Driving Impact: A National Convening on Early Learning

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE EARLY LEARNING WORKFORCE

EarlyEdU is committed to improving higher education for early childhood teachers

Opportunity

In 2013, only 19% of center-based caregivers working with infants and toddlers, and 45% of preschool teachers, had a bachelor’s degree nationally. Those with degrees have attended programs with a wide range of content, field experiences, faculty expertise, and institutional contexts. The early learning workforce faces barriers in access and affordability to attaining quality training. EarlyEdU has partners in over 20 states and sees the opportunity to provide its quality courses to two- and four-year higher-education institutions that can offer formal degrees upon completion.

Approach

EarlyEdU courses are for teachers in any point in their career to provide a pathway to building credentials and advancing in their careers. The courses combine theory and the latest research with students’ field-based learning. Integrated into the courses is a video-sharing and coaching-feedback app called Coaching Companion. Coaching Companion has students upload videos of themselves teaching so they can reflect on their practice, receive feedback from peers and professors, and improve their classroom teaching. The tool gives teachers a chance to evaluate their teaching in the moment and over time, helping them become reliable observers.

Impact

Currently, EarlyEdU has 106 Alliance members including faculty, institutes of higher education, and state teams and stakeholders. 41 faculty across 19 states are deploying EarlyEdU coursework and tools. 27 state teams are identified partners of EarlyEdU. The teaching framework of know, see, do, reflect, and improve has been shown to be effective in improving teacher practices. In a University of Washington, Early Childhood Family Studies (ECFS) online BA degree program, a cohort of 110 students demonstrated improved CLASS scores in an Engaging Interactions course.

Lessons learned

• Essential to have field placement to practice and test new skills from EarlyEdU coursework
• Institutions frequently have significant barriers to adding a new course in full, but can customize course components, and use the Coaching Companion, to complement current materials
• Need a passionate local champion to drive the effort—can be philanthropist, local nonprofit, or community leader
• Planning studies to look into impact of curriculum to provide better evidence base on which to expand reach

Additional information

• Website: EarlyEdU
• Teach, Watch, Learn: Early Education Program Pairs College Courses with Video Coaching
• For more details, contact Randi Shapiro (randis@uw.edu) and Gail Joseph (gjoseph@uw.edu) with EarlyEdU

Last updated October 2017
Driving Impact: A National Convening on Early Learning

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE EARLY LEARNING WORKFORCE

Philadelphia has created a two-year ECE apprenticeship program

Opportunity

Given limited funding in early learning, employers have been trying to figure out how to create realistic options for their entry-level teachers who want to work, study, and advance in their careers. With four decades of experience as a workforce intermediary, District 1199C Upgrading & Training Fund saw opportunity to use their background in building talent pipelines to increase early learning workforce in Philadelphia.

Approach

The apprenticeship program is a collaborative effort between employers and education provider to bring workforce resources to the table, providing an affordable and equitable path for incumbent workers to build their skills. District 1199C Upgrading & Training Fund partnered with Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) to develop a two year curriculum to reward early learning caregivers as students and teachers. First, employers are recruited who commit to providing: an on-site mentor, flexibility in scheduling coursework (with T.E.A.C.H.’s help), and pay raises as student-teachers complete the program. Once onboarded with one year of experience, instructors from that employer apply to apprenticeship program. Student-teachers are assessed in language arts and math proficiency then provided with bridge courses to bring them up to speed before enrolling in CCP with T.E.A.C.H. scholarships. Each apprentice is required to complete 2,000 hours of on-the-job learning each year while supported by a mentor who ensures they are on track with their program. As student-teachers progress in degree program, 18 credits are awarded by CCP: 9 for on-the-job learning and 9 for CDA. Throughout program and upon completion of degree, they are awarded pay increases to improve retention.

Impact

Currently 22 employers have 32 apprentices participating in the program. Most of the first cohort is due to graduate December 2019 and already one participant has been promoted to Assistant Head Teacher in the Head Start Program.

Lessons learned

- Multi-employer partnership with single set of apprenticeship standards supports cohort model at community college
- Employers need to be committed and brought on board first - need to have mentors lined up and commit to wage increases, then recruit workers for the program
- Costly program to initiate, cannot support start up with workforce dollars alone
- Important to set expectations for intensity of accelerated degree program and placement test requirements for degree program which may trigger required remedial courses for apprentices
- Training and support for mentors important to aligning on the job training with coursework

Additional information

- District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund, Math, Money & Minutes; The Crisis Facing America’s Preschool Teachers
- Rethinking Credential Requirements in Early Education: Equity-based Strategies for Professionalizing a Vulnerable Workforce
- For more details, contact Cheryl Feldman with District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund at cfeldman@1199ctraining.org

Last updated October 2017
Opportunity

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) was created in 1990 as evidence was mounting that teachers were leaving the field in droves, looking for better paying jobs. It was becoming increasingly difficult to attract teachers with college degrees. To try to understand the various issues facing child care providers, Child Care Services Association, Child Care Resources Inc. and the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center partnered to conduct North Carolina’s first study of the early childhood workforce. The findings were not surprising. On average, child care teachers made little more than minimum wage with few workplace benefits. Many were women with their own children and few had degrees beyond high school. Turnover rates were almost 40% annually.

Approach

The T.E.A.C.H. National Center (T.E.A.C.H.) ensures the development, integrity and expansion integrated education and compensation initiatives. Initially there was only one state with one scholarship model for associate teachers. Now T.E.A.C.H. is operating in 22 states and DC and offers an array of scholarship models - CDA assessment, state credentials, associate, bachelors, teacher licensure, masters and more. T.E.A.C.H. programs provide comprehensive scholarships to increase the education, compensation and retention of the early education workforce and build partnerships for professional development. They use and strengthen the existing higher education system and advocate for increased workforce investments, including increased for the early childhood workforce.

Impact

Since its founding, T.E.A.C.H. has awarded $467.2M in scholarships to 146,222 recipients nationally. Last year, operating in 23 states and DC, T.E.A.C.H. scholarships supported early childhood teachers, family child care educators and directors at 533 institutions of higher education, improving the education of over 600,000 children. In North Carolina, early childhood teachers now are almost 3x more likely to have a college degree than they were in 2001.

Lessons learned

- The early childhood workforce wants to and can earn credentials and degrees but needs a comprehensive package of supports to sustain coursework progression and degree completion.
- The early childhood workforce wants real choice in when, where and how they take coursework.
- Barriers within higher education such as accessibility and poor articulation of courses and degrees make the journey for the part-time, under-resourced student much more difficult.
- T.E.A.C.H. can leverage changes within higher education through its unified buying power.

Additional information

- Website: T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood National Center
- For more details, contact Sue Russell with T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood National Center at suer@teachecnationalcenter.org

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE EARLY LEARNING WORKFORCE
T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® offers a suite of scholarships to teachers in early education

146,000+ scholarships offered to date
Opportunity
The Teacher Excellence Program’s vision is to professionalize the work of early childhood education by strengthening the knowledge and classroom practices and enhancing the skillset of teachers throughout the Greater Shelby County area, and eventually the Mid-South, via intentionally designed and data-informed professional development. Its mission intends to increase teachers’ experiences and strengthen their skillset and classroom practices reducing the “achievement gap” for children in low socio-economic environments, helping place them on a trajectory for success in school and in life.

