



**1st Place**



## **Impact Report**

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2019 - 2020



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# Chair of Trustees' message

As I write this, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are being felt in all walks of life. Although this annual report looks back on 2019-20, the impact of COVID-19 is such that it is difficult to reflect on this year without mentioning what happened in March 2020 as the country began to understand the enormity of the situation facing us.

In the midst of the fear and chaos of COVID-19, it is important to recognise how astonishingly well the 1st Place staff team continued with their job of caring for the children in our settings. In keeping our nursery and children's centre provision open to vulnerable children and the children of key workers, we protected those who needed it. Such fortitude in extremely challenging times has been, and continues to be, inspiring and humbling in equal measure. I would like to extend my gratitude, on behalf of all of the trustees, to the senior management team and the staff who worked tirelessly to support the children, their families and the wider community.

In the most difficult of times, the amazingly positive feedback received from our families is testament to the commitment and dedication of the 1st Place team. This was also reflected in other events over the past year including the incredible 'Image of the Child' exhibition in November 2019, a unique celebration of our nursery children's learning journey. It was an absolute triumph and I felt incredibly privileged to attend.

Another highlight of the year was the Southwark Stars Awards organised by Community Southwark, an annual event honouring inspirational volunteers and organisations. Three of our volunteers received awards and although we know how fantastic they are, it was lovely to see public recognition for their achievements.

In a move away from our traditional Annual General Meeting, 2019 also saw us host a special #Weare1stPlace event. Our staff, families, partners and the community came together to celebrate the notion of the 1st Place family. This seems particularly poignant as we face COVID-19 and brace ourselves for the year ahead. Who knows what the future holds but I remain confident that we will once again, more than rise to the challenge under the strength and guidance of our Director and the great team that she has developed.

**Karen Walker**  
Chair, Board of Trustees

# Director's message

From early education provision to training opportunities and family support, it is fair to say that 1st Place has a wide remit. Ensuring that families are aware of the breadth of our services and the different ways that we can support them has been an important focus this year. Successful collaboration and partnership working has been key and has not only helped us to support existing families, but has also enabled us to further extend our reach and improve our understanding of how best to deliver our services.

Over the past year, we have sought ways to bring our families, our partners and the wider community together. Through the stunning 'Image of the Child' exhibition and the heart-warming 'We Are 1st Place' event, our aim has been to highlight the work that we do but to also establish a genuine sense of community spirit and togetherness. With COVID-19, this has never been more important.

As the pandemic unfolded, we found ourselves having to quickly adjust to new ways of working and indeed, a new way of life. During the most challenging of times, it is only by coming together as a team, as partners and as a community that we have been able to continue supporting those in need around us. We provided a base at our Children and Parents' Centre for emergency support within the Borough Bankside & Walworth locality, created an online hub of advice and support for families in the borough, and worked in partnership with our friends such as Pembroke House to distribute emergency food parcels and much needed resources to vulnerable families.

COVID-19 has undoubtedly changed all of our lives and in ways that we could never have foreseen. However, I am incredibly proud to say that together, we have shown resilience, compassion and determination. We have shown that we truly are a family, that We Are 1st Place.

**Nicki Howard**  
Director

# Introducing the 1st Place family

**We have a vision of a strong community where every parent and child is given the chance to realise their potential and enjoy a good quality of life.**

Founded in 2003 by local parents as part of the Aylesbury Sure Start programme, our aim is to provide equal opportunities to every child and parent in the local community through high quality early learning experiences, family support and training.

We do this through:

- A purpose-built Children and Parents' Centre which offers a wide range of children's centre services including play and learning sessions, parenting programmes and one-to-one support.
- Three day nurseries which provide a unique learning experience inspired by the Reggio Emilio approach, an innovative movement for excellence in childhood education.

We are proud that long-lasting, supportive relationships with our families and their children still lie at the heart of what we do. Many parents continue to support us even when they have moved out of the area, and many of our staff began their links with 1st Place as parents.

“1st Place was our rock – a safe place full of supremely kind people where our son formed his first relationships with peers and adults, learnt about the world, had space to be himself and be wonderfully happy in doing so.”

