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EPISCOPAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES OPENS NEW PLAYGROUND WITH SUPPORT OF THE WAGMORE FOUNDATION

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., October 18, 2023 - Episcopal Children's Services and the Wagmore Foundation will host the grand opening of the newest playground in the ECS family. This playground will be housed at the Eastside Head Start Center in Gainesville, a newly renovated Head Start facility in the Alachua County community. The playground grand opening will occur Friday, October 20, 2023 at 10 a.m. at 1930 NE Waldo Road, Gainesville, FL 32609.

The playground at Eastside Head Start is the result of a \$42,600 grant awarded to Episcopal Children's Services from the Wagmore Foundation to support the outdoor play and learning project. This investment from the Wagmore Foundation will not only support outdoor play but also foster a collaborative learning environment, integrating art, music and nature experiences while building gross and fine motor skills for the preschoolers.

"We are thrilled to open our playground at our brand new center in Alachua County and share it with the Episcopal Children's Services community," said ECS Chief Executive Officer Connie Stophel. "We have the opportunity to meet the needs of the neighborhoods we serve, as many of our children only experience the joy of outdoor play when they are at our centers. This is why our services and facilities are so important."

The new playground will serve 60 of the community's most vulnerable preschoolers in one of the most challenged areas in Alachua County. The Head Start grant allows ECS to add another 561 children to its programs.

About Episcopal Children's Services

Episcopal Children's Services serves more than 25,000 children and their families in 14 counties in Florida. ECS offers School Readiness, Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Baker, Bradford, Clay, Duval, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns, Marion, Dixie, Gilchrist, Lake, Levy, Citrus and Alachua counties.

ECS uses research and best practices to help families ensure their children enter school ready to learn. Talented, dedicated teachers and staff work proactively with children from birth to age five and their families to build a strong educational foundation.

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