



Dear Child Advocates,

Happy New Year! We hope everyone's holidays were relaxing and joyful. With so much work ahead of us, we can't stress enough the importance of recharging and self-care. We also want to start out 2023 with a big THANK YOU to all those who have been a part of this Alliance since the beginning, as well as those who have joined along the way. And we are so grateful for the participation of parents, youth and partners at our Task Force meetings. This work is vital to our community, and we couldn't do it without everyone's voice and action around the table.

We are thrilled to start our 10th year of this important collective impact initiative. We have a lot to celebrate, and a lot more to do. With your help, we will continue to work together to meet the most pressing needs of our community. Stay tuned to hear more about our plans for a celebration towards the end of 2023.

Now it's time to transform the work yet again. This year was our first time having two Task Force meetings, to ensure we could make it more accessible to parents and youth. We also reimbursed parents for their time and provided youth with community service hours. We heard directly from youth and parents about what they want us to focus on, as well as possible strategies and solutions.

Resident engagement is now driving our work. It's not perfect, but when you think about how we started, with not even one parent or youth at the table, you can't help but celebrate how far we have come. This is all part of learning, adapting, and building our capacity to do this work differently. We know our entire community will benefit. It's exciting to think about where we will be in the next 10 years!

Sincerely,

Dr. Lisa Williams-Taylor  
CEO, Children's Services Council

Tammy K. Fields  
Director, Palm Beach County Youth Services Department



# Birth to 22 United for Brighter Futures NEWSLETTER

Volume 4 | Issue 2 | March 2023

Birth to 22 Hosts

7th Annual Task Force Meeting

Birth to 22 seventh annual stakeholder task force meeting virtually titled *Reimagine & Create Pathways to Success*.

## Alliance Spotlights

Since its inception, Birth to 22 and its community alliances, have been working towards providing youth and young adults resources to reach their fullest potential.

## Upcoming Events

Check out the Birth to 22 community alliance upcoming events.

## Share Feedback & Stories!

Do you have feedback or have an inspiring story to share? We'd love to hear from you!

Contact us at, [pbcbirthto22@pbcgov.org](mailto:pbcbirthto22@pbcgov.org)

## Birth to 22 Hosts 7th Annual Task Force Meeting



The seventh annual Birth to 22: United for Brighter Futures task-force meetings titled Engaged Voices for Brighter Futures was recently facilitated virtually. The annual meeting serves to inform, engage and plan with the key champions, coalitions, and young people about the work of Birth to 22: United for Brighter Futures.

These meetings looked different than years past. First, it was split into two meetings: Tuesday, December 13, 2022, and Saturday, January 21, 2023. The goal was to be more accessible for parents and youth by holding an event on the weekend. Participation was incentivized with community service hours or gift cards for youth and parents. This resulted in 100 participants in December and 51 in January. Ike Powell, Senior Program Specialist at Youth Services Department (YSD), hosted both events. Geeta Loach-Jacobson, YSD Director of Community Outreach and Programming, and LaNita Sanders, Community Planning and Partnership Lead at the Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County (CSC), introduced the participants to Birth to 22 and shared videos about the 2022 accomplishments, Future Leaders United for Change, and the Girls Coordinating Council.

The December meeting was tailored more towards Birth to 22 members, stakeholders, and community agencies than the January meeting, which focused on obtaining feedback

from the youth and families. In December, Tammy K. Fields, YSD Department Director, and Lisa Williams-Taylor, CEO of the CSC, presented the 2022 accomplishments and the benefits of collective impact.

Jeannette Gordon, an independent consultant, facilitated breakouts and discussions around the newly identified strategic priorities. In the 2022 Community Conversations, the community stated that the three most significant areas of need are mental health, economic access, and education. The taskforce meeting served to gather additional information around these strategic priorities. This information will then be used to build the Youth Master Plan 2.0; the blueprint for setting priorities and taking action to improve the lives of children and youth in Palm Beach County.



Please sign in through the google doc link in the chat. If you cannot access the link, please put your contact information in the chat.

[pbcbirthto22.com](https://pbcbirthto22.com)



## Friends of Youth Services Opens Alyssa Sangeeta Jacobson Scholarship for 2023 Academic Year

Friends of Youth Services and Palm Beach County, Inc. announces the call for applications for the 2023 Alyssa Sangeeta Jacobson Scholarship. The scholarship is now open and will close on March 31, 2023.

