



Markman
Children's Programs

1972 ~ 2011

CASE STATEMENT

Mission

The mission of Markman Children's Programs is to provide quality, affordable child care to families in the greater Attleboro area. The agency is committed to creating an environment where children can develop age appropriate intellectual, social, physical and emotional skills and to assist families in increasing the tools to help their children learn and grow into healthy, happy, successful members of our community.

Markman Children's Programs strives to provide the highest quality and most comprehensive child care program attainable. This vision is achieved by meeting and exceeding state licensing standards, as well as accreditation standards set by national organizations.

Vision

Our vision is to:

- Be a premier child care organization that enriches the entire community by providing education and nurturance while supporting the success of children and families.
- Be a leader in educational programming to enhance children's growth and development in a safe and caring environment rich in experiences and human interaction.
- Develop lifelong relationships, create family solutions, and enhance the quality of life for our families and the community.
- Unify our programs into a dynamic "green" child care facility designed to honor the needs of children, families, and our staff while also respecting the environment in which we live.

Challenge

Markman Children's Programs is facing a location crisis. We currently operate out of two rented sites in Attleboro. 505 North Main Street is our original site; classrooms are small, office and storage space is limited. The Pine Street location is in dire need of repairs; it is a city-owned building and currently there is little if any funding for more than patch-through maintenance. Neither building has room for expansion. We are in urgent need of a permanent place to call our own.

Operating out of two different sites has caused much inefficiency and causes a great inconvenience for working parents who have two or more children at Markman. If their children's programs are at different sites they have to deal with separate staff, additional paperwork, and have to pick up their children at two different places. There are additional agency expenses for providing transportation between the sites. There is also duplication of administrative support which can present communication problems and misunderstandings. In addition, both of our current sites are in multi-use buildings with other organizations. This leads to increased safety concerns due to the lack of total control of the entrances/exits. It also affects being able to totally control when we will be open. A new facility that brings all of our operations under one roof and allows us to expand will alleviate these problems. It will also give Markman Children's Programs the stability of our first home since our founding in 1972.

Currently, our capacity allows enrollment of 265 children. Over 93% of our enrolled children come from low-income families. Markman is the only child care provider in the area to offer tuition assistance and transportation to and from children's homes and area schools for families in need. Our enrollment is consistently between 90-95% of capacity and we have waiting lists of children whose families require tuition assistance for their care. In 2007, Massachusetts had 18,723 children on its waiting list for child care assistance. These families have no other options. Markman Children's Programs fills an otherwise unmet need in the Greater Attleboro community; a new building will allow us to help even more families in need. A new building will also enable Markman to expand and broaden the programs we currently offer as well as make additional services available to families in the community.

Why the community should care

Quality child care is an identified community need. In Massachusetts, 65% of all children under the age of six live in families where both parents (and the only parent) work full time.

Parents need to be able to count on their child care provider to safeguard their children's health and well-being and promote their development and learning. Research shows that the first years of life are critical to a child's overall development. In fact, 80% of a child's brain develops by the age of three, and 90% by the age of five. Research on the effect caregivers have on children during these early years clearly shows that the caregiver's education, training, and ability to provide a safe and stimulating environment have an impact on children's cognitive and emotional development. In addition, research on school age children shows that after school programs help improve children's self-esteem, social skills, and academic performance as well as decrease negative behavior problems.

Markman Children's Programs provides a safe, stable, developmentally appropriate environment for children ages four weeks through twelve (or the end of sixth grade). We provide preschool children with the skills necessary to enter school ready to learn and children already in school with challenging, creative environments to further build upon their foundational skills and enhance social responsibilities.

Quality child care does more than benefit children, it helps families and communities prosper. The economic vitality of a community is threatened when parents cannot afford the cost of child care and are unable to work. According to the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies, Massachusetts ranks among the 10 LEAST affordable states for child care. A family with one infant and one preschooler will face average prices of up to \$20,670 a year for child care. That is over 35% of the Massachusetts median household income for Bristol County (\$54,048).