*Alasdair MacGregor, Ex nursery parent*



# Early education

“ Before my son started at 1st Place, I had a few concerns regarding his speech development. After three weeks of my son attending the nursery, my son’s verbal communication developed so quickly. I was astounded by the growth. He has become extremely confident in himself and comes home every evening demonstrating a new skill or knowledge that he learnt that day.”

*Jamie Banton, Nursery parent*



## Our unique Reggio Emilia inspired nurseries continue to provide early education to families within the local area and beyond.

- In the last year, 264 children attended our full day care and 129 children attended our sessional provision. During the COVID-19 pandemic, our Chumleigh Gardens site remained open to provide a nursery service to vulnerable children and children of key workers. In order to support our families through an uncertain and financially challenging period, we used our financial reserves to suspend fees for existing families. Through virtual sessions, we maintained regular contact with families who were at home for lockdown including ‘Keeping in Touch’ meetings, storytelling and rhyme times.
- We have continued to build our support for children with additional needs. 18 children with identified needs attended our nurseries over the last year, with 4 having an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place before they go to school. There is a dedicated SEN member of staff at each of our nurseries with plans to further develop the skills within the team in the future.

- To recognise our children’s learning journey and to showcase our Reggio Emilia inspired approach to early education, we hosted an immersive ‘Image of the Child’ exhibition. This special event documented our nursery children’s year-long exploration of a range of themes including nature. Over 100 families and professionals attended to view exhibits including a room filled with leaves and a space themed hallway with artefacts suspended from the ceiling. Following its success, we are hoping to share the exhibition again within our professional networks.
- Our trained Forest School leaders have continued to develop activities at the Forest School site in Burgess Park including fostering connections with other schools and settings using Forest School as part of their curriculum.

With a further three members of staff due to begin training, the Forest School team is set to expand in the near future.

- To improve communications with parents, the Blossom Educational app is now in full use across all three 1st Place nurseries. Through this secure online platform, parents can get more involved in their child’s learning journey. They can view their child’s activities and progress through photos and observations, as well as send/receive general communications to and from the nursery.
- In response to parent feedback, we launched the Customer Journey Project to improve the nursery experience for existing and prospective families. This review of the nursery parent’s customer journey covers all aspects of the process from joining to leaving 1st Place including nursery tours and the admissions process.



# Supporting local families

**In line with the Southwark Early Help provision, our Children's Centre Family Support services form a core part of our community services at 1st Place, with our reach of both universal and targeted services extending beyond the Borough Bankside & Walworth locality.**

- This year, our Family Support team continued to support 66 cases, 69 adults and 70 children on a one-to-one basis.
- 2,659 children and adults accessed 51 different services across 948 sessions, and 1705 children and adults registered with us to participate in a variety of services including baby groups and parenting courses.
- During the COVID-19 situation, our weekly Family Support advisory sessions continued remotely. Our Chumleigh Gardens site provided a base for emergency support within the Borough Bankside & Walworth locality with services being co-ordinated by Southwark Council and other voluntary groups.
- Thanks to a partnership with Pembroke House, we distributed emergency food parcels on a weekly basis to 60 of the families that we work with. On behalf of Southwark Children's Centres, we also produced resources for vulnerable families and launched 'The Hub' on our website, an online resource providing a one-stop shop of useful links for families seeking advice, support and children's activities.
- Victory Children's Centre reopened in early 2020, providing another dedicated space for families and staff. Full children's centre services will be able to operate from the centre subject to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions being lifted.

“ The way that 1st Place provides its services makes users feel less reluctant to ask for help. Everyone at a certain point in their life has been vulnerable and it is good to know that there is somewhere that provides help.”

