the house was on me. We couldn’t go anywhere. There was so much tension. I was home all day, every day. Couldn’t go to the grocery store - that had been our favorite place.

But we got technology from our kids’ schools, so they could get online and do their work. Mainspring made sure staff like me

stayed on payroll, and Daniel’la’s teachers kept doing lesson plans and Zoom meetings, so she got to check in with them each week.

I started doing graphics for my church and discovered I really like it. Now I want to go back to school and learn graphic design.

Elicia and I celebrated our 6th anniversary at the beginning of the pandemic. We ordered a nice meal as takeout, I drove out to get it. I cleaned out the garage and set it up, I had a table, chairs, candles, balloons. I had a banner printed and the kids signed it. That was our anniversary dinner.

We’re about to celebrate our 7th anniversary. This pandemic year has been hard. It’s been hard on us, on our kids, on our marriage, on our family. But we didn’t give up. We just kept doing the best we could.





Impact Story – Family

Victoria Rios' has two daughters, Arria, in the pre-k Shining Stars classroom and Alayah, in the Songbirds.

Victoria

↓

I was working at a restaurant and my job shut down completely. So I wasn't working for a little bit. Some of my family members lost their jobs too. We all wound up being in one house. People were losing their jobs and losing their houses. It was a lot. But family sticks together. We had maybe three families in one house. It was cool to have everyone together, but it was a lot.

After everything was shut down, sometimes I would feel bad, because my kids were used to being outside, playing at the park. I think they got so used to being at home that when we started going out more they were like, I just want to stay here, get me home. Alayah got to Zoom her Songbird teachers over the summer - until I broke my phone and I wasn't able to fix it. That was the problem with doing everything online.

It was worse for other people. But we made it.

Impact Story – Organization

Mainspring was founded in 1941 as a “war nursery.” It served working families as the country responded to the Great Depression and World War II. Resilience is in the DNA of our organization.

We develop resilience through warm, nurturing relationships. Mainspring has been lucky to build those kinds of relationships through the long-standing support of the American Association of University Women and the United Way. Each year we find new supporters who believe in the school’s mission. In 2019, we received in-kind donations that revitalized the building that we’ve occupied on the Meadowbrook Housing Community campus for more than 51 years.

In January 2020, midway through our fiscal year, we were feeling a surge of optimism.

SLIC Design had re-envisioned the furnishings, bookshelves, and storage capacity of our central courtyard.

Jahn Construction had provided new flooring for the whole building.

Volunteers from the Young Men’s Service League (Westlake Chapter) had repainted the exterior for a fresh, modern look.

Then, the pandemic.

As we navigated those early days of the COVID-19 crisis, our first thought was how to keep serving the families that are the heart of our community - many were supporting multiple-generation households, working in essential jobs, and abruptly navigating the challenges of online learning. However, one reason we closed on March 17, 2020 is because of the risk that the virus posed to our staff, teachers, caregivers, and children.



→ “Latino and African-American residents of the United States have been three times as likely to become infected [with COVID-19] as their white neighbors... And Black and Latino people have been nearly twice as likely to die from the virus as white people.”

<https://nyti.ms/3ifMGqV>



According to a July 5, 2020 article in the New York Times

There were also significant disparities for Native American and Asian communities, who were affected by COVID-19 at multiple the rates of white families. *“Many [people of color] have front-line jobs that keep them from working at home; rely on public transportation; or live... in multigenerational homes.”*

Data from the CDC shows *“a significant imbalance in the number of virus cases, not just deaths — a fact that scientists say underscores inequities unrelated to other health issues.”*

Put simply, the structural legacies of racism and other cross-generational traumas may be linked to levels of chronic stress that increase susceptibility to the kinds of health impairments that result in greater risk of harm from COVID-19.

→ Evidence is also mounting that the origins of these common diseases are affected by significant adversity during the prenatal period and first 2-3 years after birth.

<http://bit.ly/mspring-harvard>



Jack P. Shonkoff, M.D. and David R. Williams, Ph.D., Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University

Strong relationships got Mainspring through 79 years, got us through this new, challenging time, and will get us through what lies ahead. Mainspring received a first round Payroll Protection Program loan, which supported our teachers and staff during our closure. We also received Stabilization Grants from Texas Workforce, which provided a baseline of funding for operations while we prepared to reopen. We were also able to get some funding straight into the hands of our families.

Other COVID support in fiscal year 2019-2020 came from:

- Small Business Administration
- Stabilization Grants, Texas Workforce Commission
- St. David's Foundation
- Buena Vista Foundation
- All Together ATX Fund, through the United Way

The lesson of COVID, and of this fiscal year, which we now use in the signature portion of our staff emails is: **We are all in this together.**

Mainspring in the News

Check out Executive Director Jason Gindele's thoughts on the state of early childhood programs during the pandemic in this news story on KUT.