The Alyssa Sangeeta Jacobson Scholarship is dedicated to those who need a little extra assistance in achieving educational goals. The scholarship provides \$2,000 per year, distributed over two semesters to each recipient, and is renewable for up to four years, depending on the degree or certificate program. The scholarship is open to graduating high school seniors and high school graduates who will attend an accredited college or technical vocational school beginning in Fall 2023.

Currently enrolled college, technical, or vocational students are also encouraged to apply. Enhanced consideration will be given to applicants who are members of Future

Leaders United for Change or involved in the dependency or delinquency systems.

For more information on the scholarship and the application criteria, please visit <https://friendsofyouthservices.com/scholarship.htm> or contact Geeta-Loach Jacobson, Director of Outreach and Community Programming of Palm Beach County Youth Services, at 561-242-5713.

*The scholarship is in memory of Alyssa Sangeeta Jacobson. Alyssa was committed to living a self-sufficient life and discovering her passions. Her determination to pursue education, earning undergraduate and graduate degrees, enabled her to live consistent with those commitments. She hoped others could have support to achieve their goals.*



## Alliance Spotlights

### Palm Beach School District Empowers Employees with Youth Mental Health First Aid Training to Prioritize Student Wellness



Mental Health and Wellness is a priority and is one of Palm Beach School District's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan themes. According to the Strategic Plan, District employees are responsible for acknowledging and supporting students' emotional, behavioral, mental, and physical wellness. With

the support of over 90 District employees who are certified Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) Instructors, the School District is making outstanding progress towards this goal. Hundreds of YMHFA classes have been offered district-wide since the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year.

On the November 8th Professional Development Day, YMHFA classes were offered at 36 school sites. As of February 1st, over half of our school-based employees have completed all the requirements to be certified in YMHFA. We are proud of our school communities for their outstanding support of student mental health and wellness.

For more information, access Department of Behavioral and Mental Health resources at the Department of Behavioral and Mental Health website or Caring First website or by calling the Department at (561) 982-0920.

**It's OK to be OK. It's OK to not be OK. It's OK to Ask for help.**

### Local Mentor Selected from Across the State as the "Take Stock in Children Mentor of the Year"

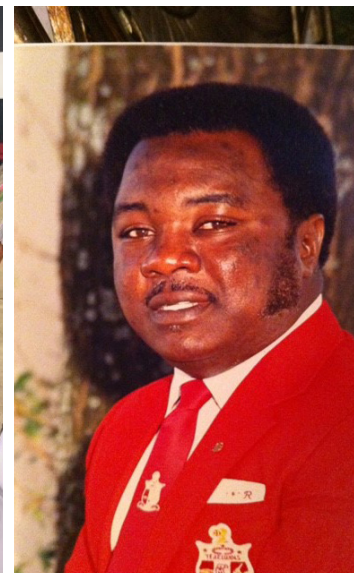


Mr. Eddie Rhodes is the 2023 Take Stock in Children Mentor of the Year. Rhodes, a long-time resident of Belle Glade, began his teaching career in The School District of Palm Beach County in 1967, immediately upon graduating from college. His career with the School District spanned thirty-nine years. After retiring in 2005 with a legacy second to none, he became a mentor for Take Stock in Children and mentored students in Belle Glade and Pahokee for over 12 years. He is known for his dedication, commitment, and desire to be a positive role model.

Mr. Rhodes explains that he mentors, "because if someone had not seen something in me and taken the time to help me, I would not be where I am today. I enjoy helping young students to enhance their education. I want to take them to a productive place in society. It is gratifying to see one of my mentees walk across the stage and receive their diploma,

whether from high school or college. My goal is to give back to help others. I enjoy every moment of it."

Take Stock in Children, Inc. is a nonprofit organization transforming Florida one student at a time. Working in every county throughout Florida, Take Stock in Children Palm Beach is 1 of 46 affiliate offices. Our mission is to break the cycle of poverty for low-income, academically qualified students by providing opportunities for post-secondary education. Through an innovative multi-year model, we provide wraparound services to students, with no drop-off of services after high school completion. Students are matched with a caring volunteer mentor, equipped with academically focused intervention, awarded a college scholarship, and provided post-secondary retention services.