*Raquel Orobiyi, Children's Centre parent*



# Partnerships

**As a Children & Family Centre, partnerships with both statutory and voluntary sector organisations remains vital to the work that we do, ensuring that we can provide more and better services to the families we serve.**



- To bring our staff, families, partners and the wider community together to celebrate the 1st Place family, we hosted a #WeAre1stPlace event in November. #WeAre1stPlace replaced our traditional Annual General Meeting and focused on our work with families in the community, encapsulated in a newly commissioned film that was launched at the event.
- Working in partnership with Southwark Council and The Children's Sports trust, we introduced the 'Healthy Movers' project into all of our Children's and Family Centre sessions and a series of themed summer activities to encourage more active play amongst our families. The aim was to raise awareness of the recommended 3 hours of physical activity for children under 5 in a fun and engaging way.
- As part of a community outreach programme, 1st Place partnered with Southwark Playhouse to host a series of interactive performances and workshops for local families. Drama students from London Southbank University worked with children and their families to devise a special performance at 1st Place at Chumleigh Gardens. The programme aimed to bring the joy of the arts to families, particularly those who would not ordinarily be able to access or enjoy the theatre.

- In conjunction with Pembroke House and Creation Trust, 1st Place are working with Notting Hill Genesis and Southwark Council to shape the Social Regeneration Charter for the local area, as well as identify the infrastructure and support needed by an area undergoing significant regeneration. This will be done alongside long-standing residents and organisations.



## Rose Vouchers for Fruit & Veg Project

In conjunction with the Alexandra Rose Charity, we have supported 345 families to eat healthier as part of the Rose Vouchers for Fruit & Veg Project. This scheme gives families between £3.00 and £6.00 per child each week to spend on fresh fruit and vegetables at our local street market at East Street. Thanks to the Alexandra Rose Charity and Guys & St Thomas's Charitable Trust, the Rose Vouchers for Fruit & Veg Project has received funding for a further three years. A Rose Voucher Project and Volunteer coordinator was recruited in October 2019.

This has provided a much needed additional resource and the opportunity to develop volunteers to lead the distribution sessions.

Following our success in the Faraday ward, the scheme has also been extended to Camberwell Green and North Walworth, and is also now open to primary age children. Our partnerships within the extended area are developing, with the first distribution session in Camberwell Green starting with PACT (a parents' group linked to London Citizens). We are also in discussions with the Camberwell and Dulwich Children's Centre's team to open another access point in the area.

# Celebrating and developing staff

**We remain committed to our staff, their development and ensuring that 1st Place is the best place to work.**

- We were proud to see our volunteers receive public recognition for their achievements at the Southwark Stars Awards. Organised by Community Southwark, an annual event honouring inspirational volunteers and organisations. Two of our volunteers (Grace Ovenden and Raquel Manana) received awards for 100 hours service and Phil Wilkins, our treasurer, received the Trustee of the Year award.
- As part of our second Erasmus+ funded visit to develop our future leadership capacity, five members of staff visited Jafalla, Stockholm in October 2019. The focus of the visit was to experience outdoor education in the country that is seen as the home of Forest School. Our third planned trip is to Bērnu Vides Skolas in Riga, Latvia has been postponed until COVID-19 travel restrictions have been lifted. Despite our recent exit from the European Union, we have submitted an application for further Erasmus+ funding. If successful, training will take place in Iceland, Poland and Italy between October 2020 and May 2022.
- Our involvement in the peer review project led by the London South Teaching School Alliance continues. Senior managers and Senior Early Educators have received training in a multi-sensory approach to 'Letters and Sounds' to support phonics. This includes a story-telling element that uses real objects in 'sound boxes' that provide an inclusive approach to teaching phonics in the nursery.
- We are proud to be in our third year of working with early education training provider Elm House. 6 of our staff graduated in September with a further 2 members of staff currently studying for Level 3 qualification.
- To share best practice, we hosted nine interns from kindergartens in Austria who were training to become nursery nurses and carers. The internship was facilitated by ETCi Ltd, a London based educational agency.

“ The Erasmus+ visit truly widened our knowledge both professional and personally. It enabled us to reflect on what we are doing as a nursery and how we can continue to support our children to become lifelong learners.”

*Sara Noor, Early Education Manager*

# Our future

**Over the next year, we will continue to develop our services to support our local community including:**

- Reviewing the way in which we communicate with our users and deliver our services in the short and long-term as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.
- Raising awareness of our Family Support service and unique offering as an early education provider including exploring the role of digital communications alongside more traditional methods of communications.
- Developing our partnerships as a way to reach more families.
- Exploring and developing new funding streams to support and extend our work.
- Ensuring that 1st Place is the best place to work with a focus on improving staff wellbeing, supporting a work/life balance, and leadership and development opportunities.
- Looking at how to create meaningful change as part of our commitment to challenging and eliminating unconscious bias, racism and discrimination within the 1st Place family.
- Ensuring that our vision, mission and values remain fit for purpose and truly reflect the 1st Place of today and tomorrow.