Approach
Porter-Leath’s (PL) Teacher Excellence Program opened in February 2017 and used the Academy’s training center, observation bays, A/V technology, and highly skilled staff to provide high-quality professional development and motivation for Porter-Leath’s Preschool teachers, as well as for teachers throughout Shelby County Schools, the Achievement School District, and charter schools, as well as family day home and day care operators. The program uses these components to equip early childhood educators across the area through:

• High-Quality Teaching Practices: Intentional and thoughtful design of interactive, ongoing professional development
• Data-Informed Practices: Monitoring of teaching practices and review of assessment data to track and directly inform child outcomes as well as ongoing and future program quality
• Reflective Practice: In partnership with their Instructional Coach, teachers will improve how they teach and interact with young children, allowing teachers to increase their confidence and become more proactive and effective
• Continuous Quality Improvement: Instructional Coaches and teaching staff embrace the mantra of “a lifelong love of learning” focusing on our “process” rather than any specific individual

Impact
• Hired and trained eight Instructional Coaches
• 500 individuals in at least one professional development session, dozens of PL teachers receiving intensive coaching
• Will be analyzing ongoing CLASS assessment data to draw specific impact conclusions about program efficacy
• Children from PL’s preschools had a 11% higher Measure of Academic Progress Assessment scores than the 2016 cohort (increase cannot be specifically credited to the Teacher Excellence Program, but is a key part of improvement strategies)

Lessons learned
• Important for program to feel like an honor to participate in, not a punishment for poor performers
• Including range of talent from across district ensures no stigma attached to participation, grows educators’ network across different systems; they can invest more time in building external relationships (esp. in local child-care industry)
• Engage external evaluator earlier in the process and formalize processes earlier in the start-up phase

Additional information
• Porter-Leath Teacher Excellence Program
• For more details, contact Sean Lee with Porter Leath at slee@porterleath.org

Last updated October 2017
Driving Impact: A National Convening on Early Learning

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE EARLY LEARNING WORKFORCE

First Step increases pipeline of talent by supporting interested high school students

50 high school students enrolled thus far

Opportunity
In recent years, the District of Columbia (DC) has sought to improve access to quality educational opportunities for its youngest learners. DC’s early learning landscape has evolved in improving access and quality. This includes creating new investments in quality initiatives like the universal pre-Kindergarten program, development of the DC Common Core Early Learning Standards, the launch of the Quality Improvement Network, and Capital Quality, DC’s enhanced Quality Rating and Improvement System. In an ongoing effort to continue to improve access to quality care and education, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) increased the minimum education requirements for the early childhood workforce.

Approach
To support implementation of these new requirements, OSSE expanded funding and resources for scholarships to ensure that current and prospective early childhood educators have the tools needed to meet these new educational requirements. The First Step CDA credential program was launched in 2016. First Step provides high school students enrolled in Career and Technical Education (CTE) with competency-based education in early childhood growth and development; paid practicum experience working with young children enrolled in licensed high-quality child development centers; individualized college and career counseling; regular onsite observation and preparation for the CDA verification visit and exam; fully paid application and examination fees; and access to financial aid for college through specialized scholarships, such as the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project. To ensure students are well prepared to work in early childhood education programs, the First Step program provides students with a highly qualified instructor, school-based support, more than the required 120 classroom hours, funding for all transportation costs to and from practicum sites, and hourly compensation for the summer as they work to complete the 480 practicum hours needed to obtain the CDA credential.

Impact
In 2016, First Step launched a pilot program at one public charter school with 10 students. Seven of those 10 students are now pursuing a Bachelor’s degree. This year, the First Step program has 50 enrolled students. OSSE will expand its First Step program to enroll 150 students in the next three years.

Lessons learned
- **Students need real results:** First Step candidates participate in two paid summer internships while in the program and graduates of the program earn up to six college credits upon program completion
- **Students need convenience:** Instructors meet students onsite and snacks are provided during class time to minimize travel and increase engagement
- **Students need to share:** Opportunities to share in learning and provide moral support to increase student retention
- **Support is key:** Mentor coaches help students realize that college is achievable even with competing priorities

Additional information
- DC among first in nation to require child-care workers to get college degrees
- Resources from Office of the State Superintendent of Education
- For more details, contact Michael Rowe with OSSE at michael.rowe@dc.gov

Last updated October 2017
**Driving Impact: A National Convening on Early Learning**

**Opportunity**

Long Branch educators and superintendents wanted video examples of best-practice teaching competencies in the classroom. Capturing a teaching moment for others to review is not only powerful but necessary to advance the teaching profession. Upon searching for footage, everything that was offered for purchase was outdated and did not mirror the demographics and realities in Long Branch.

**Approach**

Virtual Rounds (VR) are a mechanism to connect learners and leaders in Long Branch. This virtual professional learning process promotes problem solving, collaboration, communication, innovation and creativity. The focused dialogue and ability to record allow the lessons learned to live for others. Long Branch Public School’s Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Michael Salvatore, hosts VRs at least monthly, comprised of educators and leaders, who identify a problem practice that needs to be improved. This problem practice is supported by existing data; for instance, creating and facilitating differentiated learning centers in an elementary language arts class may be an area of weakness revealed through multiple measures (student performance reports, formal observations, exit slips, etc). A model classroom teacher is identified and invited to serve as the observed educator. Observed educators and/or leaders volunteer to be observed and participate. These volunteers understand that the process is designed for collective growth through conversations, not to cast judgement or condemn. Virtual Rounds are recorded to allow peers to benefit from the focused dialogue.

**Impact**

Virtual Rounds prompt much needed, professional dialogue with school personnel and experts from beyond the school walls, which enhances methodology aimed at improving identified problems. Current qualitative research supports professional development through PLCs; however, the effect of a real-time, virtual PLC has yet to be fully revealed. In Long Branch, improved practices have been noted in classroom visits after each virtual round.

**Lessons learned**

Virtual Rounds can be the most valuable process a teacher or leader utilizes to enhance their pedagogical content knowledge while simultaneously creating a broad network for professional growth. Long Branch’s teachers as well as leaders have enhanced their craft through digital collaborative dialogue. The merit of this process resides in the dialogue among observing panelists before, during and following each observation, which can be recorded and blogged for further skill enhancement.

**Additional information**

- For more details, contact Michael Salvatore with Long Branch School District at msalvatore@longbranch.k12.nj.us

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*Last updated October 2017*
Building An Effective Early Learning Workforce

Opportunity

Although certificate requirements provide a foundation for establishing quality in early childhood education, the Child Development Associate (CDA) qualification is just the first step, as most of those who take the qualifying exam pass. In December 2014, the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) created two key policies to unify expectations and support early childhood teachers: established the Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate as an expectation for child-care lead teachers by 2019 and created a specialized Birth to Kindergarten BA field of study and teaching certificate.

Approach

The Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate has multiple beneficial effects. First, it acknowledges the hard work of current practitioners, allowing them to acquire the Certificate based on their extensive experience and training to date. Second, the new Certificate will instate increasing quality standards to continue improving the preparation of these new instructors. Starting in July 2018, the requirement will be elevated to require CDA training and early childhood degrees be awarded by Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs which have proven high-quality coursework approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) using a cohort model, and measuring success while providing scholarships through LA Pathways. Third, all instructors are added to a central database that provides a full view of the early childhood education workforce in Louisiana. Finally, teachers who have met these standards will qualify for up to $3,600 in tax credits based on their level of experience and education obtained starting in 2018.

Impact

Beginning in 2019, all child-care lead teachers will be required to hold Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate in Louisiana. So far 3,000 child-care teachers have received the Certificate. Eleven state programs have been approved as Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs thus far with the capacity to provide high-quality preparation for over 400 child-care teachers each year.

Lessons learned

- Change is slow and steady; working to increase the quality of CDA training takes time
- Collaboration is required; involved advisory council and Board of Regents throughout process with routine updates
- Initial communication of requirement to educators was difficult. Once it was clear that the credential was free and came with tax credits and legitimization of degree, word spread quickly
- Some funding and lots of technical assistance will be required to approve Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs, but more programs will be required to reach every area of the state, requiring a request for a statewide online vendor with a community-based network

Additional information

- Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate FAQs
- For more details, contact Early Childhood Workforce and Engagement Senior Manager, Erin Carroll, with the Louisiana Department of Education at Erin.Carroll@LA.GOV
Driving Impact: A National Convening on Early Learning

ENGAGING FAMILIES

Flamboyan Foundation building positive partnerships between teachers & parents

Opportunity

In 2008, Flamboyan conducted an extensive landscape assessment in DC to learn about the misconceptions between teachers and parents. Families often felt insecure, confused, ignored, and perceived as ignorant and uncaring. Educators often lacked training on how to engage families and therefore used minimally effective strategies, ultimately leading to a belief that many families did not value education or have the time to support learning. Both teachers and parents wanted what was best for students, and wanted to better engage, but did not know how.