<http://bit.ly/mspring-tx>



And this news story on transparency about COVID cases in child care centers and schools.

<http://bit.ly/mspring-youtube>



And Mainspring mom Jasmine Hernandez was interviewed by CBS Austin about the challenges of online learning for her kids during the shutdown.

<http://bit.ly/mspring-cbs>



What is Resilience?

→ Ann S. Masten, PhD, a Professor at the Institute of Child Development at the University of Minnesota, calls resilience "ordinary magic."

Resilience is the process of handling adversity. It is not something we are born with. It builds from experience, relationships, and each person's genetic makeup.

Research shows that 90% of a child's brain development occurs by the age of 5. The brain is the "command center" for all the connections that have to be made - physical, emotional, linguistic, cognitive. A million new neural connections are made every second! Brain Development First Things First.Org.

Every interaction and every relationship in a child's early life

affects brain development. "*The brain molds itself in response to the input it receives.*"

Pull a rubber band and it will snap back - unless it is stretched too far. The same is true for humans! Resilience is a person's elasticity, helping them find equilibrium after adversity.

Adversity in early childhood can have far-reaching consequences. In fact, trauma can literally slow both physical and developmental growth. However, there is also an opportunity to build the basis for lifelong resilience.

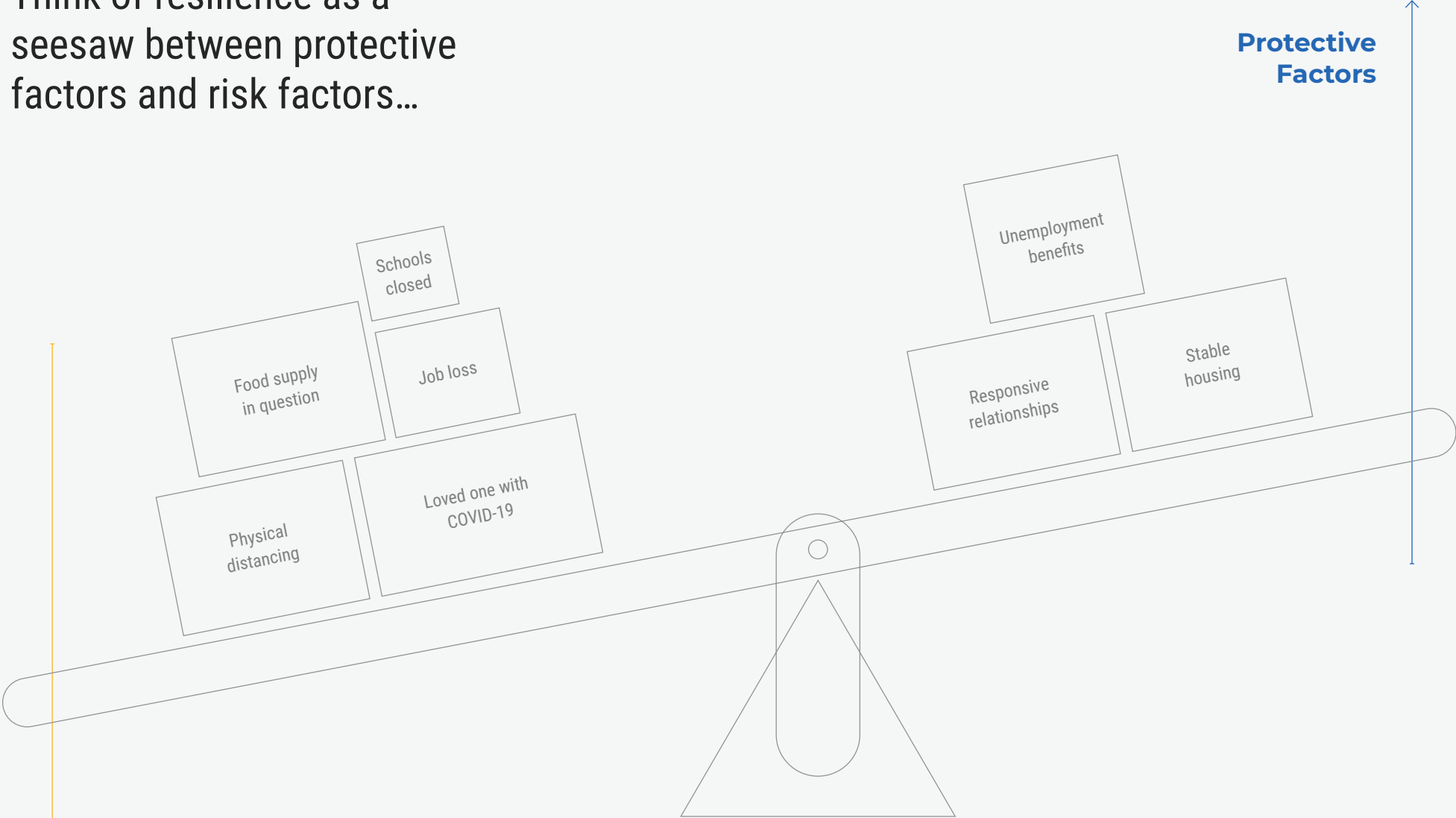
First Things First
<http://bit.ly/mspring-first>



Pn3 Policy
<http://bit.ly/mspring-pn3>



Think of resilience as a seesaw between protective factors and risk factors...