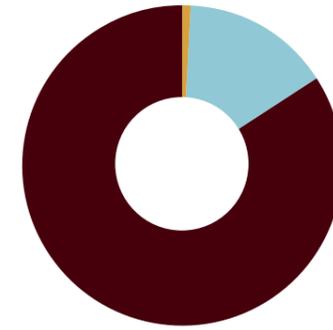


# Our partners

University College of Osteopathy	Evelina London Health Visitors
Bede House	GSTT Midwifery
Homestart Southwark	South London & Maudsley Parental Mental Health Service
Represent	St Paul's Church Lorrimore Square
Place2Be	Evelina London Speech & Language Therapy
Friends of Burgess Park	Coin Street
Learning Unlimited	Parents & Communities Together (PACT), a local project linked to London Citizens
GSTT Speech & Language Therapy	Contact
Creation Trust	Alexandra Rose Charity
Southwark Playhouse	Guy's & St Thomas' Charitable Trust (GSTT)
Community Southwark	GSTT Community Nutritionist
Solace Women's Aid	Elm House
Pembroke House	ESOL for Action
Cambridge House & Talbot	

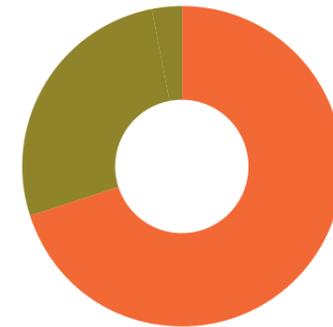
# Finance

## Our income and expenditure for 2019-20



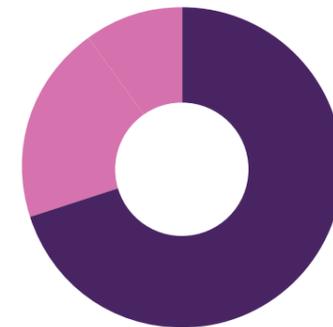
### 1st Place total income

- Nurseries** (fees & education enrolment) £2,225,716 (82%)
- Children's Centre** (Southwark grant) £420,463 (16%)
- Other** (e.g room hire, Play Scheme) £57,897 (2%)



### Children's Centre expenditure

- Staff costs** £280,920 (60%)
- Other costs** (e.g utilities & activities) £184,015 (40%)



### Operations expenditure

- Staff costs** £1,825,857 (80%)
- Other costs** (running costs e.g facilities management & utilities) £452,416 (20%)

# Get involved

**Do you want to be part of a unique charity?  
Help us to give local parents and children  
the greatest chance in life.**

## **Become a partner**

We have many long-standing partnerships with health professionals, universities and other children's centres that have enabled us to bring a wide range of services to local families. Why not join us?

## **Donate**

As a charity, the generosity of our donors can have a big impact on the work that we do with local families. From the provision of free learning and training opportunities to much needed outreach and support, every penny counts.

## **Fundraise**

Whether you have your sights set on a marathon or would simply like to host an event, why not choose to fundraise for 1st Place?

## **Volunteer**

Gain valuable experience while volunteering for a worthwhile cause. Potential roles include becoming a parent trustee or a member of our Family Support team.

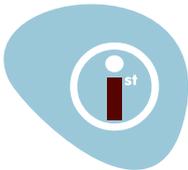
## **Hire our space**

With lovely surroundings, catering and a crèche service, our purpose-built Children and Parents' Centre is the perfect place to hold your meeting or event. The income from hiring our space will also be ploughed directly back into the charity.

## **Interested?**

We would love to hear from you.  
Simply get in touch by emailing  
**[Director@1stplace.uk.com](mailto:Director@1stplace.uk.com)**





**1st Place**

1st Place  
12 Chumleigh Street  
London SE5 0RN  
020 7740 8070  
[www.1stplace.uk.com](http://www.1stplace.uk.com)

   @1stPlaceCentre

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