

## Our Program

Our work directly targets the specific causes of damage to children: poor quality of care and a lack of high-quality, stable, nurturing, caregiving relationships.

In each country, we adapt our program to existing resources and specific challenges, establishing partnerships with national governments and leading universities and carefully leveraging the nation's pre-existing expertise. We offer training to appropriate government personnel, center administrators, and caregiving staff, mentoring them through the process of program improvement. We create a framework for the teaching, learning, and sustainable application of best practices in systems of care.

Our simple, cost-effective program works collaboratively with the wide spectrum of existing organizations, helping move childcare toward best practices, breaking cycles of poverty, and reducing the burden on societies.



## University Courses & Training

Whole Child's program begins by training key government and other stakeholders in best practices in childcare. In the months and years that follow, the training process extends to other administrators, educators, trainers, leadership of care centers, and then the actual care providers themselves. The idea is to create a new culture of care for the children and for the people who devote their lives to their care, and for Whole Child to deploy its resources elsewhere after it has helped firmly establish childcare best practices across a country's childcare system.

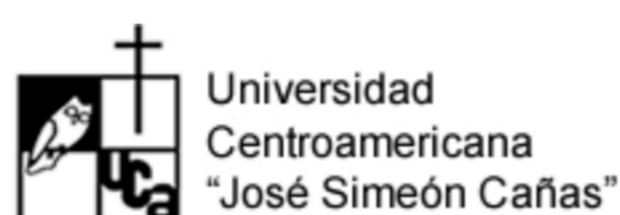


For more, please jump to the ["Building Knowledge"](#) page.

## Research & Evaluation

Since 2006, all of Whole Child's work has been evaluated by an R1-rated research university, the University of Pittsburgh's Office of Child Development, with evaluators from the University of Central America in San Salvador. Further programs, including our impending work in El Salvador, will be evaluated by our partners at Duke University's Center for Health Policy & Inequalities Research (CHPIR).

Please explore the [Impact](#) page for more information.



## WHAT DOES WHOLE CHILD DO?

We work across a country's system of care to improve outcomes for vulnerable children.



Whole Child International is devoted to elevating the quality of childcare for vulnerable children globally. Our program works within the entire spectrum of limited-resource care settings, ranging from orphanages to early childcare centers, and is designed to be implemented in existing centers using existing resources.

## Five Essential Childcare Principles

- 1. Responsive caregiving:** Caregivers shift the priority from speed, efficiency, and institutional cleanliness to meeting the developmental and emotional needs of each child under their care. Interaction, communication, and paying special attention to the child's cues are prioritized.
- 2. Continuous primary care:** Each child must be able to form an attachment to an adult caregiver, and maintaining this relationship is made a top administrative priority. Primary caregivers are given a special place in the child's life. On the child's birthday, when she needs medical attention, or any other key activity normally led by a parent, the primary caregiver takes the lead. Unfortunately, in many cases centers divide up these responsibilities to nurses, social workers, and administrators, wasting a valuable opportunity to build on the core relationship whose strength and quality is central to the child's well-being.
- 3. Small groups:** Without increasing existing numbers of caregivers, we reduce group size to best develop and sustain relationships between the children and their caregivers, peers, and environment. Being in a group of 20 children with two caregivers feels entirely different to a child than being in a group of ten with one caregiver. Again, at no extra expense, we can dramatically change the child's day-to-day experience. and impact the quality of primary caregiving relationships.
- 4. Freedom of movement:** Caregivers learn to prepare a safe environment that children are encouraged to explore, ending the dominant practice whereby centers and caregivers restrict children's mobility to maintain order and simplify housekeeping.
- 5. Individuality and identity:** Children are recognized as individuals and their development of identity is supported through simple, cost-effective changes such as spaces for personal effects and individual birthday parties. Even low-cost options such as a sewn fabric sack tied to the end of a bed where children can store personal belongings can make a big difference to a child's sense of identity.



The absence of these principles is in large part responsible for the poor outcomes typical for children raised in institutions. Even with limited resources and within existing facilities, they can be meaningfully implemented by working closely with childcare workers and administrators, connecting institutions' basic resources, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of these activities. By implementing these principles, Whole Child is working to realize its vision of helping ensure that every child has the chance to become a whole person.