Approach

Flamboyan focused on educator support to build the right mindsets and deploy the supports and resources to make teachers successful. The three key pillars of this approach are: building authentic relationships between families and educators, academic partnering between families and educators, and ongoing positive, two-way communication.

Impact

- Students who receive home visits had 24% fewer absences and were more likely to read at or above grade level
- Teachers who frequently and consistently had face-to-face meetings with families, authentic relationship-building communication, and shared materials to support learning saw 50% higher reading and 40% higher math growth
- DC Public Schools named family engagement one of 5 major priorities in their 5-year strategic plan, which speaks to the impact and effect of the work of teachers, leaders, families, and Flamboyan

Lessons learned

- When first approaching schools, teachers can see this as additional work that will not be effective; must show how this will make their lives easier when they have a partner in parents to help drive student achievement
- Best way to train is for parents and teachers who have implemented these strategies to speak about how it has helped
- Create a proof point by starting with a small group of schools—a coalition of the willing who can then convince others

Additional information

- Website: Flamboyan Foundation
- For more details, contact Justin Jones with Flamboyan Foundation at jjones@flamboyanfoundation.org
Driving Impact: A National Convening on Early Learning

ENGLISH FAMILIES

Dallas Independent School District is building intentional, respectful partnerships with families

Opportunity

Dallas needed a better way to reach, involve, and engage the families of its students. There is significant social inequality across the district with a number of organizations focusing on Hispanic families, but fewer for Black families. Parents wanted more clarity on what their role should be in their children’s education. The district used part of a $6.5M quality Pre-K grant to develop and begin piloting a family engagement strategy.

Approach

To build a culture that values, embraces, welcomes, and encourages families, Dallas ISD has been focused on strengthening four key relationships: child-family, family-family, school-family, and community-family. For child-family, given that family is a child’s first and most important teacher, Dallas has Aberg Center ESL courses, Maya Angelou school, and Ready 4K! text messaging.

• Aberg community center partnered with PK teachers to host parents in the classroom at the beginning of the day a few times a week so parents learn the English vocabulary of the week both for their development and to support the child’s learning
• Maya Angelou serves pregnant girls in grades 6-12 so they continue the curriculum and receive additional services and lessons around pregnancy and childcare. After the baby is born, they receive an AVANCE social worker home visit to support the family
• Ready 4K! is a text messaging service designed at Stanford University, which sends literacy messages 3x per week. These texts focus on particular early literacy skills, which provide parents with encouragement and reinforcement as well as follow-up tips

Additionally, to open communication lines between family-school, home visitation programs have begun. Stand for Children led teacher visits 2x per year to build parent-teacher relationships. These visits serve the whole family and change the home visits from negative to positive. The first visit is only to discuss the parents’ hopes and dreams for the student. Teachers receive $25 per visit and commit to visiting 8 students twice that year. Frequently teachers elect to do many more than eight once they see the benefit.

Impact

• Ready 4K! increased parent involvement; currently 9,000 families are enrolled (PK-2nd)
• After the pilot, twice as many teachers (400) enrolled in the next round of parent-teacher home visits, seeing that parents were more willing to engage, students’ behavior issues decreased, and attendance improved
• Dallas ISD is expanding program to PK-2nd, given past success and teacher interest
• Children receiving teacher visits are more likely to test at grade level on TRC (reading comp) test

Lessons learned

• Cultural shift needed in communities and schools to see parents as partners
• Word of mouth generates more interest in home visits, which will not work as well if made mandatory for teachers
• More research and studies are required to create evidence base to generate necessary funding

Additional information

• For more details, contact Yesenia Cardoza with Dallas ISD at ycardoza@dallasisd.org

Last updated October 2017
Opportunity

Academic achievement among the 8,550 Alaska Native students in the Anchorage School District (ASD) does not match students’ potential. In 2012, Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) and the ASD commissioned a study, Review of Alaska Native Education Services in the Anchorage School District. The study found no unified, strategic approach to ensuring that programs geared toward Alaska Native and American Indian students would be successful. With partners, CITC convened a gathering that launched ARISE Partnership. Resources were not readily accessible, useful, and culturally relevant to Native families. School climate is not always supportive of Native student success, as the educational system is often not transparent to, or inclusive of, Native families. Native kindergartners could score higher on Alaska Developmental Profile (ADP), but families were not well informed about the assessment.

Approach

ARISE partners identified two focuses: kindergarten preparedness (K-Prep) and school climate. Through grassroots work, a network of parents and caregivers was convened. A core group attended regular meetings over the summer, setting a research agenda and clarifying issues and approaches to solving them. For K-Prep, the group ultimately invited community partners to join in developing a yearlong plan to address the needs they had identified. This plan leveraged community resources to address issues around ADP and to get the word out. One-on-one personal connections were key to ARISE’s approach.

Impact

- **ADP training**: Parents were being told children were behind before school had even begun. ADP assessment was inconsistent. Anchorage improved training for 400 teachers, and ARISE partner First Alaskans Institute conducted unconscious bias training.
- **Resource aggregation**: Parents wanted a trusted source where they could find needed kindergarten preparedness resources. An action team created a local K-Prep website and social media campaign; community partners posted, on a rotating basis, accessible, useful, and culturally relevant information 2x per week. Social media campaign #ARISEKPrep reached 112K views.
- **Relevant research**: Through this process, an action team identified gaps in research on the Native community and ensured that data analysis was useful to families. Alaska Native children were missing out on educational offerings and connection opportunities with others, and were 3x more likely to visit the emergency room for ear infections. An action group engaged the CDC to study the phenomenon and now rates are starting to drop.

Lessons learned

- **Strengths-based approach** establishes trust and harnesses the power of a community; do not focus solely on deficiencies.
- **Capture and leverage** the specific interests of each parent/grandparent; engage them when appropriate to bring the power of the group to the issue without requiring full effort from every individual.
- **Some changes** are subtle, but the impact of convening the community to think through solutions has positive ripple effects; parents were more engaged and less concerned about ADP results when trained and involved; new partnerships were formed.
- **Although time consuming**, it is important to really listen, to come in ready to learn from parents and the community.
- **Data** does not capture the whole story; use it to inform path, but supplement it with interviews to validate conclusions.

Additional information

- Website: ARISE Partnership
- For more details, contact Jonathan Larson (jnlarson@citci.org), Priscilla Hensley (priscilla@naungat.com) with ARISE Partnership

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ENGAGING FAMILIES

College View ES (Denver) houses Center for Family Opportunity increasing capacity to serve families

1,500 people served (73% using 3+ services)

Opportunity

The Denver Public Schools office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) was founded to meet the needs of the community. FACE conducted more than 7,000 surveys with families and community members in order to identify their needs and interests, then partnered with local non-profits and businesses in order to deliver services that addressed those needs. The surveys reflected the need to establish trust and bundle services so that multiple generations within families could access what they needed under one roof.

Approach

In 2014, Denver Public Schools, in partnership with Mile High United Way, opened the Center for Family Opportunity (CFO) at College View Elementary (a school serving students K-5). CFO offers a variety of free classes to community members, including English-language classes and GED classes, as well as help with tax preparation, financial coaching, and utility assistance. They also invest in the talent in these families by increasing the number of family members employed in the Denver Public Schools. CFO provides support for all members of the family, including young adults ages 16 to 24, to remove barriers to re-enroll in school or pursue post-secondary education.