## Winterfest Carnival Brings Holiday Magic To Foster Youth In The Palm Beach County Community



The Florida Guardian ad Litem Office in Palm Beach County was once again honored to be a part of the eighth annual Stanley Klett Sr. Winterfest Carnival in West Palm Beach on Saturday, December 17th, 2022. This complimentary private event for foster youth and their caregivers included a full carnival with rides, interactive craft stations, food, music, face painting, outdoor activities, and a visit from Santa Claus and Christmas Belle!

Many businesses and the Speak Up for Kids non-profit worked together to keep this event free for our children and their families. Over 70 volunteers helped make the day special for foster kids by transforming the International

Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) grounds into a winter wonderland.

The mission of the Florida Guardian ad Litem Office is to provide the most vulnerable children in Florida with an adult from their community who will be a consistent, positive presence in the child's life as part of a multi-disciplinary team that includes an attorney, child welfare professional and hopefully a community volunteer providing the highest quality community advocacy and legal representation to protect each child's legal interests.

If you are interested in volunteering, reach out to [GALrecruitment15@gal.fl.gov](mailto:GALrecruitment15@gal.fl.gov) or call 561-355-6224 today!



## State Partners with Interactive Agent Cass now available for 24/7 support



Secretary Shevaun Harris announced that the Department of Children and Families has launched a new behavioral health resource that is available to Floridians statewide. The Department has partnered with Cass to offer on-demand mental and behavioral health support. Developed by mental health experts, Cass uses Artificial Intelligence technology to deliver emotional support 24 hours a day, seven days a week through text messaging.

Anyone seeking support can text the message "Hi" to 1-833-365-CHAT (2428). Floridians can chat with Cass for emotional support at any time and learn tools to build resilience and self-awareness. Cass follows up with reminders and check-ins to reinforce the use of skills learned in previous conversations and promote long-term resiliency. The text messages are available in English and Spanish.

Cass is the newest addition to the behavioral health resources launched to assist individuals and families impacted by Hurricane Ian. Individuals who want to talk with a Family Support Peer can call 888-850-SWFL. Cass also launched to assist following Hurricane Ian is the First Responder Support Line 407-823-1657. This resource combines current resources into a single point of contact that will connect first responders with behavioral health professionals.

The Florida Department of Health and the Department have partnered with BetterHelp to offer mental health services through three months of free online therapy to those impacted by Hurricane Ian. To access these free services, Floridians can visit [betterhelp.com/voucher](https://betterhelp.com/voucher) and use code: Hurricanelan. BetterHelp will then prompt impacted Floridians with a questionnaire to best match them with a licensed mental health professional.

To access all resources available from the Department, visit [MyFLFamilies.com/Hurricanelan](https://MyFLFamilies.com/Hurricanelan).



## Breaking Ground on a Brighter Future for Children and Students with Disabilities

In December 2022, The Arc of Palm Beach County broke ground on renovations to create the forthcoming “Education Hub” at its headquarters in Riviera Beach. The Arc operates two charter schools, serving over 60 students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Education Hub will house both Potentials, a pre-K to 8th-grade school for children who are unable to walk or talk upon enrollment, and SAIL (Seagull Academy for Independent Living), a middle and high school that prepares students with disabilities for life after graduation. It will also include a barrier-free playground that allows students of all abilities to play with their peers, enhancing their social inclusion and interpersonal skills.

The Education Hub will establish a comprehensive Arc charter school system that supports the academic, therapeutic, and employment goals of students with disabilities as they seamlessly transition from grade to grade alongside their peers. It will feature new classrooms, improved program spaces, and curriculums, a courtyard, wraparound support services for students and their families, safety enhancements including a new roof, impact doors and windows, and a modern, modern façade. The project will be complete for the 2023-2024 school year and

will help The Arc achieve its dream of building a brighter future of possibilities for children and students with disabilities in Palm Beach County.



## GL Homes Provides High School Senior with \$1,000 Scholarship and Unique Learning Opportunity with Hard Hat Tour of New Construction Site



High school senior Kelvin Rolle, a civil engineering student, received an exclusive hard hat tour of GL Homes’ new construction site in Boynton Beach. After connecting in December at a holiday gift drive event, GL Homes learned about Rolle’s interest in attending college for civil engineering. GL Homes also provided Rolle with a \$1,000 engineering scholarship. During the tour, he learned about the project and its planning from GL Homes’ Project Engineer and Director of Land Development. Rolle expressed his excitement and appreciation for the opportunity and felt it would help him understand what to expect when entering

his desired field. GL Homes was thrilled to engage with a promising young person like Kelvin, who is interested in civil engineering, and it hopes to encourage more young people to pursue careers in engineering.

