Best Practices Report:

Transforming Early Care and Education Systems

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Introduction

Ensuring that every child in Orange County has the best start at life so they can reach their fullest potential doesn't just benefit those children, it benefits our entire community. Creating economic prosperity for all Orange County residents requires leaders to focus on the building of a strong talent pipeline, and that starts with providing support to children in their earliest years.

Children not reading on grade level by the end of 3rd grade are four times more likely to drop out.
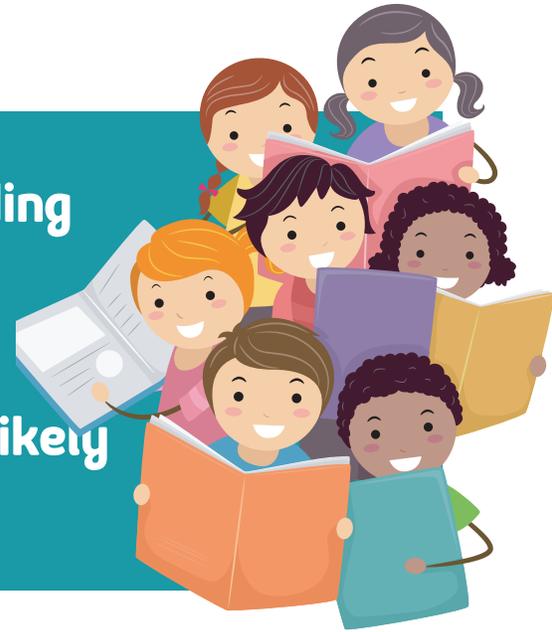
Yet children in the region do not have access to the early care and education opportunities they need to thrive - only 60% of children are entering school ready to learn, and by 3rd grade only 50% are reading on grade level.

This has serious consequences for both individuals and the community as a whole. Children not reading on grade level by the end of 3rd grade are four times more likely to drop out, are less likely to go on to post-secondary education, and are more likely to be unemployed, engage in crime, rely on subsidies and have poor health in adulthood.

The current reality of our children's experience does not align with the vision that Orange County residents and leaders have for the region. But it is possible to change. Years of research into early care and education shows that 1. We know what quality programs look like and 2. Those programs can have a significant return on investment – up to 13%.

A radically different approach is needed.

The old system of siloed organizations each running separate programs but not addressing holistic, system level barriers is no longer enough to tackle the challenges of ensuring all children have access to quality early care and education experiences.

A new strategy is needed, one that brings leaders from across sectors together, that breaks down silos, that scales success of existing efforts, that funds outcomes rather than programs, and that uses data to constantly track progress and adjust course. This system, often called "collective impact", exists and is being used in over 20 regions across the U.S. like Dallas, Cincinnati, Atlanta, Memphis, and in other Florida communities like St. Petersburg and Pensacola.

The goal of this report is to summarize the initiatives that are achieving results and provide examples that leaders in Orange County can use to launch a similar effort to address early care and education access and quality in the

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Outline of this Report:

- **The report begins with an overview of the best research on early learning.**

- **Then an overview of the collective impact model is provided.**

- **Next six education collective impact initiatives are summarized:**
    - **Each summary includes an overview, history, goals, focus areas, examples of strategies and programs, results, list of funders and supporters, and regional comparison data.**

    - **For initiatives that were interviewed, those summaries also include lessons learned.**

    - **When applicable, helpful tools used by the initiative are also included.**

    - **In addition to the six collective impact efforts, a few additional initiatives and promising practices are also summarized in the appendix.**

- **The report concludes with recommendations for how leaders in Orange County can learn from these efforts to increase access to high-quality, affordable early care and education and move from vision to action - putting the region back on track to a successful future economy and prosperity for all.**

Approach: The approach for this paper was an initial literature review on collective impact generally, a review of collective impact models and best practices focused on early care and education, and phone interviews with efforts located in areas most similar to Orange County in terms of population and demographics.

Table of Contents

Ensuring that every child has the best start at life so they can reach their fullest potential doesn't just benefit those children, it benefits our entire community.

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What Works in Early Education

James Heckman, a Nobel Prize winning economist, studied the effect of high-quality early child care programs for three- to four- year-olds and found a 7% return on investment (ROI). The study, which examined the impact of the Perry Preschool Program, found that quality pre-K programs for three and four-year-olds are:

- Language-rich,
- Help children develop trusting relationships with adults,
- Engage parents,
- Support social-emotional development ("soft" skills), and
- Develop important foundational cognitive skills (language and math).

Heckman also studied early education programs that support the health and development of children from birth to five and determined a new ROI of 13% for these programs.

The programs in this second study, The Carolina Abecedarian Project (ABC) and the Carolina Approach to Responsive Education (CARE), offered comprehensive developmental resources to disadvantaged African-American children from birth to age five, including:

- Nutrition,
- Access to health care, and
- High-quality early learning.

For his research, Heckman followed participants of the Perry Preschool program as well as the ABC program into adulthood and found that positive impact lasted long-term. Participation in these programs significantly increased the students' long-term employment and health outcomes, cognitive and socioemotional skills, and reduced the male participants' criminal activity, especially violent crime. In addition to the benefits for participants, the children of participants (second generation) were less likely to be suspended from school, and more likely to complete regular or any other form of high school and to be employed full-time with some college experience.

What needs to happen to improve early care and education for all children in Orange County:

1) Increase access to high-quality early care and education (ECE) for all children birth to five.
2) Develop a qualified, trained, and stable ECE workforce.
3) Create a common understanding and build caregivers skills in providing quality early care and education, including social-emotional learning.
4) Ensure systems support early identification and intervention of developmental delays.

Additional wrap-around services including:

5) Maternal and infant health
6) Pre- and post-natal support such as home-visitation
7) Nutrition
8) Parent engagement
9) Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) mitigation efforts

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Moving from Ideas to Action:

After more than 40 years of comprehensive research, the "what" that is required to create a high-quality early care and education program, as described above, is now more widely understood. What has been more challenging to date has been the "how". Incremental change or small-scale programs will only ever meet the needs of a limited number of children. A systems level view needs to be taken to ensure that solutions are implemented, improved, and scaled on a timeline that benefits more students before they age out of the critical developmental years.

There are initiatives meeting these standards that are being implemented across the country and they provide a guide for how to develop a birth to five system that supports early development and provides the greatest return on investment. Those initiatives largely follow a model called "collective impact" to ensure solutions are holistic and sustainable. The following two sections outline the collective impact process and provide examples of collective impact initiatives focused on early care and education that are achieving results.

"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about."
– Margaret Wheatley

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How to Implement What Works

The complex nature of the issue of inequitable access to high quality early care and education means a different approach is needed - one that involves all stakeholders and builds lasting large-scale and systemic change. In the past, efforts to solve our most challenging problems usually concentrate on programs or individual organizations that deliver these programs. This has also been true with early care and education. As a result, progress has been slow despite investment of significant resources and the hard work of dedicated individuals.