The economic challenges families face in paying for child care often means the difference between dependence and self-sufficiency. The high price of child care strains household budgets and forces parents to make sacrifices. Often these sacrifices are in the quality of care their children receive.

Markman Children's Programs believes that no child should be denied quality care due to their socio-economic circumstances. Over 93% of our enrolled children come from low-income families. We offer tuition subsidies and our full rates are also very competitive. We believe that quality child care is one of the most important survival tools working families have. Many families rely on us to meet their child care needs. It is not uncommon for children to be with us from infancy through elementary school to middle school.

Markman Children's Programs has a history of providing quality child care for ALL families in our community for over 38 years. Our intent is to maintain and improve the quality of our programs to ensure they meet the needs of the working families we serve and to grow to be able to serve more families in the Greater Attleboro community.

About Markman Children's Programs, Inc.

Markman Children's Programs is a 501 (c) 3 private nonprofit agency with a long history of providing quality child care in the Greater Attleboro community. Established in 1972, we have expanded our services over the years to meet the varied needs of families and currently offer programs for children ages four weeks through twelve (or the end of sixth grade).

Currently, our capacity allows enrollment of 265 children (221 center-based and 44 in Family Child Care). We are consistently between 90- 95% capacity.

There are presently 26 teachers at Markman, 4 Administrators, 5 Coordinators, and 8 drivers. The agency also contracts with up to 11 Family Child Care home providers. The majority of our staff exceed state requirements regarding education and all staff participate in regularly scheduled training. In addition, we are proud that historically we retain a large percentage of our staff. This provides stability in our programs as well as consistency for the children. Also, many members of our staff are bilingual.

Transportation to and from children's homes and all Attleboro and North Attleboro schools is provided on a need basis with vans and a mini-bus leased by Markman. We are the only area child care program to provide both tuition assistance and transportation for the span of infancy through middle school.

Markman provides child care through 4 primary programs:

1. Preschool Program:

For children age 2.9 through Kindergarten age. Children enjoy a preschool curriculum with a low child to teacher ratio. A variety of toys, books, games, play equipment, and art materials encourage skill development, discovery, creativity, free movement and use of large muscle skills, and coordination. Our teachers also assist in training preschoolers who have not yet completed their toilet training. The agency's preschool program is accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Beginning in February 2007 and continuing to date, our program was selected by the Massachusetts Dept. of Early Education and Care to receive Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) grant funding for classroom quality utilizing the Creative Curriculum. This was exceptionally competitive as fewer than one in ten agencies were selected. In 2010, another competitive grant from DEEC was awarded to Preschool for Quality Ratings Improvement System.

2. K-Club (Kindergarten):

For children who are attending part-day kindergarten. Children may attend before and/or after school and during school vacations and holidays. The K-Club curriculum allots time for scheduled activities as well as free play. Activities include reading, music and movement, dramatic play, arts & crafts, computer education, and outdoor play. Our teachers value the uniqueness in each child. They encourage children to discover and explore their own strengths and allow them to progress at their own pace. Our curriculum promotes self esteem and a lifetime love of learning. In 2010, competitive grant from DEEC was awarded to Kindergarten for Quality Ratings Improvement System.

3. School Age Program:

For children in full day school through the end of sixth grade. The School Age Program includes developmentally appropriate classes for children by age and grade. It utilizes the Second Step Curriculum, which emphasizes social and peacemaking skills, as well as the Life Skills Curriculum, which emphasizes health and nutrition, safety, and money management. Other activities include board games, computer education, woodworking, science, art & drama, library activities, sports, and outdoor play. During the school year, the children participate in our Homework Club. Markman teachers have regular contact with the children's schools teachers and work together to encourage a love of learning.

During the summers, our days are full of playing and learning. Each week has a theme such as music, animals, cooking, gardening, magic, etc. One day each week the children go on a field trip that corresponds with the theme. Most weeks, an educational entertainer visits classrooms with programming involving science, animals, music, etc. Also, at least one day each week the children go swimming in the town pool.