Impact

- When families do better, students do better:
  - More than 1,500 individuals have received CFO services since 2014, 660 last year alone
  - In October 2017, a second center was opened at McGlone Academy
- 73% of individuals use three or more services at the CFO
- More than 40 individuals have been hired by the Denver Public Schools through the CFO pipeline

Lessons learned

- Important to maintain close connection with school leadership - College View Elementary has put CFO front and center, which has been critical for success, increasing traffic of families by and through the center
- The multi-generational approach is key to the success of the center; when students see their parents continue their education, it builds pride and accountability within families
- Space has been the biggest issue since the school is already pressed for room, need to get creative on timing and usage
- Started by advertising, now it spreads by word of mouth as family members see the value in the services and share it with their friends in the community; only need targeted advertising for communities not currently using services

Additional information

- Center for Family Opportunity
- For more details, contact Emily Marques with Denver Public Schools at emily_marques@dpsk12.org
Driving Impact: A National Convening on Early Learning

ENGAGING FAMILIES

Shelby County ESC created online marketplace of home visitation programs to unify efforts and improve referrals

50% improvement in speed of referral

Opportunity

The Shelby County Early Success Coalition (ESC) launched in January 2009 with a five-year Evidence-Based Home Visitation grant from the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. Although there were many home visitation programs across Memphis and beyond, some families were receiving duplicative services while other families in need were not receiving any services. Families were confused by the offerings and were not matched with the best fit of visitation program. As part of this effort, over 65 public and private agencies addressing early childhood development formed a shared mission to build a comprehensive system of services for children, pre-conception through age eight.

Approach

Once funding was secured, ESC brought together local resources to ensure that the coalition was a community-wide effort. Using the strengthening families framework to align efforts with a common vision, the coalition then helped define their respective roles in serving the community. Together, Shelby’s community agencies developed a database and universal referral form for home visitation. A program selection tool helps families select the program that best meets their needs and eliminates duplication across agencies. Specialists were hired to recruit families into the programs and monthly meetings are held with front line supervisors from all 23 agencies to jointly problem solve and share knowledge. The Early Success Coalition formed a 57-agency steering committee to meet quarterly and inform their strategic direction.

Impact

ESC has improved the speed of referral from 44 days to 29 days - connecting families to the best fit home visitation program faster through online marketplace. "No Wrong Door" approach to referrals encourages connecting all families with resources. Home visitation programs are better utilized across the city (~80% utilization).

Lessons learned

- Family recruitment is challenging - specialists help train local agencies to identify and refer families for home visitation
- Engage in community activities to speak with families about what they need rather than seeking out “families in need”
- Independently sourced families are not always entered into the system; this requires consistent coordination within the network to ensure all families served are tracked and included in the database

Additional information

- Early Success Coalition site
- For more details, contact Sandra Allen with Early Success Coalition at Sandra.Allen@lebonheur.org

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Driving Impact: A National Convening on Early Learning

EXPANDING QUALITY 0-3 SERVICES

All Our Kin trains, supports, and sustains home-based family child care providers

50% quality differential between AOK and non-AOK providers

Opportunity

The foundations of children’s lifelong success are built in early childhood, but parents of infants and toddlers struggle to find affordable, quality care. Poor families face an impossible choice, pitting success in the workforce against their children’s well-being. Thousands of caregivers, primarily women, support families by opening up their homes and caring for young children. Nationwide, 45% (4.9 million) of all children under five, whose mothers are working, consistently spend time in a home-based child care setting (either family child care or unregulated family, friend, and neighbor care). These home-based child care providers are often systematically devalued and isolated from professional development opportunities, despite their critically important work.

Approach

All Our Kin (AOK) provides caregivers with the resources, training, and support they need to succeed as early childhood educators and business owners. It is a triple win: child care providers move out of poverty, parents succeed in the workforce, and children develop skills and competencies for success in school and in life. AOK has a nationally recognized, data-driven model for increasing the quality, availability, and sustainability of family child care. AOK’s offerings include educational mentorship and professional development, advocacy and leadership opportunities, and licensing support. AOK’s holistic, strength-based approach gives providers support and coaching that is grounded in best practice in adult and early learning. Critical business support is offered through an entrepreneurship series and one-on-one business coaching. Additionally, AOK cultivates strong community partnerships and engages key stakeholders to ensure that family child care is integrated in programs, policies, and practices related to early childhood in meaningful ways.

Impact

- Increases the quality of family child care: Findings from a rigorous external evaluation examining AOK’s impact on program quality indicate that AOK providers score over 50% higher on research-based measures of quality than non-AOK providers
- Increases supply of child care: Though Connecticut lost nearly 35% of its family child care programs from 2000-2011, the number of licensed family child care programs in New Haven increased by 74% during the same period
- Generates significant economic returns for communities: According to the University of Connecticut, for every $1 spent by AOK in the Tool Kit Licensing Program, $15-$20 is returned to society in terms of macroeconomic benefits
- Increases provider earnings: Nearly 60% of providers report earning at least $5,000 more the first year after licensure; more than 45% report earning at least $10,000 more the second year

Lessons learned

- Strength-based approach that honors providers as partners in this work
- Hold ourselves to standards of excellence, ensuring that programs and services are based on best practice
- Holistic approach—responsive to the needs of providers and use provider feedback to inform the work
- Family child care providers need both programmatic and business support to be successful; lessening caregiver stress related to business operation liberates more energy to invest in quality
- Use data and stories to engage key stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels with the goal of maximizing investment, inclusion, and impact by transforming the narrative around family child care

Additional information

- All Our Kin website: www.allourkin.org; Examining Quality in Family Child Care: An Evaluation of All Our Kin
- The Economic Impact of the All Our Kin Family Child Care Tool Kit Licensing Program
- For more details, contact Jessica Sager with All Our Kin at Jessica@allourkin.org

Last updated October 2017
Opportunity

Providence Talks was developed based on research completed in 1995 by University of Kansas child psychologists Betty Hart and Todd Risley. They discovered that children from different economic backgrounds are exposed to different levels of adult talk over the course of their formative years. They projected that when children from low-income backgrounds reached their fourth birthday, they will have heard approximately thirty million fewer words than their higher income peers. The City of Providence won Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Mayors Challenge in 2013 and aimed to tackle the “30 million word gap” at a city-wide scale to ensure that every child in Providence enters a kindergarten classroom ready to achieve.

Approach

Providence Talks uses new technology to improve language environments for children. Participating families receive free access to a “word pedometer” and biweekly coaching from trained coaches. The word pedometer, frequently inserted into a vest for the child, was developed by the Colorado-based LENA Research Foundation. The device builds a comprehensive picture of a child’s daily auditory environment, including adult word count and conversational turns (a key metric for gauging positive interactions). Providence Talks has expanded to three service delivery methods to support families and caregivers: home visitation, family playgroups, and caregiver professional development, incorporating more local community leaders in the effort.

Impact

To date, Providence Talks has served over 2,300 families across three service delivery models. Providence Talks engages families who are otherwise unsupported; more than two-thirds of families report not receiving any other services upon enrollment. For families graduating from the home visits program, who start below the 50th percentile in word count, they increase their average daily adult word count from an average of 8,008 per day to 11,481 per day, a 43% increase.

Lessons learned

- **Build partnerships.** Must have local community partners to help execute your vision (hospitals, nonprofits, social service providers, local & state education departments and libraries) and offer referrals without duplicating services.
- **Innovation requires flexibility and creativity.** When families face logistical barriers, that is a signal that a new model is needed to reach them; talk to those who do not use the service and learn more about what they need.
- **Pay for recruitment support.** Engaging families that would otherwise not independently seek out programming relies heavily on creative messaging and employment of “credible messengers” in the community.