Kelvin has been a member of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Palm Beach County for 11 years. “It feels great to show everyone what the club has done for me and the type of person that the club has helped me become,” he said. “My favorite aspects have been engaging with younger members and being a positive role model. The club has allowed me to build relationships with a lot of the young kids and to help them. I have put so much time and energy into the Boys & Girls Club and it would be the perfect ending.”

Kelvin was selected as the 2023 Youth of the Year for the Florence De George Boys & Girls Club of West Palm Beach. He is one of seven nominees for the Palm Beach County Youth of the Year award. Kelvin also competes in varsity football, wrestling and track and field at The Benjamin School in North Palm Beach. He wrapped up his final varsity football season this past fall while playing on defense with his twin brother, Kaleb, who was a 2022 Palm Beach County Youth of the Year finalist.

**If your household income was \$70,000 or less in 2022, you can get your taxes filed for free by IRS-certified volunteers**



United Way of Palm Beach County's Taxes Filed Free Campaign gives taxpayers with low-to-moderate incomes in-person and online options to prepare and file their return for free. The campaign, which entered its twentieth year on January 19, 2023, is an invaluable service to the community.

Visit [www.TaxesFiledFree.org](http://www.TaxesFiledFree.org) to learn more about the Taxes Filed Free Campaign, the services offered, and where our sites are located throughout Palm Beach County. Site locations with days/times of operation can also be learned by calling 2-1-1.

Please spread the word! To help promote the program, promotional posters and flyers can be found on the United Way of Palm Beach County's webpage at <https://unitedwaypbc.org/vita-outreach-materials/>. Available resources for use include a web banner for your website (and to [www.TaxesFiledFree.org](http://www.TaxesFiledFree.org)!), flyers and posters available in English, Spanish, Creole, and Portuguese, as well as many email, newsletter, and social media templates for you to share.

### Training Sessions Hosted by The Center for Child Counseling Receives Warm Reception



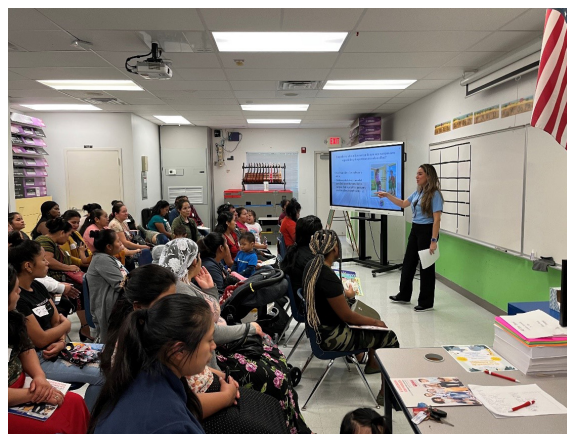
The Center for Child Counseling staff recently conducted a training session on "ACEs, Trauma, and Racism" for a group of Public Defenders at the Palm Beach County Courthouse. The presentation covered a range of topics, including the historical

context of race and racism, and the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma on people of different races. The training allowed the participants to engage in an open and insightful discussion and share their personal experiences. The session was well received, and the Public Defenders expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to learn and better understand these important issues.

Meanwhile, Melissa Maya, a Center for Child Counseling staff member, held a Spanish-language parenting workshop at South Grade Elementary. The workshop was based on the Center's Stay KidSafe!™ Curriculum, which aims to teach children and parents about safety. During the workshop, Melissa emphasized the importance of discussing safe boundaries with children. The event was a great opportunity for parents to learn valuable information and tools to help keep their children safe.

Since 1999, the Center for Child Counseling has been dedicated to transforming the lives of children and families in Palm Beach County. Our services promote positive mental

health for children, families, and our community. We support thousands of children each year, preventing and healing the effects of adverse childhood experiences and trauma, while promoting resiliency and healthy relationships. Visit [www.centerforchildcounseling.org](http://www.centerforchildcounseling.org) to learn more.