In 2010, competitive grant from DEEC was awarded to School Age for Quality Ratings Improvement System.

4. Family Child Care System:

For children ages 4 weeks to 3 years. Markman Children's Programs contracts with licensed home care providers to give care for children in this program. Markman Children's Programs Family Child Care Coordinator visits each home weekly and holds monthly meetings for all of the home care providers. In addition, the Coordinator is available to the home care providers at any time.

The Center based programs are open from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and operate year round including school vacations, holidays, and summers. Family based care provides the option of care during a ten hour day, varying with each home care provider. Providing **year round, full-day child care** assures parents can continue working to support their families. In 2010, competitive grant from DEEC was awarded to Family Child Car for Quality Ratings Improvement System.

Parent Education:

Opportunities for parent education are offered through workshops. Markman is a host site for parenting workshops focusing on the importance of play, discipline, and topical shared issues. Our Consultants may offer workshops for timely topics such as Sexual Development and Responding to a Crisis. The agency recently received grant funding by the Attleboro Foundation to offer a series of 8-12 workshops for parents. The agency's practice is to incorporate parenting workshops into any grant funding received (Such as Universal Pre Kindergarten or QRIS) as parent training is a vital and ongoing need. Typically, child care and dinner are provided during parenting workshops.

Parent involvement also occurs during regularly scheduled parent/teacher conferences, through program fundraising, and participation on our Parent Advisory Committee and Board of Directors. In addition, we provide parents with community resource information regarding food assistance, medical insurance, child support, and holiday assistance. A lending library with a wide range of books and other materials is accessible for parents. An agency newsletter, the Markman Chronicle, is published quarterly.

Markman Children's Programs has been a respected and active member of the Attleboro community for 38 years. Our many years of experience in providing early childhood services is a strength of our agency, giving us expertise in providing a quality program for children, and in developing supportive relationships with our families.

The capital campaign

In 2007, Markman Children's Programs purchased 3.3 acres of property at 803 North Main Street, known locally as "Just a Mere Farm," and decided to launch a \$7.2 million capital campaign to build a permanent child care facility. Then the recession impacted the economy to an extent that this fundraising target was unobtainable. The agency spent 2009 looking at existing buildings, mostly commercial or industrial, as market values had dropped. After looking at over 40 properties, making offers on two, and entering into a Purchase and Sale with one of them, the Building Committee determined that our best plan was to redesign the proposed building with "value engineered" affordability.

The funds raised will pay for construction of the new facility either as Phase I or Phase II. The campaign will focus on receiving gifts from foundations, corporations, small businesses, and individuals.

The new facility

Known locally as “Just a Mere Farm”, the site of the new facility offers a country setting just minutes from area interstates and town centers. Near Route 95 and major local roadways, 803 North Main Street will have traffic signal controlled entrance and exit, provide ample parking with lots of outside space that is quiet and self-contained. Dacon Corporation completed a study and redesign with a 2-phased build out. The total for the entire 24,000 square foot project is just over \$4,000,000. Phase I of the design, which allows 13,300 square feet and accommodates just over 140 children, will be constructed for a cost of \$2,500,000. This new facility will allow Markman to continue to provide quality, affordable child care to the families we currently serve and to expand to serve more families in the Greater Attleboro community. A Groundbreaking Ceremony and Reception for Phase I was hosted on February 4, 2011; anticipated opening date is early summer, 2011.

Going “Green”:

We strongly believe in respecting the environment in which we live and sharing the benefits of going “green” with our children and their families. The original buildings at “Just a Mere Farm” included a house, a portion dating to the 1750’s, and a barn circa 1850. The agency worked with state and local historical groups and salvage companies to preserve and/or recycle 95% of the valuable old wood and materials. All the salvageable historic interior of the original house has been removed, purchased by a company that deals in historic preservation. The heating system, windows, gutters, doors and much more was repurposed by interested community members. Trees in the path of new construction were removed to other locations in Attleboro, whenever possible. The new facility is designed to lessen the impact of a large building by placement closer to the roadway, lessening the impact of light and sound for the neighbors. The execution of the design will incorporate “green” building design tactics such as daylight harvesting, the use of recycled materials, the implementation of energy efficient mechanical systems, and optimizing the building’s site orientation to maximize solar efficiency.