Additional information

- Website: [Providence Talks](#); Providence Talks is funded by a generous $5M investment from Bloomberg Philanthropies
- The City of Providence has committed $500K in funding to sustain Providence Talks beyond 2017
- For more details, contact Caitlin Molina ([Cmolina@providenceri.gov](mailto:Cmolina@providenceri.gov)) or Missy Menders ([Mmenders@providenceri.gov](mailto:Mmenders@providenceri.gov))

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**43% increase in average daily adult word count among program graduates**
Driving Impact: A National Convening on Early Learning

EXPANDING QUALITY 0-3 SERVICES

Family Connects provides community-wide nurse home visits

Opportunity
In 2008 in Durham, North Carolina, a host of community partners came together to assess the best way to prevent child maltreatment and help children in Durham get a good start. Durham Connects was piloted in 2008 as a universal nurse home visiting program with the goal of creating a replicable model that could be used in other communities. Family Connects® has expanded to 10 states, focusing on communities actively interested in implementing the program.

Approach
Family Connects is a community-wide nurse home visiting program for parents of newborns, regardless of income or socioeconomic status. Visits last two hours to allow nurses to check the health of the mother and infant, then provide connections to resources as needed. Nurses use a searchable database of local agencies, created by local program staff, in making referrals, which may include intensive, targeted home visiting programs such as Healthy Families America or Early Head Start, mental health services, public assistance programs, or primary health care providers. Family Connects has been expanding to new cities by partnering with public health departments, health systems, and/or local nonprofits with similar reach and scope.

Impact
American Journal of Public Health and Pediatrics have published studies on the efficacy of Family Connects’ home visits. The universal nature of the program (no fewer than 60%-70% of families must be visited) has reduced the stigma attached to receiving this support. The program has reduced total infant emergency care by 34%, lowered maternal reports of clinical anxiety by 28%, improved parent-child relationships and home environments, and increased use of quality child care. Every dollar invested saves $3.02 in emergency health costs for the community.

Lessons learned
• Need to engage the community from the start; their buy-in is critical to success
• Even when communities have invested in coordination and collaboration between organizations, more will be required
• Start slowly—easier to plan together scale carefully over time
• Programs can start serving the community immediately, but typically take 12-18 months to scale up

Additional information
• Website: Family Connects
• American Journal of Public Health evaluation and results from randomized control trial
• For more details, contact Ashley Alvord with Family Connects at Ashley.Alvord@duke.edu

Last updated October 2017
Driving Impact: A National Convening on Early Learning

EXPANDING QUALITY 0-3 SERVICES

San Francisco is flipping the script on funding to focus on continuity of quality care

3x families-in-need receive subsidies for quality care

Opportunity

Federal and state funds support many critical birth-to-three services. However, as family circumstances change, services can be pulled at a moment’s notice. Families are provided support when in a homeless shelter or foster program, but if families transition out of those programs, so do the child-care programs for these young children. Or when parents receive a modest raise at work can affect the funding programs parents qualify for and leave them scrambling to find new child-care. Continuity of care and the relationships with child-care givers fundamentally impacts young children’s development and as this is disrupted, our children and families are being left behind.

Approach

San Francisco serves 44,000 children under the age of five and is lucky to receive $60 million in local tax dollars in addition to federal and state funding to close the gap for low-income families. Upon seeing the impact of these funding mechanisms on families, the Office of Early Care and Education used local funding to flip the script and put families in the center, leading with family and child needs first. San Francisco has increased the threshold for support from 85% of state median income as the baseline for qualifying for support to 110% of median area income, with the baseline that families should not have to pay more than 10% of their family’s income for child-care.

Impact

Currently, only one in 11 infants in California eligible for payment assistance in quality care receive a subsidy. In San Francisco they have reduced this gap to one in four.

Lessons learned

- User-centered design is critical, with a system focus on families over programs, otherwise families get left behind
- Funding mechanisms are frequently not structured to execute equitably and simply, or evaluate whether a community is well served by the system
- It is never too early to invest in data infrastructure to support a unified and comprehensive approach to care
- This approach requires significant local resources, which may not be possible and therefore is not always replicable
- If you have a system expansion, allow enough planning time with critical partners

Additional information

- For more details, contact September Jarrett with San Francisco Office of Early Care and Education at september.jarrett@sfgov.org

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Driving Impact: A National Convening on Early Learning

EXPANDING QUALITY 0-3 SERVICES

Best Babies Zone uses a multi-sector, place-based approach to improving children’s outcomes

Opportunity

Too many babies in the U.S. are dying at birth or in their first year, at a rate that is higher than almost any other developed nation. Infant mortality, preterm birth, and low birth weight are disproportionately higher in communities of color. Traditional approaches have not been successful in addressing these racial and economic disparities.

Approach

The Best Babies Zone Initiative (BBZ) is working in Cincinnati, Ohio; New Orleans, Louisiana; Oakland, California; Portland, Oregon; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Kalamazoo, Michigan. BBZ brings stakeholders across four sectors—health care, early care and education, economic development, and community services—to share resources, create programming, and empower community members in order to improve health outcomes. BBZ is supported by three collaborative entities:

- The National Team at the University of California, Berkeley (UCB) School of Public Health, which provides guidance, technical assistance, and support to each of the individual zones
- The Policy Corps Team (Policy Corps) of key national partners, which provides leadership and technical assistance for the Initiative and connect BBZ’s work to national efforts
- The Multi-Sector Advisory Group (MSAG) includes an evolving group of organizations from diverse sectors to support BBZ

These groups support local communities in three phases:

- Activate zone residents and community partners
- Work with communities to understand their needs and develop a shared vision to improve health outcomes
- Foster cross-sector community actions

Impact

In the short term, the BBZ team hopes to see increased community networks and civic engagement, increased access to reproductive services and to parenting education, and an emphasis on building and cultivating “resident power.” In the next several years, BBZ aims to reduce the racial disparities in premature births, infant mortality, and low birthweight seen in low-income communities across the country. BBZ is positioned to achieve broader outcomes over 10 years, including reductions in household poverty, economic inequities, and high school drop-out rates.

Lessons learned

- Great ideas are not great if developed in a vacuum. For example, New Orleans invested an incredible amount in a comprehensive healthcare fair where 25 local organizations gathered in the community on a Saturday to spread awareness, but only three residents showed up because there was no interest from the community
- Staff turnover is a serious issue as it disrupts relationships with the community and trust must be rebuilt
- Fail early and often; this ensures you are adapting to meet the communities’ true needs
- There will always be resistance to change even when you see good results; maintain commitment to the area

Additional information

- For more details, contact Cheri Pies with Best Babies Zone at cpies@berkeley.edu

6 communities served
Opportunity

Baby University (Baby U) is a new partnership between the City of Chattanooga, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee, and Signal Centers to provide intensive case management services to expectant and new mothers and fathers. The services are free, voluntary, and designed to effectively prepare children for lifelong success—from healthy pregnancies through early childhood development. In the first two years, Baby U began the program in the East Lake Community, an area with a high concentration of poverty. The program faces several challenges: clients found it difficult to secure transportation, find suitable housing, and access support systems. Some families also encountered language barriers.

Approach

To meet their clients’ needs, Baby U built up a staff that includes a director, 7 case managers, an outreach coordinator, and administrative support. Each case manager takes on a maximum of 25 clients, maintains weekly contact with clients, and performs biweekly home visits. To reduce isolation and build a stronger support group for families, Baby U offers parent workshops, walking groups, support groups, and events (including visits to the children’s museum, baby showers, and community and holiday events). When alternative transportation is not available, Baby U staff transport clients to medical appointments. They also help clients find adequate and affordable housing. Two bilingual staff members help overcome language barriers. Baby U staff work intensively with middle and high school students who are pregnant or new moms.