## 95 High School Students Shut Down the Street to Develop Professional Skills with Local Community Leaders



On Friday, December 9th, Related Companies welcomed Path to College Fellowship's 6th Annual Speed Interview event at The Square in downtown West Palm Beach. During this Rosemary Avenue takeover, where the street was shut down, local high school students suited up in professional business attire and participated in speed rounds of mock interviews hosted by 85 local professionals.

Joining our students were Vice Mayor Maria Sachs, County Commissioner Mack Bernard, City Commissioner Cathleen Ward, local executives, and leadership from Palm Beach County's most forward-thinking, equity-valuing, and community-focused organizations. Volunteers met one-on-one with the 95 local high school students participating in Path to College's 3-year academic fellowship. Students and volunteers practiced professional networking, handshakes, and resume pitches and honed their interview skills. This annual event aims to increase student confidence for professional interviews and networking and to light the path for their bright futures.

Path to College fearlessly clears the path for overlooked students to get into the best colleges with the best scholarships through a free, three-year program that

identifies and supports high-potential, low-income students from Title I high schools in Palm Beach County. To learn more about this organization, its students, and how you can help, visit [pathtocollege.org](http://pathtocollege.org).



## Prime Time Palm Beach County and Youth Attend Youth Powered Forum in Chicago to Reimagine the Future of Afterschool

In partnership with Youthprise, Every Hour Counts launched the Powered by Youth Voice: Future Directions for Afterschool initiative. Powered by Youth Voice centers youth voice and leadership to advance new directions for the afterschool field driven by a national youth survey, local youth planning teams, capacity-building led by Youthprise and Greentrike, and youth convenings.

Prime Time Palm Beach County was honored to be one of six communities across the United States identified to help catalyze community-based planning efforts. Through design thinking, peer learning, and networking, this effort has identified best practices to authentically engage youth in program development and design the future of afterschool.

As part of the initiative, Prime Time Palm Beach County and

eight youth from the Milagro Teen Center in Delray Beach, Florida, attended the Youth Powered Forum in Chicago on December 2-4, 2022, to be a part of a collaborative space for idea-sharing that kept the focus on real recommendations with real financial implications for communities and the ability for afterschool to facilitate healing and be the space that young people imagine.

Youth from each community presented their ideas on how to elevate afterschool in their community. Then all the youth convened privately to vote on what idea would earn the \$100,000 reward to use to scale their idea locally. The youths' final decision was to divide the pot of money so each idea could begin implementation.



## AVDA's "Commit to Change" Initiative Engages Community to Prevent Domestic and Dating Violence



AVDA's Commit to Change: A Violence Prevention Initiative engages and educates young people, parents, community members, and community

organizations to build and promote safe, healthy, and equitable relationships with the goal of reducing the occurrence of domestic and dating violence in our community. AVDA believes one of the best ways to change an individual's knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors about domestic and dating violence is through education and promoting positive health social norms.

Commit to Change includes specific strategies to engage men and boys in our community, one of which is our #CommittedMen public education campaign that includes key chain cards, posters, billboards, bus shelter ads, original songs created by local youth, and the first ever comic book addressing teen dating violence to spread health relationship messaging further into our community and encourage others to engage in healthy relationships. Grant funding from the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties supports AVDA's Commit to Change

programming at Spanish River Community High School in Boca Raton. Students who completed the 9-week Commit to Change education curriculum in December pledged their commitment to healthy relationships, creating social media posts sharing what they are committed to doing to create healthy relationships.

AVDA wants to know, are YOU committed? Share your commitment on social media and tag @avdacommits!



## Compass LGBTQ+ Community Center Expands Mental Health Program, Hires On-Staff Youth Mental Health Therapist



The Compass LGBTQ+ Youth Mental Health Program at the Compass LGBTQ+ Community Center is growing! Compass was thrilled to hire Andrea Hanner as the first on-staff Youth Mental Health Therapist in November. Andrea is a Registered Clinical Social Worker Intern with over 10 years of clinical

experience, including providing trauma-informed care in inpatient and outpatient settings and working with young people with eating disorders. Welcome to the team Andrea!

The need for mental health support among LGBTQ+ youth and their families continue to grow. Compass' mission is to engage, empower and enrich the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people and those impacted by HIV and AIDS. Compass LGBTQ+ Community

Center also believes that youth and families deserve access to the resources and tools needed to thrive.