In recent years, a new model, called collective impact, has garnered national attention as early efforts have shown impressive gains on social issues, including in education. The approach shifts from siloed, individual programs and organizations to a more disciplined and full-system approach to achieving dramatic, large-scale impact. Collective impact engages citizens and leaders from all sectors to collaboratively solve problems. It does not wait for a non-profit or government entity to find one miracle solution but instead involves experts and affected citizens from all sectors to work together to develop and scale a system of solutions that build on what is already working.

Isolated Impact vs. Collective Impact

Isolated Impact	Collective Impact
◆ Funders select individual grantees that offer the most promising solutions.	◆ Funders and implementers understand that social problems, and their solutions, arise from the interaction of many organizations within a larger system.
◆ Nonprofits work separately and compete to produce the greatest independent impact.	◆ Progress depends on working toward the same goal and measuring the same things.
◆ Evaluation attempts to isolate a particular organization's impact.	◆ Large scale impact depends on increasing cross-sector alignment and learning among many organizations.
◆ Large scale change is assumed to depend on scaling a single organization.	◆ Corporate and government sectors are essential partners.
◆ Corporate and government sectors are often disconnected from the efforts of foundations and nonprofits.	◆ Organizations actively coordinate their action and share lessons learned.

There are five conditions of effective collective impact:

1. Common Agenda
2. Shared Measurement
3. Mutually Reinforcing Activities
4. Continuous Communications
5. Backbone Support

Early adopters of this approach are already moving the needle. The StrivePartnership is one of the first and most successful examples of collective impact. Established in 2006, the StrivePartnership is comprised of leaders from the education, business, philanthropic, nonprofit, civic and grassroots communities in Cincinnati. The goals of the group are to transform the education pipeline from cradle to career. In their first 10 years they were able to make improvements where other initiatives failed. They saw 86 percent of student outcome indicators improve, including third-grade reading achievement increase to 73 percent, and high school graduation rates rise above 90 percent.

In the following section six additional collective impact efforts are summarized- some based on the StrivePartnership model - that can serve as examples for a similar effort in Orange County.

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Collective Impact Initiatives

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Key Take-Aways

Lesson	Description	Best Practices
Focus on building strong and positive relationships:	The past 20 years of research has shown that any early care and education program should include a focus on building strong relationships between children and caregivers (parents, relatives, teachers, etc.) and include efforts to address sources of stress, or Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).	The Early Learning Alliance, Fort Worth, TX
Business involvement is critical to success:	Business support is critical to the success of collective impact initiatives because of financial support, the ability to raise awareness more broadly, the new perspective offered by business leaders on social issues, and to support the business side of the early care and education industry.	Early Matters Dallas
Involve stakeholders throughout the process:	Most efforts started with multiple "visioning" sessions with key stakeholders which help them build out goals and strategies, and includes regular conversations.	Seeding Success/ First 8 Memphis
Maintain integrity of collective impact structure for best results:	Almost every effort has a similar structure - executive council and working groups with a backbone organization managing the process, facilitating conversations, holding groups accountable to action steps and gathering and sharing data aligned with the vision.	Achieve Escambia
Establish goals early:	Setting goals and benchmarks early helps engage stakeholders as well as manage expectations for what results to expect when. Along these lines, a few initiative directors recommended setting ambitious goals around increasing school readiness and 3rd grade reading in the long-term but to also set some more achievable short-term goals and benchmarks.	Seeding Success/ First 8 Memphis
Set "Systems Alignment" as an initial goal:	Ensuring the various stakeholders and organizations working on early care and education goals are working collaboratively is a critical precursor to other goals and strategies.	The Early Learning Alliance
Spend time understanding the best strategies for the region:	Almost every effort set increasing access and quality as a core goal (the number of children in high-quality early care centers) but the exact strategies vary by community.	Milwaukee Succeeds
Operational goals are as important as social change goals:	Goals around data collection and sharing, public awareness, and collaboration bolster the core goals of increasing quality and access.	Early Matters and Seeding Success
Consider expanding beyond early care and education:	Expansion of the scope of the effort to include supporting caregivers at home and child and maternal health.	Seeding Success

Regional Demographic Comparisons

Initiative/Region	Scope	Focus Areas	Region Size
Early Matters **Dallas, TX**	**Early Care and Education**	**Child Care Quality, Increase Access, Increase Awareness, Support Children and Families from Birth**	**2,637,772** (Dallas County, TX)
The Early Learning Alliance	**Early Care and Education**	**Child Care Quality, Focus on ECE Educators, Family Engagement**	**2,084,931** (Tarrant County)
Orange County , FL			**1,348,975**
Thrive by Five **Pinellas County, Fl**	**Early Care and Education**	**Family Engagement, Child Care Quality, Increase Awareness**	**975,280** (Pinellas County, Fl)
Milwaukee Succeeds **Milwaukee, WI**	**Cradle to Career**	**Child Care Quality, Immunizations, Screenings, Social-Emotional Development**	**948,201** (Milwaukee County, WI)
First 8 Memphis **Memphis, TN**	**Early Care and Education**	**Home Visits, Screenings, Child Care Quality**	**935,764** (Shelby County, TN)
Achieve Escambia **Escambia County, FL**	**Cradle to Career**	**Family Engagement, Screening, Access to Services, Child Care Quality, Increase Access**	**315,534** (Escambia County, Fl)

Orange County Demographics

Population	Children	Economics	Education
Total: 1,348,975	**Children under 5: 6% (83,636)**	**Median Household Income: $45,624**	**Kindergarten readiness: 60%**
White: 40%	**Children under 5 in Poverty: 25.8% (21,578)**	**Overall Poverty Rate: 15%**	**3rd Grade reading: 50%**
Black: 22.8%	**Children in Orange County Public Schools (OCPS): 211,685**	**Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE) Rate: 47%**	**Bachelor's Degrees: 32%**
Hispanic: 31.4%	**Children in OCPS from low-income homes (5-18): 65% (137,595)**	**Early Care and Education Funding: State - $2,383 per 4-year-old for Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Federal - TANF Subsidies for children 0-3 living in low-income homes**	**Bachelor's and Certifications: 48%**
Asian: 5.7%	**Children under 18: White - 26% Black - 25% Hispanic- 42%**		

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earlymattersdallas
A Historic Coalition on Early Education

Dallas County, TX | earlymattersdallas.org

About the Initiative:
Early Matters Dallas is an initiative focused on early care and education that is part of a larger collective impact effort to improve the quality of education in Dallas called The Commit Partnership (Commit) with the ultimate aim of improving 3rd grade reading. The other areas of focus for Commit are teacher recruitment and retention and improving postsecondary completion rates.

History:
Commit was launched in 2016 after the mayor of Dallas became interested in the collective impact model, particularly the success of collective impact initiatives in Cincinnati (Strive Partnership) and Memphis (Seeding Success). The Mayor's head of education was tapped to launch the Commit Partnership after a year of exploration and community meetings.