Impact

In the first two years, Baby U has now served 158 families (270 adults and 321 children). 32 families have graduated. 80 pregnant women, all received prenatal care. All 65 babies born on target developmentally. 105 families received safe sleep equipment (pack and plays). 71 families received car seats. 66 families gained employment. 52 families are in more stable housing. 32 teen mothers were enrolled and remained in school. Teens who were seniors graduated and found employment. All teens received prenatal care and had healthy babies. The community building has been invaluable—these families have become friends and support systems for each other.

Lessons learned

- Garner support from the mayor, who can advocate for the program
- Hire highly motivated, flexible, highly qualified staff and leaders
- Stay client-driven and realize that clients highly value connections with other parents
- Provide full transparency with funders and other partners

2017 update

- Expanding to neighboring areas of East Lake where infant mortality rates are high and prenatal care rates are low
- University of Tennessee acting as external evaluator providing data-driven feedback valued by funders
- Funding has been a challenge with a yearly application cycle to sustain programing
- For more details, contact Donna McConnico with Signal Centers at donna_mcconnico@signalcenters.org

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CONTINUUM OF CARE

Denver develops roadmap for birth to age 8

Driving Impact: A National Convening on Early Learning

Opportunity

The city of Denver needed to coordinate efforts of the many organizations that provide services for families and children (from birth to age eight) to ensure that they were optimally effective. The goal was to align the work in Denver from Pre-K to third grade and provide an appropriate foundation for children’s success in school and beyond. The biggest dilemma was appropriately identifying the right partners to support the effort.

Approach

A steering committee was formed, with two Denver Public Schools Board of Education members and the Executive Director of the Mayor’s Office of Children’s Affairs serving as co-chairs, and they met weekly. Early Milestones Colorado provided consultation and support and participated in a small work group that met weekly. Several work groups also recommended milestones and partners for the eventual plan. An advisory committee met twice to provide support and advice. With support from foundations, the team developed a roadmap to guide and align the city, the schools, and the community. The project included a diverse range of stakeholders—including schools, foundations, early education funders, home visitation programs, family educators, health providers, and others—and focus groups were held with families and school administrators to better understand their unique needs and constraints.

Impact

The committee developed a set of recommendations, and several efforts are moving forward. The Denver Public Schools hired an Executive Director to assure that the recommendations are implemented on a realistic timeline.

Lessons learned

- Take the time and money to hire or provide quality facilitation and organization to achieve planning goals
- Be broad to include multiple stakeholders, while compact in getting the work accomplished
- Include focus groups with families and school administrators—these are important voices
- More partners can generate synergies and momentum, but require significant work to keep together

2017 update

- Governance continues to be the greatest challenge for Birth to Eight Roadmap
- Need continued commitment of resources (time, people, and funds) to implement the strategy
- Working group meeting monthly to discuss performance toward goals, along with several Steering Committee and Executive Committee meetings this year
- For more details, contact Cheryl Caldwell with Denver Public Schools at Cheryl_Caldwell@dpsk12.org

6% jump in literacy scores last year
Opportunity

To emphasize Seattle’s commitment to racial equity and socially just practices for all children, the Seattle Preschool Program (SPP) includes a “zero expulsion and zero suspension” policy, which prohibits SPP providers from suspending or expelling preschool students. There is no evidence that the practice of suspending or expelling children from preschool is a deterrent for challenging behavior. Yet, across the country, children are suspended and expelled from preschool at alarming rates. Overall, the national prekindergarten expulsion rate was three times higher than in K-12. Studies have shown that African-American and Latino children are expelled and suspended at much higher rates than their white and Asian peers. Boys receive more than three out of four out-of-school preschool suspensions.

Approach

Seattle’s Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL) dedicated approximately $1.5M for professional development annually and hired a team of eight coaches and a training coordinator to provide child-centered and culturally responsive coaching. DEEL coaches were assigned to each preschool site to support teachers in developing targeted social emotional strategies to prevent challenging behaviors in the classroom. For acute challenges, teachers, in partnership with coaches and center directors, were able to access additional support. This work was challenging, as coaching is time-intensive and requires regular and sacred child-free time for teachers and coaches to meet. The city also engaged the Seattle Public Schools Special Education Department to develop a collaborative plan for screening and assessing children’s needs and subsequently meeting the needs of children with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) in district or SPP classrooms.

Impact

There have been no suspensions or expulsions of any SPP children during the last two school years.

Lessons learned

- Successful implementation of a zero-suspension/expulsion policy requires that support systems be in place for teachers, providers, children, and families. Support can be extensive, and the city must be prepared to invest
- Interagency partnerships are essential

2017 update

- Clear support protocol in place for when there are issues with a child: instructional coaches, nurses, and public health resources available to tailor support plan, which is revised periodically and escalated to behavior specialist as needed
- Still adapting program to be more proactive, less reactive
- Received grant from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to do analysis of support protocol with teachers and better understand family and community needs for these children
- For more details, contact Monica Liang-Aguirre with City of Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning at Monica.Liang-Aguirre@seattle.gov

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Opportunity

Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) wanted to expand access to Pre-K, create opportunities to learn what works in early education, and use those learnings to increase quality throughout the district. Through a partnership with Vanderbilt University’s Peabody Research Institute, the district team identified low-enrollment and low-achieving schools that could be converted into standalone early learning centers. These standalone centers would serve 4-year-olds and function as hubs of innovation to learn what works in early education. The teams faced three challenges: managing turnover in leadership at the early learning centers; balancing the need to expand access and enhance quality, especially given the accelerated expansion that came from the federal Pre-K development grant; and scaling best practices from the early learning centers to school-based and community partner sites throughout the district.

Approach

The team worked with the School Board, then-Mayor Karl Dean, and Metro Council to allocate funding for renovations and operational costs of the centers and partnered with Vanderbilt’s PRI to develop a high-quality program design. They also partnered with Conexion Americas to renovate a portion of their space at Casa Azafran for one of the early learning centers. They recruited national leaders to serve at each of the centers. The Early Learning Center staff continually examined processes and outcomes for students to create recommendations for scaling best practices throughout the district. The first three early learning centers opened for the 2014–15 school year, and a fourth center opened during the 2016–17 school year.

Impact

By opening three model early learning centers, this initiative expanded access to 540 students and created momentum for Nashville (along with Memphis) in securing a federal Pre-K expansion grant in December 2014. The program improved data quality around Pre-K, enabled Nashville to focus on the alignment between Pre-K and the rest of the district, and enhanced quality system-wide. It also created a platform for the district to test different innovations in early learning.

Lessons learned

- Cross-sector collaborations are critical to expanding access to high-quality Pre-K
- This kind of effort requires bringing Pre-K through 12th-grade stakeholders, higher education, nonprofits, and government to the table for leaderships and input

2017 update

- In August 2017 unveiled roadmap: High-quality Start for All working off evidence-based practices with a project manager and working group that will now continue through implementation
- Goal is to have access to quality Pre-K and defining quality metrics established within 4 years
- For more details, contact Laura Moore with Office of Mayor Megan Barry at Laura.Moore@Nashville.gov
New Orleans coordinates enrollment for all public Pre-K

**Opportunity**

In 2015-16, roughly 100 public schools, non-public schools, early learning centers, and Head Start centers provided free care and education to approximately 4,500 infants, toddlers, and preschool children. These programs had differing eligibility requirements, application processes, and enrollment timelines, which created hardships for families trying to navigate the system and gain information on all of their choices. To address this issue, New Orleans developed a coordinated enrollment process for all publicly funded programs. The program needed to be tailored to meet stringent Head Start requirements; small centers needed support to effectively use the online platform; and the program needed to get the word out to families as efficiently as possible.