In response, we have expanded our program to serve more youth through individual and group therapy for LGBTQ+ youth ages 10-22. For more information, go to our website at <https://compassglcc.com/>.





### Youth Services is Building Champions

Achieve Palm Beach County has selected Humberto Sigler, Student Clerical Intern at Youth Services Department, to participate in the 2022-2023 Florida College Access Network (FCAN) Fellowship program.

There is an increased need to build champions who can effectively advocate for postsecondary policies that support student access and success. As an FCAN Fellow, Humberto will develop and grow his advocacy skills and participate in FCAN Advocacy Days in Tallahassee.

The fellowship will run from October 2022 to June 2023. Congratulations!



## Upcoming Events

### Horses Healing Hearts



Horses Healing Hearts® helps children facing adversity due to anxiety and depression from having grown up in a home with parental addiction. We provide hope and resilience by teaching life skills and connection through interaction with horses. Together, we can beat the effects of parental addiction and be part of the solution.

Join us to meet the horses, tour the facility, and learn about how horses can help heal hearts.

This monthly event occurs the first Saturday of each month from 9:00am-10:30am and is open to the general public. We encourage the following: Therapists • Community Leaders • School Personnel • Parents • Potential Donors

Business people interested in energizing your teams!

PLEASE NOTE: This event is not for feeding the horses, as their diets are strictly regimented for their health and safety. Thank you for your understanding.

Please call 877- 467-7310 for more information.



# Collective Impact Pledge



Birth to 22 is committed to a common agenda, we are an alliance of community partners that engages and aligns existing coalitions, networks, systems and youth-serving organizations as well as connecting families, community members, and most importantly, young people.

Take the *Pledge*, be listed as a Collective Impact Partner of the Birth to 22 Alliance to improve outcomes from cradle to career for all Palm Beach County children, youth and families.

Click [here](#) to join us in envisioning and creating a culture that values our youth from cradle to career.

## Steps to Success

The Steps to Success represent 6 domains of child and youth development – physical health, behavioral health, academic readiness, social/emotional well-being, career readiness and connection and contribution to community and society. These steps represent key markers of success that allows us to access developmental outcomes. As children and youth make their way up these stairs, we are able to track their progress or lack thereof. The indicators, or measures, for these different areas are shown above the stair steps in the green text (for things we are trying to promote) and orange text (for things we are trying to prevent). Understanding what this data looks like for different subpopulations within Palm Beach County is also essential. In order to achieve those outcomes, children and youth need key supports along the way, through a combination of effective parenting and safe and nurturing families and communities. A sample of possible measures are listed below.

### Steps to Success & Supports for Success

#### STEPS TO SUCCESS: Child & Youth Outcomes & Indicators



#### SUPPORTS FOR SUCCESS: Effective Parenting | Safe & Nurturing Families & Communities

<b>ECONOMIC ACCESS:</b> Percentage of Families in Poverty • Access to Housing • Workforce and Job Development Opportunities • Number and Percentage of Households receiving Food Stamps • Access to Transportation
<b>PARENTING &amp; ROLE MODELS:</b> Parenting stress (situational are chronic) • Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development • Support Services for Parents
<b>SOCIAL &amp; EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS:</b> Access to Afterschool Services • Access to Early Childhood Education and Care • Mental Health Assessments & Services • Caregiver Stability • Bullying
<b>EDUCATIONAL SUPPORTS:</b> Educational Attainment • Advancement via Individual Determination • Parent Education & Involvement • Healthy School Connections • Effective Schools
<b>HEALTH &amp; WELLNESS SUPPORTS:</b> Access to Health Insurance • Food Deserts • Physical/Eye/Hearing Exams • Late or No Prenatal Care • Access to Safe and Clean Parks and Recreation Spaces
<b>REMOVAL OF COMMUNITY STRESSORS &amp; SYSTEMIC BARRIERS:</b> Crime Reduction • Access to Domestic Violence Services

KEY: + Child & Youth Indicator (Promotion) - Child & Youth Indicator (Prevention) Blue • Family, School or Community Supports **Bold** = measures & data currently available *Italics* = measures and/or data TBD



[www.pbcbirthto22.com](http://www.pbcbirthto22.com)