Goal/Core Indicators:
The goals of Early Matters Dallas is to increase the number of students reading on a 3rd grade level. The current on grade level reading rate is 34% and the goal is to increase that to 60% in 2025.

Approach:
To increase the third grade level reading rates Early Matter Dallas aims to 1. Increase access to and quality of early care and education in the region in all settings through better training, 2. Increase awareness about the importance of a child's first years, and 3. Extend the continuum of care to support both children and their families from birth. The fourth goal is to ensure sufficient resources are available to support the work of the other three goals.

Strategies:

Increase Access - Strategies include:
1. Match supply of quality early education seats to need and demand
2. Maximize private-public partnerships;
3. Increase quality out-of-school time services provided.

Increase Quality - Strategies include:
1. Align on common defined components of quality early care and education in all settings;
2. Strengthen the early care and education teacher pipeline both for new professionals and for existing teaching assistants to become lead teachers;
3. Improve professional development for existing early care and education professionals;
4. Improve the economics for quality early care and education (more profitable for providers);
5. Increase licensing requirements (e.g., adult-to-child ratios) to nationally recommended levels; 6. Optimize learning environments; and 7. Implement age-appropriate assessments for monitoring and intervention.

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Strategies cont.

Increase Awareness - Strategies include:
1. Educate parents of the importance of quality early education & how to identify and access it;
2. Strengthen parent interactions at home;
3. Support parents in finding culturally responsive resources and services outside of the home;
4. Develop and execute county, district, and neighborhood coordinated campaigns;
5. Plan for and coordinate legislative efforts to increase funding for culturally responsive, quality early education;
6. Expand networks and coalitions across educators and providers for improved communication, coordination and practice.

Extend Continuum of Care - Strategies include:
1. Increase the likelihood that babies are born healthy and stay healthy during the early childhood years;
2. Increase usage of and access to culturally responsive behavioral and mental health care;
3. Increase identification of and treatment for special needs;
4. Ensure safe outdoor environments exist to support an active and healthy lifestyle;
5. Prevent child and family abuse and neglect.

Results:
Early Matters Dallas has been in operation for 3 years, early community-wide results include increasing quality rated centers by 20 and increasing the number of eligible students enrolled by 11%.

Funding/Supporters:
The support of the business community was critical for Early Matters Dallas. The head of Commit and former lead education staff member for the mayor of Dallas, leveraged his connections in the business community to build initiative support (he was an executive at Goldman Sachs pervious to his role at the Mayor's Office). A report highlighting the impact of early care and education on the current workforce galvanized additional business leaders: http://earlymattersdallas.org/bcgreport/.

Regional Comparison Summary:
Dallas County is almost twice the size of Orange County. The counties have similar racial makeups, similar percent living in poverty, and similar numbers of families who are employed but asset limited (ALICE rates). Dallas County has a median income that is $10,000 higher than that of Orange County.

Lessons Learned:
Involvement from leaders within the business community was critical to the launch and sustainability of the Early Matters Dallas effort. Having a leader and board with influence among the business community in Dallas was key to engaging the broader community. Arguments used in the case for support papers written on behalf of the Early Matters Dallas focused on the economic impact on the business community of lower education attainment levels and the skills gap.

Fort Worth, TX
earlylearningalliance.org

About the Initiative:
The Early Learning Alliance (ELA) is a community collaboration working to ensure all children have the foundation they need to succeed in school and in life. ELA only focuses on early care and education, rather than cradle to career initiatives. The ELA is not a nonprofit, the group is made up of 50 organizations, including 28 dues paying organizations, committed to a coordinated, aligned, and results-oriented system of services promoting early learning. Member organizations have an equal voice and participate in frequent discussions that encourage accountability and innovation.

History:
In 2013 Fort Worth was selected by the National League of Cities to be one of six cities to focus on early childhood learning. In the first year the group identified the three initial goals of 1. Family engagement 2.Quality improvement through professional development 3. Data sharing. Fifty organizations joined the coalition and collaboratively created a "Plan for the First 1,000 days" which continues to drive their work.

Goals:
To build a cohesive local early childhood system that enables every child to be kindergarten ready.

Focus Areas:
The ELA has four focus areas to increase kindergarten readiness: 1. Elevate early care and education professional quality, 2. Elevate early care and education program quality, 3. Engage with families, and 4. Share data and research. They also focus on ensuring equity in child well-being efforts.

Strategies/Programs:

Elevating Professional Quality - Develop stackable trainings and credit-bearing professional development opportunities for early education professionals. Roll out a public-private partnership with local school districts, charter schools, nonprofits and researchers to improve the quality of classroom instruction.

Elevate Program Quality - Increase the number of local early care and education programs in the Texas Rising Star (TRS) system. Identify an approach, or approaches, for programs to use and coordinate on common Pre-K and Kindergarten assessment tools.

Engage Families - Develop organizational processes to provide better family engagement. Identify an approach, or approaches, for families and programs to use/coordinate on a common Developmental Screening Tool.

Data and Research - Create a shared data platform for community tracking and reporting on shared outcomes.

Results:
In the first 2 years the ELA increased the number of rated centers by 62%, increased gains in emotional support levels by 10% and enlisted 1,800 early care professionals to track their credentials.

Funding/Supporters:

In addition to the initial grant from the National League of Cities, the ELA is funded by a combination of individual donors; private foundations such as The Miles Foundation, Rainwater Charitable Foundation, and North Texas Community Foundation; government grants and support such as the Texas Health and Human Services Commission Home Visiting Grant and the Fort Worth Independent School District; and support from community organizations like the United Way of Tarrant County and Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County. The coalition is also made up of 50 organizations, 28 of which commit to annual dues.

Regional Comparison Summary:

Tarrant County is significantly larger than Orange County with a total of 2,084,931 residents. The city of Fort Worth is larger than Orlando, but the two counties have similar racial demographics with slightly more white residents and slightly fewer Black residents in Tarrant County. While poverty rates and bachelor's degree attainment are similar, median household income is $17,000 more in Tarrant County.

Lessons Learned:

The executive director of the Early Learning Alliance shared that family engagement was challenging but very important. The most difficult part was when families would share needs that were beyond the scope of the ELAs work - such as the need for better transportation. Another lesson learned is that the connection between education and early health is important. The ELA did not focus on health but if the director could change that she would.

Helpful Tools:

The ELA's chart outlining their four priorities and three key strategies per priorities offers Orange County a helpful guide to ways this region might address similar issues.

