



Family Building Blocks

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE AND FAMILIES TOGETHER



March 14, 2019

To: Chair Gelser and Members of the Committee
From: Patrice Altenhofen, Executive Director, Family Building Blocks
Re: HB 964, Strong Families, Resilient Neighborhoods



Please accept this as Family Building Blocks' letter of support of HB 964. We believe this pilot program, if successful, could transform the lives of children and families in our State. Because of the collaborative nature of the initiative, Marion County service providers, who have been collaborating in their work for nearly a decade, are uniquely positioned to test this innovative model – Strong Families, Resilient Neighborhoods.

Family Building Blocks is the Relief Nursery serving Marion and Polk counties. We are a child abuse and neglect prevention organization whose mission is to "Keep Children Safe and Families Together." We partner with parents who have young children, under the age of six, who are facing overwhelming life circumstances. We operate our family strengthening prevention programs from six sites throughout Marion and Polk counties. Our programs are supported by 100 staff, 400 volunteers and 2,000 donors annually.



We serve our community through the delivery of three well-regarded early childhood programs: Relief Nursery, Healthy Families and Early Head Start. Our core services include Therapeutic Classrooms, Home Visiting, Parenting Education, and Respite Care. Our services are free and voluntary. We partner with parents who bravely come to us asking for assistance and who are ready to make a positive change in their family's life.

In 2018, Family Building Blocks served 1,200 children and supported 720 families. *Ninety-nine percent of the children enrolled in our prevention programs were able to remain living safely with their families, avoiding foster care and the devastation of abuse and neglect.* We provided 10,428 home visits to families last year. Family Building Blocks' services primarily focus on the formation of healthy and positive bonding and attachment between parents and children. Families in our program also receive access to wrap around services such as playgroups, respite care, and access to our food pantry and clothing closet. We partner with families to identify and accomplish goals leading to self-sufficiency.



We believe that by partnering with others, we will be able to focus on what we do best while ensure families have access to resources to meet their specific needs.

Thank you for your consideration.