**Approach**

New Orleans coordinated enrollment for all publicly funded birth-to-four-year-old programs. This allowed New Orleans families—for the first time ever—to verify eligibility, review program information, and apply for multiple programs through a single, transparent timeline and application process. They identified a lead organization, the Recovery School District/EnrollNOLA, then held meetings and working groups with program partners to develop and codify the process in a written framework. Next, they secured a grant and philanthropy to support startup costs; built a technology system; conducted outreach with families; and implemented the application process. Barriers were overcome or lessened through increased and improved communication, collaboration, trainings, central support, and technology solutions.

**Impact**

Since its launch in November 2015, the program has processed approximately 10,000 applications and enrolled approximately 4,500 children in roughly 100 centers and schools. By coordinating enrollment, they now have the data to better understand parent demand and to plan more effectively to meet that demand.

**Lessons learned**

- Build support and buy-in as early as possible, from a variety of stakeholders representing different sectors and interests
- Nearly any implementation or design problem can be overcome with collaboration and creative problem solving

**2017 update**

- Now expanding system to cover birth to 12 across Louisiana
- Includes an overview of each school so schools, families, and other stakeholders can compare quality metrics
- Envision businesses, realtors, and public officials could use the data to attract others to their neighborhoods
- For more details, contact Nasha Patel with Louisiana Department of Education at Nasha.Patel@LA.GOV

2017 update
**Opportunity**

New York City expanded full-day Pre-K from 20,000 students to nearly 70,000 in just over two years. Given that families prefer to travel short distances to attend Pre-K, it was important to not only add seats but to add them in the right parts of the city. Because demand varies over time based on enrollment patterns, new needs in communities, and changes at existing programs, it can be challenging to predict demand. The team had to make significant resource decisions quickly with the information available.

**Approach**

To estimate demand at a sub-neighborhood level, the team used prior registration and application data. This information was presented to decision makers using clear maps, broken down by administrative district and neighborhood. Based on the data, the team was able to effectively allocate resources for expansion. Ultimately, the success of the effort was due to the work of multiple teams within the Division of Early Childhood Education, the School Construction Authority, and the Office of Management and Budget at City Hall.

**Impact**

In 2016, nearly 70,000 4-year-olds enrolled in Pre-K for All, compared with 83,000 in public kindergarten.

**Lessons learned**

- Simple methods are often best
- Keep distance to families in mind when planning new sites or expanding existing sites
- Kindergarten enrollment and preferences expressed by Pre-K families are more direct estimates of demand than adjusted census data

**2017 update**

- At scale with ~70,000 4-year-olds enrolled, now shifting to focusing on community needs at neighborhood level
- Have initiated data-sharing agreements through mayor’s office, which enable Department of Health and Human Services, Department Homeless Services, Administration of Children’s Services to forecast future distribution of 4-year-olds
- Continuing to right-size system, making adjustments to classrooms and developing projects to address large demographic shifts
- In April, Mayor introduced 3-K for All and announced city would bring program to 8 community school districts by 2020; team will apply lessons learned from Pre-K expansion
- For more details, contact Emmy Liss with NY DOE at ELiss@schools.nyc.gov

**New York City projects and maps demand for Pre-K**

~70,000 4-year-olds enrolled

Last updated October 2017
Opportunity

Washington, DC, established a state-level coordinated approach to ensure access to high-quality Pre-K for all three-year-old and four-year-old children in DC through a mixed delivery system: DC Public Schools (DCPS), public charter schools (PCS), and community-based organizations (CBO). Some challenges included: degree attainment and pay parity for Pre-K teachers in the CBO sector; measuring Pre-K quality in a mixed delivery system with different regulations (e.g., Head Start, licensing, Public Education Reform Act); and ensuring equitable access.

Approach

The program financed Pre-K in DCPS and public charter schools through the school funding formula for DC public schools, the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF). It also funded grants to support quality improvement efforts for CBOs to meet the high-quality standards. DCPS blended Head Start and UPSFF funding to create the Head Start Schoolwide Model. The program also established dedicated funding at the Office of the State Superintendent for Education (OSSE) to supplement the Head Start and child care subsidy funding received by CBOs. To overcome challenges, the program created a non-lapsing scholarship fund for Pre-K teachers in DC through the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion legislation. They established a common measure of quality across all three sectors through the enhanced Quality Rating and Improvement System and the Performance Management Framework. To ensure equitable access, they instituted a citywide lottery for DCPS and PCS.

Impact

In the 2015–16 school year, Washington, DC, had 12,910 children enrolled in public Pre-K programs across three sectors: 5,832 in DCPS; 6,477 in PCS; and 601 in private child development centers.

Lessons learned

- Focus on equity to ensure the most vulnerable children have access to high-quality education
- Support parents in making informed choices for their children’s education
- Measure the quality of programs and outcomes for students
- Consider potential unintended consequences for access to care for infants and toddlers

2017 update

- For more details, contact Margareth Legaspi with Office of State Superintendent of Education at margareth.legaspi@dc.gov
Driving Impact: A National Convening on Early Learning

QUALITY

Boston works for equity in curriculum and instruction

Opportunity

Boston Public Schools wanted to address the common challenges of high turnover and relatively low salaries for teachers. These challenges create difficulties in maintaining high-quality instruction. To avoid having the school system devolve into a two-tier system where working families received a lower quality education, they needed to identify resources that could be used to boost teachers salaries.

Approach

In Boston Public Schools, teachers have master’s degrees and they’re paid $70,000. Operating since 2012, Boston K1DS is a project which has brought the success of BPS preschool into 14 community-based programs (CBOs). This project was created through BPS, Thrive in 5, and community-based organizations that came together to expand access and improve quality. Through Boston K1DS, programs receive instructional material and support, professional development, and coaching support (including support for directors and executive directors). Critically, Boston was able to increase salary for CBOs through the federal Preschool Expansion Grant, which Massachusetts received in 2014 for five communities, including Boston. In CBOs now, teachers have a BA and are paid a starting salary of $50,000.

Impact

After implementing these changes, student performance on third- and fifth-grade state tests increased up to 25%. Additionally, Boston K1Ds is now a model across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the Preschool Expansion Grant.

Lessons learned

- It’s important to keep an eye on curriculum and instruction in K-third grade
- Community-based organizations need much more support to deliver strong curriculum and instructional practices
- It’s important to have strong expertise, patience, and accountability structures

2017 update

- Since establishing minimum salaries for teachers, directors and assistant teachers’ wages have been adjusted as well
- Turnover among teachers and directors continues to be an issue
- Carving out more planning time for teachers to develop and prepare complex curriculum with directors
- Monthly meeting with directors and other leadership to co-create solutions to director needs and concerns, providing professional development and earning increased buy-in across district
- Supplementing these efforts with ExCEL P-3 study on how to sustain children’s early preschool gains
- For more details, contact Jason Sachs with Boston Public Schools at jsachs@bostonpublicschools.org

2,600 students performing well
Driving Impact: A National Convening on Early Learning

QUALITY

Fresno improves support for dual-language learners

32% Fresno students are dual-language learners

Opportunity

Data from the California 0-5 assessment tool and from third-grade reading assessments indicated that there was a need to better support dual-language learners in Fresno. The goal was to help Fresno’s early childhood professionals improve English language development and provide home language support to better prepare children for kindergarten and later school success. While Fresno has a rich history of supporting early learning, professional development is often conducted within separate programs, which can make it challenging to coordinate efforts.

Approach

With backing from The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, combined with strong community support, the team worked with the Early Learning Lab and nationally recognized expert, Dr. Linda Espinosa, to initiate a professional learning community. They focused on the Personalized Oral Language Learning (POLL) strategies developed by Dr. Espinosa. The project involved both group learning sessions as well as onsite coaching to support integration of its strategies into the individual programs. The financial backing from the Packard Foundation provided an important jump-start for the project, offering the time and the expertise to explore innovative solutions.