Thrive by Five Pinellas
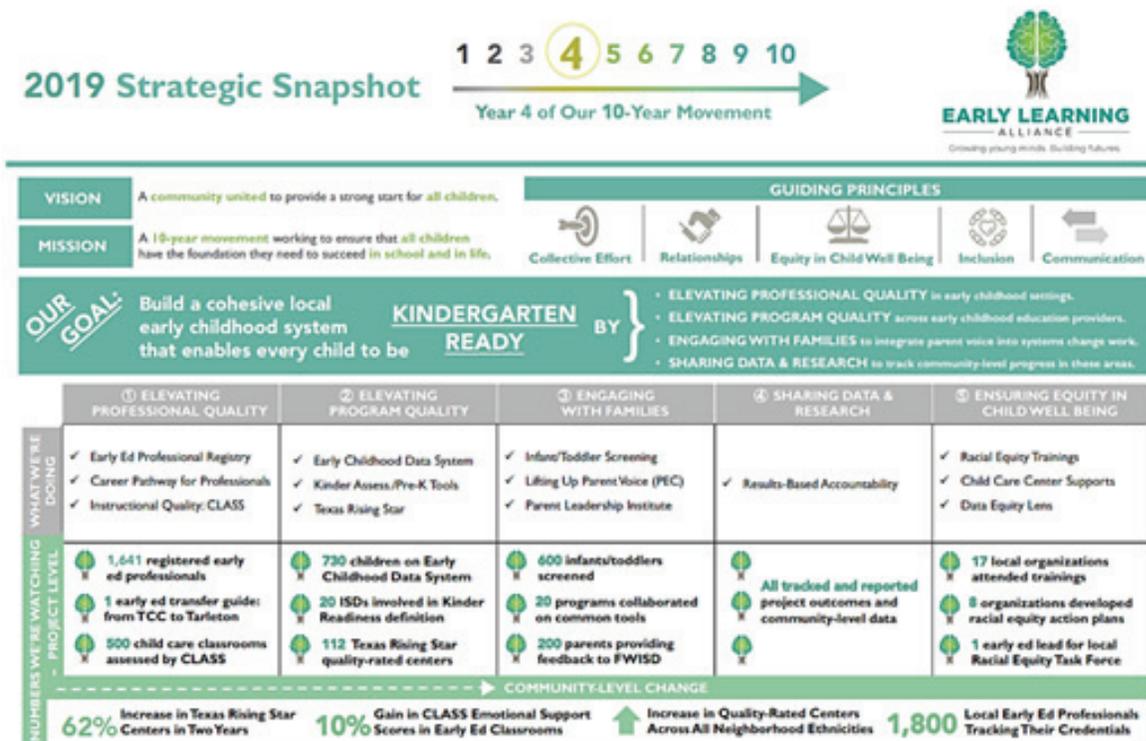
Pinellas County, Fl
elcpinellas.net/tbfpinellas

About the Initiative:
Thrive by Five is a collective impact initiative focused on early education. The effort seeks to transform early child care and education in Pinellas County through intense collaboration, realignment, and use of resources by all sectors of the community and residents invested in the success of the community's youngest citizens.

History:
The Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County received a grant for about a half million dollars to launch the collective impact initiative. The business community got on board because of Amazon's rejection and feedback about their education system during the company's search for a new headquarters location.

Goals:
Ensure every child is kindergarten ready.

Focus Areas:
Thrive by Five is focused on four areas to improve educational outcomes for children 0-5: 1. Child and Caregiver Success, 2. Business Engagement, 3. Public Awareness, and 4. System Alignment.

Strategies/Programs:
Thrive by Five is in its first year of operation and currently in the process of determining their strategies.

Results:
Thrive by Five was launched in 2017 and as of yet does not have results. In the coming years they plan to track number of people/organizations engaged, number of children in VPK programs, and number of children ready for Kindergarten.

Funding/Supporters:
The Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg provided a $538,625 to Thrive by Five for the initial three-year launch.

Regional Comparison Summary:
Pinellas County is smaller than Orange County by 373,695 residents. Overall Pinellas is less diverse than Orange County with 74% white residents, and 11% and 9% Black and Hispanic residents respectively. Pinellas has slightly lower overall and childhood poverty rates. Orange County has 18 percentage points more residents considered Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE). The median household income and bachelor's degree attainment rates are similar in both counties.

Lessons Learned:
Upon reflection, the executive director of Thrive by Five Pinellas wished she had defined measurement and created a dashboard earlier in the process.

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About the Initiative:

Milwaukee Succeeds is another example of a "cradle to career" collective impact effort and also a part of the StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network.

History:

Milwaukee Succeeds was launched in 2011 by a partnership between the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Greater Milwaukee Committee, Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce, Milwaukee Urban League, United Way of Greater Milwaukee and the Helen Bader Foundation. The Kindergarten Readiness Partnership - the early learning aspect of Milwaukee Succeeds - is made up of 40 partners working collaboratively to support proper brain development in a child's first five years.

Goals:

The initiative's overall goal is to ensure that every child is prepared to enter school. As an initial short-term goal, they wanted to increase the number of children in a high-quality program from 11% to 16% in two years. They have exceeded that goal with 18% of children currently in a high-quality program.

Focus Areas:

The Kindergarten Readiness Program focuses on four areas: 1. Quality child care: number of children in high-quality programs, 2. Developmental Screenings: gain a clear picture of the number of children screened, by whom, and the resulting referrals, 3. Immunization: increasing immunization rates as well as raising awareness of the importance of immunizations, and 4. Social and Emotional development: with a focus on professional development for educators.

Strategies/Programs:

Quality Child Care - Program example: Wisconsin Early Childhood Association provides onsite mentoring and coaching of early childhood educators for the child care quality improvements pilot.

Immunizations - Program example: This collaboration of all of Milwaukee's hospital health systems, federally qualified health clinics and other community partners is working to promote on-time/up-to-date immunizations and reduce missed opportunities for young children.

Social and Emotional Learning – Program Example: Milwaukee Succeeds is chartering a southeastern Wisconsin chapter of the Wisconsin Alliance of Infant Mental Health, which provides professional development and resource sharing for providers and parents.

Results:

The Kindergarten Readiness Program efforts have increased the number of children in a high-quality early care and education programs by six percentage points since 2015. Increased referrals to intervention programs by 23%. Increased immunizations from 59% to 66% since 2011.

Funding/Supporters:

Five organizations came together to provide sustainable funding for the Seeding Success Initiative -The Bader Philanthropies, Northwestern Mutual Foundation, United Way of Greater Milwaukee, Herbert Kohl Philanthropies, and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation all committed $1 million dollars over a four-year period.

Regional Comparison Summary:

Milwaukee County has a population of 948,201 - 400,774 fewer residents than Orange County. There are 11% more white residents, 3% more black residents, 16% fewer Hispanic residents, and similar Asian populations. Median household income and bachelor's degree attainment are similar to Orange County. Poverty is slightly higher at 19% compared to 14% for Orange County.