Risk Factors

Protective Factors

The COVID-19 pandemic has not just been one risk factor, but many. It has created a natural disaster, generated economic instability, and led to a terrible loss of life. Families have lost jobs, housing, security, schools, and loved ones.

Children exposed to [multiple] risk factors are **2.5 times more likely to develop externalizing disorders**, such as conduct disorder, violent crime, and substance abuse. They are also 1.8 times more likely to develop internalizing disorders, such as depression and anxiety disorder.

Strategies to Build Resilience

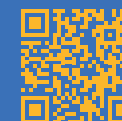
→ Resilience is ongoing. It is not a fixed point or end goal.

Parenting for brain
<http://bit.ly/mspring-parenting>



→ “The science clearly indicates that the professional task of educating young children requires the same high level of sophisticated knowledge and competencies related to child development, content knowledge, and educational practices as that of educating older children.”

National Academy of Sciences
<http://bit.ly/mspring-science>



Routine

Keeping a daily routine is difficult, especially in times of adversity, but knowing what to expect can be comforting.

Reading

Sharing stories together helps build language and literacy skills, but it also encourages children to use their imaginations. Books can help families navigate difficult events or hard feelings.

Studies have shown that the quality of caregiving for children in their earliest years is a crucial factor in developing resilience. Access to high-quality early childhood education can be the difference.

Most importantly, we are a trusted, caring, committed partner in the lives of families as they navigate those first critical years of their child’s life. Our curriculum and philosophy help build and reinforce the social, emotional and executive function skills in young children that are the foundation for learning and future success — and for building resilience.

Play-based learning for young children helps to:

- 01** Support responsive relationships
- 02** Strengthen core life skills
- 03** Reduce sources of stress
- 04** Make learning fun!

Donate

The tuition subsidies that most of our families qualify for only cover about 60% of real costs. Private contributions help close the gap and support high-quality, high-impact teaching for all our students. Your donations help pay for...



- Low student-to-teacher ratios
- Highly-qualified teachers trained in TBRI and Conscious Discipline
- Support for the whole family
- Healthy meals
- Art and music programs
- Scholarships

Amazon wish list
<https://amzn.to/3wWfRUK>



Donations accepted at
<https://give.mainspringschools.org>



Resources & Fiscal Management

- \$2.1 million income
- 65% spent on programs
- 16% spent on operations
- 3.5% spent on fundraising

Revenues & Other Support	Unrestricted	Restricted Programs	Total
Program Service Fees	888,577	0.00	888,577
Contributions	207,973	107,366	315,339
Grants & Contracts	131,975	639,790	771,765
Contributed Goods & Services	90,353	0.00	90,353
Investment Income	35,646	0.00	35,646
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	675,858	(675,858)	0.00
Total Revenue & Other Support	2,030,382	71,298	2,101,680
Expenses			
Program Services	1,363,501	0.00	1,363,501
Supporting Services			
Management & General	345,801	0.00	345,801
Fundraising	72,914	0.00	72,914
Total Expenses	1,782,216	0.00	1,782,216
Change in Net Assets	248,166	71,298	319,464
Net Assets			
Beginning of Year	702,896	263,951	966,847
End of Year	951,062	335,249	1,286,311

Major Partners

UnitedWay
Child, Inc.
AISD
Housing Authority of the City
of Austin
United States Department
of Agriculture

Grants and Foundation Support

Webber Family Foundation	Seawell Elam Foundation
Orsinger Foundation	PayPal Giving Fund
Montandon Charitable Trust	Pacey Family Foundation
Buena Vista Foundation	South Coast Foundation
Gallogly Family Foundation	Oppenheimer Foundation
DRM Foundation	John & Sonia Hamstra Family Fund
All Together ATX Fund	Kintzel Family Charitable Trust
Posey-Glickert Foundation	UPS Foundation
Small Business Administration	Trail of Lights Foundation

Donors over \$100

Katie & Steve Felice	Greater Austin Contractors & Engineers
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Microsoft	Siara Morrow		

Report Designed by:
William Blacklock (wblacklock.com)
*(proud father of three; one attends
Mainspring)*

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give.mainspringschools.org



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