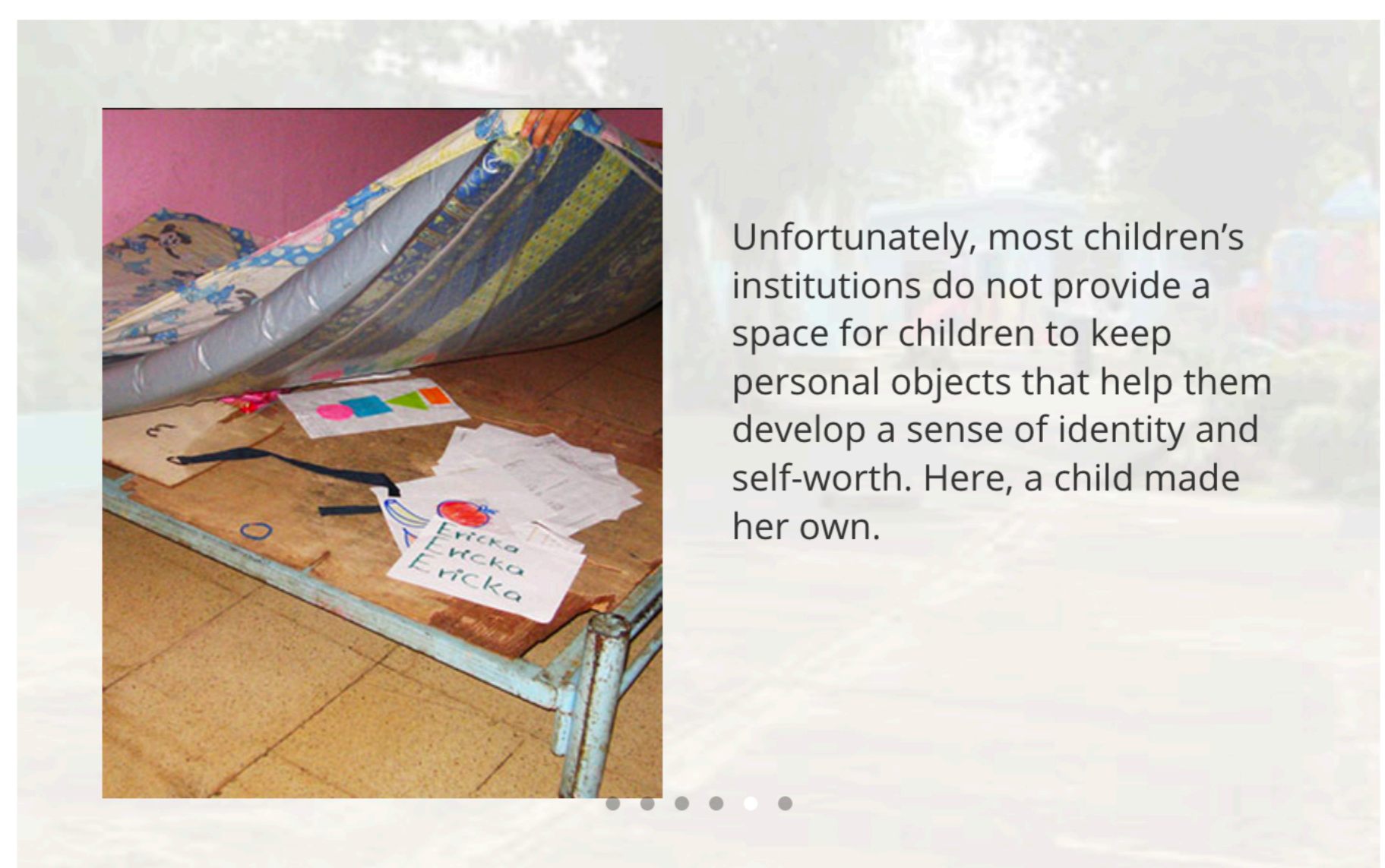
## Primary Activities and Services

Whole Child International's program consists of three primary activities, each of which serves our key focus on the caregiver/child relationship:

- Organizational Change and Caregiver Training
- Government Partnership
- Academic Initiatives

Early childhood interventions in particular have a well-documented return on investment; we further maximize this investment by creating in-country internal capacity at all levels: within government, within the university system, and in each center of care. Working on these three levels progressively lowers the cost of implementation even as it ensures the long-term sustainability of our work while minimizing that number of years in a country before we can move our resources to another region of need.

Please explore our [Organizational Change](#), [Collaborative Strategy](#), and [Building Knowledge](#) pages for more information on our unique strategies for addressing these challenges.



Unfortunately, most children's institutions do not provide a space for children to keep personal objects that help them develop a sense of identity and self-worth. Here, a child made her own.

^^ Whole Child's investigation of orphanages on nearly every continent has confirmed the conventional wisdom that these institutions generally do a dismal job of raising children. However, the main problem isn't one of buildings or facilities — but is rather an acute lack of childcare knowledge in the hands of those who need it. Whole Child begins with existing staffs and facilities, and through commonsense structural modifications and a tested program of training in best practices, we ensure that children's most essential needs are met above all. We take special care to limit disruption to children whose childhoods are already characterized by lack of continuity of care, while avoiding extra financial burden on care centers which are often operating on highly limited budgets.