Helpful Tools:

Milwaukee has seven Core Indicators presented in a road map, so all stakeholders involved are clear on what the initiative is working towards. While this example goes beyond early care and education, a road map similar to this could be a valuable tool in ensuring various stakeholders understand and are aligned on the vision.
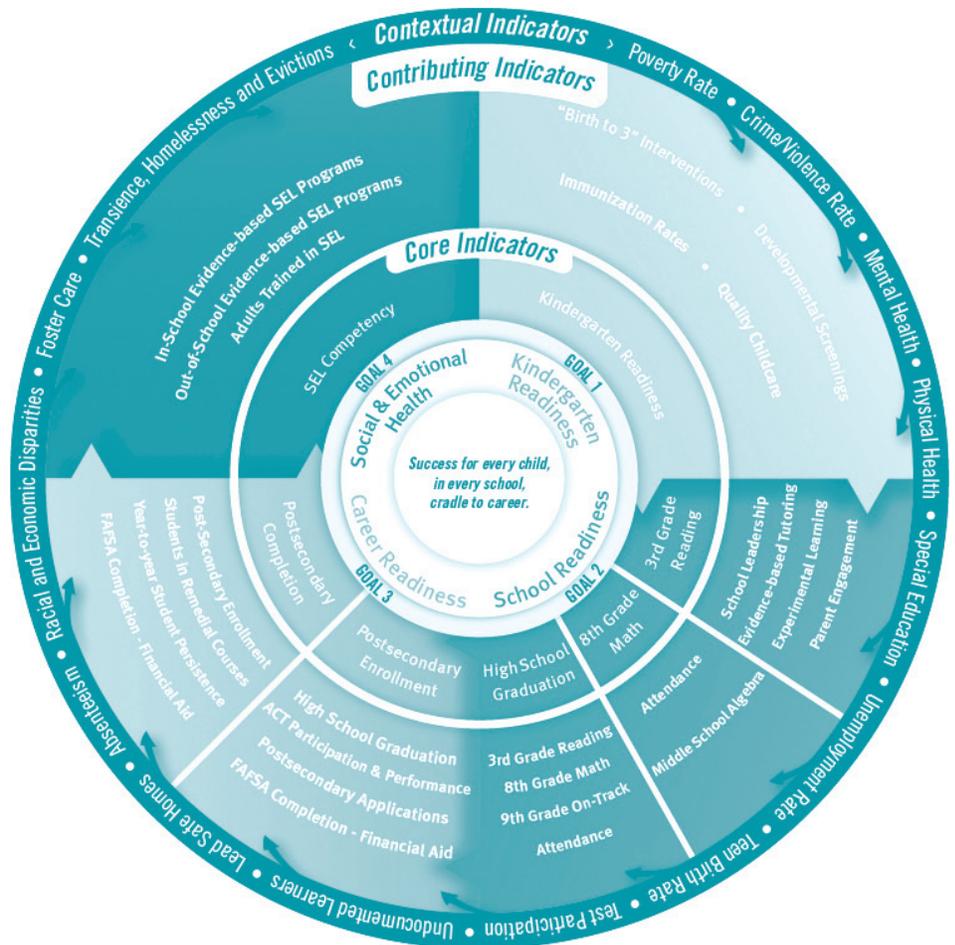
seeding success

Shelby County, TN (Memphis) | first8memphis.org

About the Initiative:
Seeding Success is a "cradle to career" (birth through career training) collective impact initiative that aims to improve kindergarten readiness, grade-level reading, middle school math, high school graduation, college and career readiness as well as post-secondary access. Seeding Success is also part of the StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network - over 70 initiatives across the network using collective impact to improve educational outcomes.

History:
After the Shelby County school district split into seven smaller districts in 2012, school board members and other community leaders saw the need for an organization that could provide guidance to the new network. This new organization, Seeding Success, was launched with a focus on kindergarten through 12th grade only. After seeing success with the initial organization leaders hired a consulting firm to write a report about how they might expand impact to early care and education. The result were 23 recommendations, of which 11 were prioritized for children ages 0-5 (see below), and the formation of the early education component of Seeding Success, called First 8 Memphis.

Goals/Core Indicators:
The goals First 8 Memphis is to increase the rates of kindergarten readiness from 34% (in 2014) to 90%, with the ultimate aim of increasing 3rd grade reading rates.

Focus Areas:
The initiative focused on three strategy areas for the program launch:
1. Home visitation programs,
2. Developmental assessments, and
3. Child care quality.
They have a total of seven priorities for children ages 0-3 and four for pre-K programs:

Children 0-3
1. Incentives to increase quality seats
2. Strengthen certificate distribution
3. Increase awareness of important of ECE
4. Expand supports for providers
5. Increase use of screeners
6. Improve home visit referral conversions
7. Strengthen QRIS

Pre-K
1. Common definition of high-quality pre-K
2. Improve pre-K quality
3. Increase capacity of high-quality programs, home visitation programs, developmental assessments, and child care quality.
4. Mitigate summer slide (learning loss during summer months)

Strategies/Programs:

Home Visitations - Increase the number of families participating in home visitation programs and implement various strategies to improve practices.

Developmental Screenings - Recommend a community-wide adoption of a universal screening tool and include use of this tool in a quality rating system for early care and education providers.

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Increasing Quality Seats - Develop a better understanding of supply and demand in specific neighborhoods then provide support/incentives to expand high-quality providers in high-needs areas. First 8 Memphis also runs a shared services network to ensure child care providers can operate efficiently and that those that are high-quality can scale. Porter Leath, a high-quality comprehensive provider, acts as a model and coach for other providers in the program.

Results:
The First 8 Memphis strategic plan was approved in 2016 and community level results are not yet available. Early wins for the effort focus on systems alignment and funding support from the community - including 16.6 million in funds from the city and county.

Funding/Supporters:
Seeding Success, and First 8 Memphis, receive significant investment from a broad range of funders. The city and county governments provide 16.6 million annually in perpetuity. An anonymous funder recently committed 10s of millions over several years. The business community, including the chambers in the 4 largest metros in the state, advocate for increasing state funding. A group of investors is looking into the pay for success, or Social Impact Bonds, in which private investors would provide upfront capital to support the work of First 8 Memphis and are repaid by a back-end.

Regional Comparison Summary:
Shelby County is smaller than Orange County by 400,000 people. Memphis is larger than Orlando by 371,979 meaning Shelby County's population is slightly more urban than Orange County. Shelby County has far more Black residents and far fewer Hispanic residents and similar numbers of other races as Orange County. Median household income, bachelor's degree attainment, poverty rates are similar for both counties.

Lessons Learned:
Head of the First 8 Memphis initiative identified two major lessons learned since launching the work. The first is that ongoing and transparent community engagement is important especially during the visioning stage but should be maintained throughout the process - more information is better than less. Second, she shared that having strong data was important during the partner and supporter building stage. The more accurate, specific and authentic the data the more likely partners were to sign on.

