

# BRIGHT HORIZONS INCREASES ENROLLMENT, EFFICIENCY, AND SATISFACTION AT ST. JOHN HEALTH SYSTEM'S CHILD CARE CENTER

St. John Health System transitioned management of its child care center to **Bright Horizons**®, reducing the Health System's investment by more than \$1 million while improving the quality of care provided to children.

### THE CHALLENGES:

In 1959, Sister Mary Clara opened the hospital's on-site child care center to ease staff concerns about finding and keeping quality care for the young children of St. John associates. Since its inception, "the center has been an important part of the organization," said Corporate Vice President Page Bachman, and has served hundreds of families over the years.

Over time, St. John Health System (St. John) saw the amount of its subsidy steadily increase, reaching a point where there were concerns about the long-term sustainability of the child care program. Furthermore, challenges from local schools were impacting the center's enrollment and staff. "Oklahoma public schools perform very well for pre-K classes, and we were competing against that," Bachman explained. "We were seeing fewer and fewer students in that group, which hurt our bottom line. And we were losing teachers to public schools."

### THE SOLUTION:

After more than 50 years of self-operating the child care program, the recurring challenges faced by St. John led them to engage with Bright Horizons and begin discussions about the transition of the center's management. (continued on next page)



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— Page Bachman, Corporate Vice President



## THE SOLUTION (CONTINUED)

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“On a personal level, I felt responsible for the children's care, and wanted to be very confident in the level of oversight of the center,” Bachman said. “That's one reason we chose Bright Horizons. This is their core business, and they're one of the leading providers in the country. They're a very well-proven company and work in a way that's consistent with our values.”

In 2012, St. John entered into a long-term partnership with Bright Horizons to manage its on-site child care center. In addition, Bright Horizons introduced back-up child care in the center for St. John associates, providing access to care when regular care arrangements are disrupted. Not only is this a terrific way to expand the reach of the program, but it also can act as a solid enrollment strategy for full-time children.

The transition of center management was ultimately embraced by all those connected with the program. “Bright Horizons handled the transition beautifully, helping our associates understand the personal value of joining the Bright Horizons team. As associates of a health system that owns one child care center, our center team had limited options. But as employees of Bright Horizons, the team's opportunities expanded tremendously,” Bachman said. Bright Horizons offers extensive training resources, accreditation support, recognition programs, center staff training, curriculum planning support, and succession planning to enhance the overall value for center staff. “Our transitioning employees very quickly recognized Bright Horizons' commitment to them. It's been an extremely positive experience.”

## THE RESULTS

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With a projected five-year investment reduction of \$1.3 million, Bachman said, “Our Bright Horizons team has done a great job of increasing enrollment and maximizing this resource. The financial savings speak for themselves.” Since assuming management of the center, the program has benefited from unprecedented enrollment growth, reaching full occupancy within one year of the transition. Bachman went on to say, “We want the center to perform at peak levels,” and that's clearly what has happened under new leadership from Bright Horizons.

“In addition, we've been able to expand our offering,” Bachman said. “We used to only be able to offer child care to children of St. John's full-time associates. Now we've been able to say goodbye to those rules, and reach out and offer these services to our extended community.”

Outreach to the community is often an important initiative for healthcare organizations. But, of course,

priority is still given to St. John's associates. By offering back-up child care, St. John's associates are more productive and less frequently absent from work. This past month alone, 21 families used back-up care services to avoid having to take time off. “In our area, school gets cancelled often, even for small snowstorms,” Bachman said. “It's important that our core associates have a place they can trust to care for their children.”

The quality of care at the center continues to improve. Bright Horizons has maintained the center's National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation, and proactively looks for ways to further enhance the experience of its families. St. John associates are very happy with the care. “All the feedback from parents has been positive,” Bachman said. “I can't say enough about Bright Horizons. They've done a tremendous job, and have a great team in place that manages the center. This allows me to focus more on my core work.”

## ONE EMPLOYEE'S STORY

Like most new parents, Deedra Hammons was committed to ensuring that she found the best child care for her new baby. Happily, from the moment she enrolled her son Jake at St. John's child care center, she's been extremely pleased with the quality of care and attention her child has received.

"At first when Bright Horizons took over the center I was a little hesitant, but I immediately saw new changes that parents like me appreciate, like offering fresh fruits and vegetables, encouraging hands-on learning, and bringing in new things for the children to do," Hammons said. "I love the center and all the activities that Bright Horizons has brought in. Every day he's doing something different, and he's learning so much!"

Jake is now heading towards his first year of public school and, like all parents, Hammons wants to be sure he is well prepared. "His teachers have always been very welcoming and have assured me that he is ready for kindergarten. I rely on them a lot. More than that, Jake likes going there. He happily heads to the center every day and never looks back. That's very comforting to me."

As a recruiter at St. John, Hammons shares her experiences with new hires and offers center tours to relocating associates. "The center is so amazing, and I know a lot of moms come here and stay here because of the center!"

When asked what it means to her that her employer offers on-site child care, Hammons says, "I have never looked for another job because I do not want to interrupt Jake's experience at the center. Also, since the center has extended hours and is open on days when other centers are closed due to holidays and bad weather, I do not have to take off work like some of my neighbors do."

### ABOUT ST. JOHN HEALTH SYSTEM

St. John Health System is a partner through every stage of life.

This has been its mission for nearly 90 years, and the health system is committed to making people stronger and healthier. The organization is a fully-integrated healthcare system encompassing six hospitals in northeastern Oklahoma and southern Kansas.

St. John also has an array of partner and subsidiaries healthcare facilities, serving more than 3,500 patients every day.

### ABOUT BRIGHT HORIZONS

Bright Horizons is a leading provider of high-quality child care, early education, and other services designed to help employers and families better address the challenges of work and life. We provide center-based full service child care, back-up child and elder care, and educational advisory services to more than 900 clients.

Bright Horizons manages more than 650 child care programs and centers in the U.S.:

- More than 110 transitioned management to Bright Horizons
- More than 45 transitions were in the healthcare industry



**To learn more, contact us today at**

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