Increase Capacity:

Most importantly, the new facility will be able to serve more local families. It will allow Markman Children’s Programs to expand center-based care from the current capacity 220 center-based children to 286 children or more.

Improve Facilities:

Markman Children’s Programs currently operates out of two rented sites. Both sites are in multi-use buildings, one in desperate need of major improvements. There is no room to consolidate at either site, nor is there room for desired expansion.

The new child care facility will provide Markman a new home with plenty of space. There will be separate wings for each center-based program with numerous bright, welcoming classrooms. There will also be large indoor play areas for each program. We believe that play is the foundation for learning. The 3.3 acres will also allow for large outdoor playgrounds with plenty of grass and shade. In addition, the new facility will house much needed storage space, office space, and parent/teacher conference rooms.

The new child care facility will allow the agency to unify our programs under one roof. This will alleviate the inefficiencies and difficulties of operating out of two different sites. The new facility will also eliminate the concerns brought about by having to share space with other organizations and will allow total control of all entrances/exits and operating hours.

Enhance / Provide New Usages:

Indoor play spaces in both the Preschool and School Age wings will be multipurpose to allow media and meeting spaces, available to host community workshops and staff training events which may include other child care agencies. This space will allow Markman Children's Programs to support the needs of the community by expanding the types and number of workshops we offer.

Many of the classrooms in Phase II of the new facility will have developmentally appropriate themes. Possible themes include: Technology, Math & Science, Health & Fitness, Music & Movement, etc. These classrooms will support our vision of being a leader in educational programming and help inspire a lifetime love of learning in our children.

What about operating support after the facility is built?

- Approximately 74% of Markman Children's Programs' operating revenue comes from stable federal and state sources.
- Approximately 18% comes from tuition fees.
- The remaining 8% comes from state, local, or private grants, interest income, and donations.
- Projections indicate that Markman Children's Programs' operating revenues can support the operations of this size child care facility.

What a successful campaign will mean

- Markman Children's Programs will continue to provide quality, affordable child care to all families living in the Greater Attleboro community.
- The agency will be able to increase enrollment by approximately 65 children from preschool through sixth grade.
- The agency's programs will continue to enhance children's growth and development in a safe and nurturing environment.
- The agency's programs will constantly be assessed and updated to ensure they meet the needs of the working families we serve.

- The agency will expand the types and number of workshops we offer to support the needs of the community.
- The agency's expansion will create a need to hire more teachers and drivers therefore, creating more jobs for our local community.
- The agency will continue to provide our staff with regularly scheduled training, support seminars, workshops, and conferences and will encourage them to pursue continuing education.
- The agency will continue to offer tuition assistance and transportation to and from children's homes and area schools so that low income parents can work to support their families.
- A "green" building will benefit the community by minimizing pollutants and reducing demand on local energy and water infrastructures.
- A "green" building will benefit our children's health, and also provide many environmental education opportunities.

Our Progress, May 2011

- Board of Directors member pledges to raise \$200,000 from community with personal guarantee, summer 2010.
- All required permits from the City of Attleboro (Zoning Board, Conservation Commission, and Planning Board) have been received and filed.
- Building Permit issued December 5, 2010.
- Mortgage closed with Sovereign Bank for \$2.1M, December, 17, 2010.
- Abatement remediation completed December 17, 2010.
- Demolition began on December 27, 2010.
- Community Appeal for Capital Campaign began in early December; to date approximately \$75,000 received
- Agency vendors received Appeal for Capital Campaign in late December.
- Outreach to key area businesses for Capital Campaign support began in late December.
- Open community meeting held December 20, 2010 to discuss building plan and construction schedule.
- Groundbreaking Ceremony hosted February 4, 2011
- Anticipated Opening of Phase 1 – July, 2011