Helpful Tools:
Seeding Success has a number of comprehensive planning and implementation documents that would be helpful references for Orange

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Proposed key milestones in first year of implementation

2016:

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Enabling Infrastructure	Establish leadership (Chair, Committee) and working team to oversee the implementation of the recommendation, with a dedicated staff resource in PFP Finalize owners of individual recommendations, and begin developing more detailed implementation roadmaps Establish local advocacy plan for maintaining pre-K funding Establish dialogue with DHS on strengthening QRIS	Confirm neighborhoods, leadership and funding for place-based pilots Establish advocacy plan for increasing funding for TEIS Establish basis for longitudinal analysis to understand how different early learning and pre-K pathways contribute to kindergarten readiness	Adopt new State definition of K-readiness. Train teachers and begin translating definition into pre-K offerings Launch the "Early Education Community Program of the Year" Establish structures and practices that promote more alignment of instructional practices from pre-K to third	Secure funding and begin adding capacity for home visitation support Create a forum for district-charter school collaboration for social emotional learning Build out partnerships with universities and/or research and business organizations to provide analytical support to inform continuous improvement
Programmatic	Plan public roll-out of the Plan Develop plan and on-board staff to create direct push model through Impact TN for screeners	Collaborate with districts to create more extensive summer programming, and modify teacher evaluation to include academic and social-emotional measures Confirm metrics for scorecard and paths to collecting data	Pilot new ways to expand in home supports and provider supports Pilot an extension of the family service model for k-3rd	Begin introducing more innovative approaches to building up the educator pipeline (e.g. early exposure in high school, teacher leader roles)

Achieve Escambia
Cradle to Career

Escambia County, Fl
achieveescambia.org

About the Initiative:
Launched in 2017, Achieve Escambia is a "cradle to career" collective impact effort. This initiative is part of the StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network and is housed in the United Way of Escambia County. The focus areas of the initiatives are school readiness, academic achievement, graduation, and career readiness.

History:
Achieve Escambia was launched after four community funders - Navy Federal Credit Union, Gulf Power, Baptist Health Care, Sacred Heart Health System - sought a new approach to improving education after they felt their previous investments were not producing significant results. They engaged in an exploration of other models working to improve educational outcomes and discovered the collective impact effort being used in Cincinnati - The StrivePartnership.

Goals:
The goals of Achieve Escambia are to align community resources so everyone is empowered to achieve success - school readiness, academic achievement, graduation, and career readiness. For early education the effort aims to increase kindergarten readiness to 60% by 2020 and 75% by 2025.

Focus Areas:
For early education, Achieve Escambia has five focus areas: 1. Support family education and involvement, 2. Expand effective interventions, 3. Ensure families have access to programs and services they need, 3. Increase enrollment and 4. Raise pre-k completion rates.

Strategies/Programs:

Increase Enrollment - Program examples: In June 2018, Achieve Escambia entered into an agreement to house a place-based partnership in early learning and early child development at C. A. Weis Community Partnership School. This site-based work will foster a learning exchange between early learning and kindergarten educators, supporting the goal of increasing kindergarten readiness.

Expand Effective Interventions - Program examples: An effort to promote continuous improvement for providers was also launched in the first year. Achieve University is a program that brings together various providers to learn best practices, like Circle of Security - a program to support social-emotional learning of young children.

Results:
Achieve Escambia is only in its second year, so it is too early for results. However, in the early years of the effort Achieve Escambia measures results based on programs launched rather than tracking data towards kindergarten readiness. In addition to a successful initiative launch, the effort also started two programs focused on early care and education (see above).

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Funding/Supporters:

In addition to the four initial supporters - Navy Federal Credit Union, Gulf Power, Baptist Health Care, Sacred Heart Health System – Achieve Escambia also receives funding from the United Way and Florida Blue.

Regional Comparison Summary:

Escambia County is much smaller and more rural than Orange County; with only 315,534 residents, Escambia is a quarter of the size. A larger percentage of Escambia County's population is white, and a smaller percent is Hispanic, rates are similar for Black and Asian residents. While overall poverty rates and children under 5 in poverty are similar, there are 13 percentage points fewer households considered asset limited (ALICE) in Escambia. Residents in Escambia County are slightly less well educated than in Orange (26% vs 31%) but the median income is slightly higher ($47,361).

Lessons Learned:

Early care and education can often be the hardest part of cradle to career initiatives because of the decentralized nature of the sector. Given this additional complexity, Kimberly Krupa, Executive Director of Achieve Escambia, shared that it is important to set both ambitious long-term goals as well as achievable short-terms wins.

Helpful Tools:

Achieve Escambia has a helpful chart outlining the organization's structure that could act as a guide for organizing an effort in Orange County.

Civic Infrastructure

COLLECTIVE ACTION NETWORKS in kindergarten and career readiness are made up of volunteers and community leaders who focus on improving community-driven outcomes through an agreed-upon network charter and action plan.

ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS include United Way of Escambia County, Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County, Community Action Program Committee, Escambia County School District, Pensacola State College and University of West Florida, who support Achieve Escambia's efforts.

DATA TEAM members support and guide the development of indicator metrics and data collection, sharing and analysis.

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM members help tell the story of our collective impact efforts.

THE OPERATIONAL SUPPORT TEAM functions as a central hub of activity for the partnership, comprised of local leaders closely invested in the process.

THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL provides strategic guidance, social and financial capital and a unified voice to champion our work.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Today, our early care and education system isn't able to live up to its full potential. Every year 40% of children entering kindergarten are starting school already behind and most of them will never catch up.

But the path to improving the quality of early care and education is not a mystery.

- We know that high-quality early learning has been proven to be a high return investment that benefits the lives of the children it serves as well as the broader community.
- We also know that the types of programs that are most effective are those that address the health and developmental needs of children from birth to five and engage parents.
- Changing early care and education systems to meet these standards is not easy, but the collective impact model provides a process proven to show results, and initiatives already making progress across the country provide road maps.

In order for a collective impact initiative focused on early care and education to succeed in Orange County, leaders from across multiple sectors, including the business community, must come together and commit to making children's first years a priority.

The path to high-quality early care and education is clear:

1. **Leadership:** Organizers must bring together a group of influential community leaders to guide the work while simultaneously gathering support for and building an organization, often called a backbone organization, with the sole purpose of guiding the work.

2. **Clear Vision:** The leaders, with the support of a backbone team, will set the vision for the effort - timeline, specific goals, contributing indicators, benchmarks, as well as modes of operation/communications.

3. **Strategy:** Working teams will be formed to determine strategies, implementation plans, funding sources, measurement systems and evaluation methods.

4. **Support:** The backbone organization will facilitate these conversations; ensure commitments are fulfilled between meetings; provide ongoing learning and collaboration opportunities such as site visits; and collect, analyze, and distribute data to the group.

