

## A Message From Lisa Greenwald, PhD



September 6, 2019

Dear Friends,

A few weeks ago, I had the joy of sending Kindering's 57<sup>th</sup> graduating class off to the next step in their life journey. A graduation designed for 773 toddlers is like none other. Let me paint the picture: a darling new walker toddling everywhere while his mom watches him with uncertainty, trying to decide how to keep him safe while not stealing the show; a 3-year old dressed in full cap-and-gown regalia; many proud loved ones snapping an endless stream of photos; a boy who recently found independence commanding control of his own wheelchair; and a small girl dirtying up her beautiful dress. Hundreds of little ones, proud families, and caring Kindering staff took over the Crossroads Park singing familiar songs: add bubbles, face painting, an obstacle course, resources for families, and of course a graduation cake. Now this is how you celebrate the milestones!

Recognizing that “dreaming big” for our kids can feel daunting when the road ahead is new and unknown, I shared some thoughts with families based on my personal experience from my own Kindering graduate. This familiar feeling has revisited me this fall as my son begins high school. I will try to heed my own advice. First, Kindering teaches us to celebrate not only the milestones, but also the “inchstones” along the way – a term recently coined by a Kindering parent. Recognizing these smaller steps brings both joy and hope, especially in the face of uncertainty. The second point is to surround ourselves with those who believe in our children and do not put limits on their potential –

and this includes doing so ourselves! To me, that is what dreaming big is all about - believing in the endless possibilities. Finally, I challenge us to draw upon the very same courage that brought us here or to Kindering and then simply follow in a Kindering kiddo's footsteps. Just like they literally or figurately put one foot in front of the other and took their first steps to the next unknown, so can we.

It may not always be easy, and we may not always know where we are going; but we will get there. Just remember: celebrate the inchstones, dream without limits, and put one courageous foot in front of the other.

How have we been dreaming big for our Kindering kids? Kindering's 2018 Annual Report Card can be found [here](#). In addition, here are a few recent inchstones and milestones to celebrate with us:

- In 2018, we reached 30% more families and served 5,793 children through direct services, professional consultation and program replication, and training and support to our community and other partners.
- Kindering Redmond is now open and operational – bringing us to 4 service campuses: Bellevue, Bothell, Renton, and Redmond.
- Early intervention families can now receive supplemental support through tele-intervention to better serve their needs and expand our reach.
- Our Families in Transition (FIT) early intervention program has grown to better support children experiencing homelessness or housing instability.
- We replicated our CHERISH program, designed to build attachment and positive relationships between our youngest children in the child welfare system and their various caregivers/parents, to other agencies across our community; and we expanded CHERISH through age 5.
- We received several awards for excellence including:
  - Recently ranked as the 13<sup>th</sup> Best Workplace in Washington in the large business category from the Puget Sound Business Journal
  - 100 Best Companies to Work For 2019 from Seattle Business Magazine
  - 2018 Non-Profit of the Year Community Impact Award from Seattle Business Magazine
- We received the new and official designation as a Neurodevelopmental Center of Excellence from the Department of Health.

Thank you for walking alongside Kindering and celebrating these accomplishments with us as we dream big and courageously take our next steps into the 2019-2020 year.

Sincerely,



Lisa Greenwald, PhD, CCC-SLP  
Chief Executive Officer