The Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County was founded on the belief that all children deserve futures of more successful and satisfying lives.

JWB was created by the citizens of Pinellas County who were the first in the nation to collectively say all children matter by investing tax dollars to improve their futures.

For 70 years, Pinellas County residents have been making children a priority. From the early years to present, JWB milestones all add up to one thing—

70 YEARS OF PUTTING CHILDREN FIRST!
Our Creation

Juvenile Judge Lincoln C. Bogue and Attorney Leonard Cooperman were outraged there weren't more alternatives for troubled children other than adult jail in Pinellas County, so they led a group of concerned citizens to find a solution.

A bill was drafted to create an independent, tax-supported board to guard the rights and needs of children.

Led by Senator Henry Baynard and Representative S. Henry Harris, the Pinellas Delegation sponsored the bill, and the 1945 Florida Legislature passed it—subject to referendum.

In November 1946, Pinellas County citizens overwhelmingly voted the Juvenile Welfare Board Special Act into law by a 4-to-1 margin.

This was the first time in the United States that a community created such an entity to strengthen the lives of children and families with taxpayer support.
The first meeting of the Juvenile Welfare Board was held on May 14, 1947. Mrs. Mailande Holland Barton, one of the founders of the Junior League of St. Petersburg, became JWB’s first Board Chair.

As a first order of business, the Junior League was asked to conduct a survey on the conditions and needs of juveniles to guide the Board’s work.

Dr. Herbert Williams was hired to serve as JWB’s first executive director. He was fond of saying, “You must catch them by six!”, outlining for JWB a focused commitment on prevention and early intervention.

JWB’s first employee was Nanabelle Dame, hired as a juvenile court caseworker for girls. JWB’s first office was in the former St. Petersburg High building near Mirror Lake.

The organization’s annual budget of $75,000 was distributed to three agencies serving about 1,500 children.

Early successes included a Child Welfare Unit to assist with shelter and long-term foster care needs of dependent children.
In the 1950s, JWB helped pass legislation to create the Pinellas County License Board, responsible for setting minimum standards for family daycare homes and centers.

JWB also established the Marriage and Family Counseling Program as a preventive service, understanding problems of children often reflect difficulties between their parents.

In 1962, JWB was one of the first in the U.S. to fund specialized foster care and adoption placement services for children with disabilities.

Two years later, JWB began subsidizing daycare for at-risk and disabled children.

In 1965, the first Protective Services Unit for Pinellas County children was established with support from JWB.

Two years later, the Protective Services Unit began operating 24 hours a day and 7 days a week to serve children.
In the early 1970s, JWB initiated a child trauma team as a result of a JWB-sponsored study on battered children.

JWB launched the In-School Counseling Project, leading to the creation of the Pinellas County Schools Student Services Department.

JWB supported the creation of Latchkey Services for Children, now known as R’Club Child Care, Inc., providing supervision for children of working parents.

In 1974, JWB led a National Study Survey resulting in the first State of the Child Plan and organized its first annual legislative workshop for community dialogue.

In the early 1980s, JWB advocated for juvenile divisions to become part of all Pinellas law enforcement agencies.

In 1986, given the historic success of JWB’s work in Pinellas County, the Florida Legislature passed a bill to enable other Florida counties to establish Children’s Services Councils.
In 1990, JWB proposed a millage rate increase to implement a five-year plan for Asset-Based Strategies and Neighborhood/Community Development Initiatives. The referendum was overwhelmingly approved by nearly 70% of the citizen vote.

That same year, JWB conducted a large-scale study on maternal substance abuse, distributing the report nationwide.

In 1991, the JWB Board approved the first school-based health clinic in partnership with the Pinellas County School District, Health Department and All Children’s Hospital.

One year later, the Healthy Families initiative for the screening of prenatal and new mothers was approved.

In 1992, the JWB Board approved an annual award recognizing social services professionals, naming it the Cooperman-Bogue Award after JWB’s founders.

That same year, the Board approved a Community Involvement Plan leading to the creation of three Community Councils in North, Mid and South Pinellas County.

In the mid-1990s, the JWB Board adopted a Neighborhood and Community Development Initiative, paving the way for today’s Neighborhood Family Centers (NFCs).
In 2000, oversight and accountability were enhanced by the addition of the Sixth Judicial Circuit State Attorney and Public Defender to the JWB Board.

In 2006, JWB adopted three strategic areas of focus: School Readiness; School Success; and the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.

In the mid-2000s, JWB created the Family Counseling System of Care, paving the way for today’s Family Services Initiative which provides real-time support for struggling Pinellas families.

In 2010, JWB launched The Children’s Initiative at Fairmount Park Elementary; four years later, the successful pilot was expanded and coined Scale Up Success.

In 2011, JWB shifted from funding traditional child care to investing in high quality early learning. JWB adopted eight quality components and launched the Quality Early Learning Initiative in 2012.

In 2014, JWB achieved national accreditation through the prestigious Council on Accreditation (COA).

In November 2014, JWB held its inaugural Children’s Summit featuring a live, interactive annual report and community dialogue about four collective initiatives: Preventable Child Deaths; Childhood Hunger; Student Achievement; and Grade-Level Reading.
**OUR MISSION:**
The Juvenile Welfare Board invests in partnerships, innovation and advocacy to strengthen Pinellas County children and families.

**OUR VISION:**
Our vision is that children in Pinellas County will have a future of more successful and satisfying lives because of the efforts of JWB and its partners.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**
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