Learn more about how you can get involved at: www.GetKReady.com

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Appendix I – Collective Impact Initiative Summary Chart

Initiative	Goal	Funders/Board	Approach	Budget	Region/Population
Early Matters Dallas (2016)	60% of Students to be reading on a College Ready pace in 3rd Grade by 2025. (up from 34% in 2015)	-AT&T Foundation -Bain & Company -Bank of America -Harry W. Bass, Jr. Foundation -Henry C. Beck III Fund -Bezos Family Foundation ...more	- Improve the quality of early childhood education - Increase access to quality early childhood education - Ensure awareness and demand for quality early learning - Extend the continuum of care to support children and families from birth - Ensure sufficient resources are available	$4,989,794	Dallas County, 2,637,772
The Early Learning Alliance (Fort Worth, TX)	Ensure every child is kindergarten ready.	- The Miles Foundation -Rainwater Charitable Foundation -North Texas Community Foundation - Texas Health and Human Services Commission - FWISD - United Way of Tarrant County - Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County	- Elevate Professional Quality - Elevate Program Quality - Engage Families - Data and Research	CEOs salary	Tarrant County, 2,084,931
Thrive by Five (2017) - Pinellas County	Ensure every child is kindergarten ready	- Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg	- Parent and Caregiver Support - Quality Programs for Children - Increase Public Awareness - System Alignment	$500,000	Pinellas County, 975,280
Milwaukee Succeeds (2014)	Every child prepared to enter school.	- Greater Milwaukee Foundation - United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County - Greater Milwaukee Committee - Northwestern Mutual - Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce	- Quality Early Care & Education - Early Childhood Immunization - Developmental Screening - Social and Emotional Development		Milwaukee County, 948,201
Seeding Success (2014) - Memphis	90% of K students ready for school (only 33% currently are ready).	- Bader Philanthropies - Northwestern Mutual Foundation - United Way of Greater Milwaukee - Herbert Kohl Philanthropies - Greater Milwaukee Foundation ($1M each over four-year period)	Focus areas for initiative launch: - Home Visitation Programs - Developmental Assessments - Child Care Quality.	$1,366,849	Shelby County, 935,764
Achieve Escambia (2017)	To align community resources so everyone is empowered to achieve success, cradle to career - 60% K ready by 2020, 75% by 2025	- United Way of Escambia County (fiscal sponsor) - Florida Blue - Florida College Access Network - Gulf Power Foundation - Higher Education Coordinating Council - Federal Navy Credit	For early education focus: Support family education and involvement, expand effective interventions, ensure families have access to programs and services they need, increase enrollment and raise completion rates	Under United Way of Escambia County: $2,030,000	Escambia County, 315,534
Alexandria (VA) Early Care Workgroup (2013)	Support the development and alignment of, and access to, an early care and education system that prepares young children to enter kindergarten.	A number of small business donors: https://www.actforalexandria.org/corporate-partners	The Common Agenda (a framework of specific goals to guide progress): - System Alignment - Glass Doors - Seamless Support - QuALLity - Data Stewardship - Community and Funder Mobilization	$7,763,218	

Initiative	Goal	Funders/Board	Approach	Budget	Region/ Population
Generation Next (2012) - Twin Cities	We envision a future in which every child has the academic, social, and emotional skills to thrive in a globally-fluent world.	- 3M - Bigalow Foundation - Bush Foundation - Cargill - General Mills - Minneapolis Foundation - StriveTogether - St. Paul and Minnesota Foundation - United Way - University of Minnesota - US. Bank	- Pathways 2 Quality: addressing quality improvement, program stability, family support and suspension reduction. - ParentPowered Texting: real-time, developmentally-appropriate information to promote their child's success. - Screening at 3: increase efficiency and remove barriers to improve 3-year-old early childhood screening	No 990	
Learn4Life (2017) - Atlanta	We envision a future in which every child has the academic, social, and emotional skills to thrive in a globally-fluent world.	- AT&T Georgia - Atlanta Regional Commission - Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta - Delta Air Lines, Inc. - Dobbs Foundation - Georgia Power - Home Depot Foundation - Metro Atlanta Chamber - State Farm - United Way of Greater Atlanta	- Create shared understanding through data - Convene partners - Build trust and shared learning - Increase access to high quality early learning		Fulton County, 920,581

Appendix II –
Collective Impact Best Practices: Key Take-Aways*

1. ► Set "systems alignment" as an initial goal.

2. ► Spend time understanding the best strategies for the region.

3. ► Involve stakeholders throughout the process.

4. ► Establish goals and measurement strategies early.

5. ► Business involvement is critical to success.

6. ► Maintain the integrity of the collective impact process.

7. ► Operational goals are as important as impact goals.

8. ► Consider expanding beyond early care and education into health.

9. ► Collective Impact Best Practices: Key Take-Aways*

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Appendix III – Other Promising Initiatives and Best Practices

State-Wide | closegapsby5.org/background/melf_archive

About the Initiative:
The Minnesota Early Learning Foundation (MELF) was an effort to improve the quality of early child care and education in Minnesota focused on two complementary strategies - scholarships and parent awareness ratings

History:
The MELF was inspired by a search on behalf of the business community to find opportunities for effective economic development. Research by two economists at the Minnesota Federal Reserve made it clear that investing in early education could yield significant public returns. In response, a group of business leaders came together to create the MELF, composed of CEOs dedicated to funding a pilot solution to close the achievement gap in the early years.

Focus Area/Strategies:
The pilot consisted of two key components: 1. A new quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) to help providers learn best practices and parents to better understand the quality of available child care options, and 2. Scholarships for low-income families to enable them to access high-quality child care.

Results:
After the program was implemented 22,000 children where in programs with high quality ratings, and most important of all, all children that attended these quality programs made gains in kindergarten readiness measures, with children from low-income backgrounds making the greatest gains. The state eventually took notice and provided public funding to continue the program.

Structure:
The MELF operated as a coalition of board members, mostly from the business community, that set direction for the work of the organization. They did not use collective impact strategies to develop solutions. After the state adopted the programs, the group turned into Closing Gaps by Five and continued working to ensure the core of the original vision was maintained through lobbying.

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Harvard Center for the Developing Child – From Best Practices to Breakthrough Results

https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/from-best-practices-to-breakthrough-impacts/

Decades of research determined three core concepts about early childhood development:

1) **Responsive relationships and positive experiences build strong brain architecture:**
   - Early experiences affect the nature and quality of the brain's developing architecture by determining which circuits are reinforced and which are pruned through lack of use.
   - The lack of appropriate experiences can lead to alterations in neural architecture.
   - Epigenetic adaptation - how the environment shapes how our brains and bodies develop - actually altering our genes.
   - Supportive environments and positive relationships can generate positive epigenetic adaptations.
   - Positive relationships with adults affect virtually all aspects of development - intellectual, social, emotional, physical and behavioral.
   - The developmental process is fueled by "serve and return" interaction where adults respond and return the interactions of young children - these interactions are essential for healthy development and literally shape brain architecture.

2) **Adversity disrupts the foundations of learning, behavior, and health:**
   - Strong relationships in early years can help block excessive activation of stress hormones and protect children from their effects.
   - There are three types of stress hormones - positive, tolerable, toxic
     - Toxic stress - abuse, neglect, exposure to violence, accumulated burdens of economic hardship - can have long lasting negative impact on children's development

3) **Protective factors in early years strengthen resilience:**
   - Trying to change behavior or build new skills on a foundation of brain circuits that were not wired properly require more effort
   - Remedial education, clinical treatment, and other interventions later in life can be more expensive than providing nurturing, protective relationships and appropriate learning experiences earlier.

As a result of this research the Harvard Center for the Developing Child provides five recommendations:

1. Build caregiver skills: actively and intensively help the adults who care for young children to acquire and practice specific capabilities that are linked to explicit child outcomes.

2. Match interventions to sources of significant stress,

3. Support the health and nutrition of children and mothers before, during and after pregnancy,

4. Improve the quality of the broader caregiving environment, and

5. Establish clear goals and appropriately targeted curricula.

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FSG – Improving the Odds: Seven Principles for Investing in Early Care and Education

https://www.fsg.org/tools-and-resources/improving-odds

1. Connecting Siloed Dots – catalyze connections and trust among varied actors

There are many players in the ECE space - make sure initiatives cast a wide net to engage all relevant stakeholders. Utilize a tool like an Actor Map to ensure all stakeholders are engaged.

2. Double Down on Family Engagement

Engage families regularly and at multiple points along the path of the work

Discover: understand lived experience, engaging families in pre-existing venues
Design: Ask families to help test potential solutions
Deliver: Ask families to support each other
Discern: Ask caregivers about their experiences after changes are implemented

Find ways to make it easy for parents to participate - scheduling, transportation, childcare, meals

3. Embrace the Tensions – face, rather than circumvent, these tensions.

Common tensions include:

Settings: Formal or informal, Small or large, Non-profit, for-profit, district run, Government subsidized or not
Standards: Accreditation, Scale quality or quantity of seats, Curricula and assessments, Degrees for educators
Social Norms: Literacy and 3rd grade reading vs whole-child development, Academics or play, At home care or formal childcare centers

Use data regularly, embrace the tensions directly and early, building trust is key

4. Factor in Market Forces – think beyond traditional grantmaking

To serve the childcare industry, that is often made up of for-profit businesses, funders need creative solutions:

- Funding small business consultant - to help providers with operations and participation in quality rating systems
- Under-write interest free working capital facility - to support providers who have gaps in cash received by state and federal programs
- Creating a shared service hub - providers share costs of payroll, accounting, supplies, PD, etc.
- Helping families understand what quality looks like - marketing campaigns

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5. Play the (not so) Long Game – aim for long-term changed coupled with short-term success

Balance long-term strategies with short-term wins to maintain stakeholder's enthusiasm

Signs of progress in the first years:
- Creating a fiscal map or federal, state and local funding and identifying opportunities for alignment and complementary roles for philanthropy
- Establish a data-rich baseline for the state of ECE - health, housing, education, including cuts along socioeconomic, linguistic, and racial lines
- Enable partners to cross-infuse content

Other ideas:
Look for a collection of strategies rather than one single initiative
Aim for and celebrate at least one public win in the first year

6. Expand Your Outcomes – track indicators of incremental systems change

1. Building capacity to act together - assessing levels of collaboration, buy-in, and trust among stakeholders
2. Create changes in the system and behaviors - professional practices, funding flows, norms, or policy
3. Track changes for children at the population level

7. Adapt to Twists and Turns – be agile and engage in reflections and course correction regularly

Invest in learning and feedback systems

Engage in collaborative "sense-making" to make meaning of data or other new information

Ask these questions on a regular basis:
1. To what extent to policies affect our strategies?
2. To what extent have there been demographic shifts in the communities we are serving?
3. To what extent do local economic factors change the needs and opportunities?
4. To what extent do we see momentum around ECE issues that we should connect with?

Look at data often, and look at it in a participatory way

Strategy should be rigorous but also allow for flexibility and innovation

Develop a set of learning questions

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Toolkit for Investing in Early Education – The Center for High Impact Philanthropy

https://www.impact.upenn.edu/our-analysis/opportunities-to-achieve-impact/early-childhood-toolkit/strategies-for-donors/

Weave a Web of Support for Kids and Their Families:

Prolonged exposure to toxic stress can negatively affect a child's social, emotional, and cognitive development.

1. Foster positive relationships between children and adults
   - Develop skills of parents and caregivers
   - 2 generational strategies
   - The Incredible Years & Invest in Kids: help children, parents, and teachers manage behavior and social-emotional development.

2. Connect families to resources and services (health, nutrition, housing, and employment)
   - Nurse-Family Partnerships are an example of high-impact opportunities

3. Better coordinate existing services and information for families and young children
   - There are a number of examples including the Harlem Children's Zone and Atlanta Civic Site

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Provide Great Places to Learn:

High quality early learning environments can have long term positive impact, but access and affordability are limited.

1. Create high-quality learning centers and schools
   - Educare: Full-day, full-year learning for low-income children. Builds schools to serve more students and create physical environments appropriate to different age groups

2. Improve the quality of existing early learning centers and schools
   - Appletree: Every Child Ready model
   - Designed to close the achievement gap between "at-risk" three- and four-year-old children and their more advantaged peers.

3. Smooth the transition between preschool and elementary
   - Child-Parent Centers provide comprehensive support to children and families 0-3rd grade.
   - Dunbar learning complex in Atlanta includes Educare and a public elementary

4. Support after-school programs

5. Advocate for high standards and funding as well and better policies

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Prepare Kids to be Strong Readers:

Ensure children master the literacy skills they need to succeed in school and in life must start early.

1. Improve age-appropriate literacy-related instructions and exposure to books in preschool and elementary school
   - Promising approaches to closing this gap include intervening early to develop vocabulary and pre-literacy skills for preschool age children and improving literacy instruction in the early elementary years.
   - Jumpstart – improving low-income preschool children's pre-literacy and school readiness skills through supplementing curriculum and small group work with volunteers.

2. Increase children's exposure to language and books at home
   - Making sure that low-income children are exposed to a richer language environment at home is a promising way to prepare children to eventually become strong readers.
   - Reach Out and Read partners with local hospitals and pediatric clinics. Doctors and nurses are trained to "prescribe" regular reading to parents with young children during well-visits, and the program provides age-appropriate books for them to take home

3. Support programs and institutions that reinforce learning (including reading) during the summer
   - Springboard Collaborative – literacy training for children and their families to close the achievement gap.

4. Advocate in support of literacy-related funding and programs
   - Campaign for Grade Level Reading provides background information on literacy-related issues and brings funders, advocates and policy makers together to help assure a seamless system of care, services, and supports from birth through third grade.

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Learn more about how you can get involved at: www.GetKReady.com

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