Impact

Though the program is in the early stages of testing and learning, the community is already seeing an impact. Through strong collaboration, various ECE programs have come together in shared learning for the first time. This is not only building a valuable skill set to support children’s language development but it has opened doors to collaboration in creating a more connected system of school readiness in Fresno. In addition, there have been attitudinal shifts. With exposure to the latest research, the 60 participants are changing their perspectives on dual-language learners and their families. What was once seen as a challenge or a hurdle is now seen as an opportunity for rich cognitive, language, and social growth.

Lessons learned

- Identify an agreed-upon area of need with a specific and actionable idea in order to secure buy-in from all partners
- Partner with foundations to jump-start new project ideas
- Look for ways to bring in the unique knowledge of experts

2017 update

- Efforts have continued to expand with support of Early Learning Lab to leverage children’s additional language fluency
- Identifying additional language support in staff outside of the primary educator and studying how to best incorporate those resources in the curriculum and daily programming
- For more details, contact Deanna Mathies with Fresno Unified School District at Deanna.Mathies@fresnounified.org

Last updated October 2017
Driving Impact: A National Convening on Early Learning

QUALITY

Long Branch promotes early literacy

92% of our ECE students graduate high school

Opportunity

The Long Branch coastal urban community, based in New Jersey, is socioeconomically and culturally diverse, with approximately half of the preschool student population with a native language other than English. The youngest learners in the district have many opportunities to learn in small groups as well independently, with differentiated supports through the use of developmental trajectories and a comprehensive curriculum to guide and differentiate instruction.

Approach

The Early Childhood Learning Centers continue to refine their practices in three areas: teaching, learning, and leadership. With teaching, supporting oral language development occurs through tactics such as dedicating time to meaningful background building, using theme-related vocabulary, and engaging in make-believe play and dramatization. Structured observation tools are used to coach and help teachers reflect on practices to impact learning. To support learning, there is an emphasis on children’s role-play, strengthening self-regulation skills and children’s working memory, scaffolding interactions, and connecting the learning to real life scenarios through visits to community businesses or having members of the community visit classrooms to discuss or demonstrate their roles. To support leadership, some strategies included conducting home visits, creating a family literacy series/course, and regular leadership discussions for horizontal and vertical articulation purposes based on data.

Impact

By the end of 2017:

- 85% of the kindergarten children scored a 4 or higher on the Developmental Reading Assessment
- District’s average score for the Mathematics standards-based end of year assessment (kindergarten) was 92%
- ~80% of the preschoolers met social-emotional developmentally appropriate expectations aligned to the New Jersey DOE Preschool Learning Standards and developmental trajectories from Tools of the Mind
- Over 75% of preschool children entering kindergarten were displaying their knowledge of initial sounds in writing
- Teachers report that targeted professional development throughout year (professional learning communities, district professional learning days, school-based committee work) helped them provide children individualized support to make continuous progress
- Those who attended Long Branch’s preschool program had increased high school graduation rates

Lessons learned

- Take a systematic and scaffolded approach to implementing new initiatives
- Engage in collaborative decision making through use of data from learning outcomes, teaching practices, surveys, etc

2017 update

- Created Early Childhood Education Google site with centralized resources for parents and teachers, including schedules, assessments, professional learning, curriculum and programs, and school/registration details
- Using a training of trainers series to support coaching practices
- Encouraging parents to read more at home, sending books home and publicizing student-recorded podcasts as bedtime stories
- Attendance initiatives such as informing families of the importance of their children attending school at every family event, meeting, conference to reduce chronic absenteeism at the early childhood level
- Expanding the Early Childhood Advisory Council to participants from districts and agencies throughout Monmouth County to work collaboratively on goals and share ideas with attention on data and growth
- For more details, contact Dr. Renee Whelan, Director of EC, Long Branch School District at rwhelan@longbranch.k12.nj.us

Last updated October 2017
QUALITY

New Orleans implements CLASS at scale

80,720 minutes of observation

Opportunity

The New Orleans Early Education Network (NOEEN) implemented a class observation system that would facilitate approximately 500 toddler or Pre-K CLASS observations; enable observations to be completed almost exclusively by independent, certified CLASS observers; and input data into two different data systems for the Louisiana Department of Education. The team encountered a challenge when some programs refused to allow CLASS observers to complete observations and others moved teaching staff to different classrooms to avoid observations.

Approach

The team used reports, guides, and webinars to synthesize best practices for conducting observations at scale. They recruited, trained, and hired a corps of more than 15 certified CLASS observers, a CLASS coordinator, and a Pre-K anchor to provide oversight and quality assurance. When some programs refused to allow observations, the team requested guidance from the state to address non-participatory programs and put protocols in place (based on state guidance) to notify the state of any non-compliant programs.

Impact

511 CLASS observations were done in the fall of 2015 and 498 were done in the spring of 2016, with a completion rate of 98%. (The remaining 2% were programs that refused to participate or were unable to participate due to teacher absences.) Local CLASS scores informed the Practice Performance Profile Ratings for the 156 programs in the New Orleans Early Education Network. As a result of these class observations, 500 lead teachers received important information about their teaching practice to inform their plans for improvement and professional development.

Lessons learned

- Secure continued, real, and concrete support from the state in order to best enable planning and implementation
- Research and understand procedures, protocols, and frameworks necessary to bring the observation system to scale
- Always be open to identifying anything that is not working well and adapt course as needed
- Be flexible, open, and willing to change

2017 update

- Now 99% classes observed twice in fall and spring
- CLASS scores show improvement and now aiming to roll out statewide in December
- For more details, contact Nasha Patel with Louisiana Department of Education at Nasha.Patel@LA.GOV

Last updated October 2017
Driving Impact: A National Convening on Early Learning

QUALITY

New York City defines program quality standards across diverse settings

1,879 sites being assessed

Opportunity

New York City needed to establish, communicate, and assess all 1,879 Pre-K for All programs against one set of program quality standards. To achieve this goal, the team needed to define what was meant by “high quality Pre-K” and articulate a set of standards that were both ambitious and reasonable for a diverse range of Pre-K settings.

Approach

To create a single set of program quality standards, they reviewed the research and examined other Pre-K programs in order to develop standards that establish a shared set of expectations across all settings. The team also communicated clearly with all program sites, using multiple communication channels to reinforce messaging. Finally, they created broad alignment and support for the standards and made sure that all program assessments, coaching, and professional learning fit the standards. From start to finish, the project took approximately six months.

Impact

All 1,879 sites now function according to the program quality standards. If the initiative has the desired results, the program quality standards will impact CLASS and ECERS-R scores year-over-year.

Lessons learned

While state systems may be a useful starting point, it’s important to set specific, consistent, holistic quality expectations for the context in which your locality offers early childhood education.

2017 update

- Program Quality Standards guide approach and strategies at Pre-K for All programs
- In April, Mayor introduced 3-K for All and announced city would bring program to 8 community school districts by 2020
- Program Quality Standards are now used at 3-K for All programs to advance quality and positive outcomes for children
- Recently released Pre-K Quality Snapshot, a family-friendly tool to help select programs in the application process
- Using holistic framework grounded in the NYC DOE’s vision for school improvement across the 3-K to 12 continuum
- For more details, contact Emmy Liss with NY DOE at ELiss@schools.nyc.gov

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Last updated October 2017
San Francisco uses data to drive improvements in K-readiness

18% growth

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Opportunity

The San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) needed to create a K-readiness indicator for Pre-K students in SFUSD and use the data to understand children’s academic growth from preschool through fourth grade. They faced several key challenges, such as lacking an aligned database and having a need to effectively train teachers to use the database.

Approach

Before 2011, assessments had not been implemented in Pre-K classrooms in SFUSD. Given the compelling research demonstrating the value of early assessment as a predictor of future success, in 2011, SFUSD determined that they would identify a PK literacy assessment that aligned with reading level assessment for K-3. Later that year, they procured funding, developed a partnership with USF to administer Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS), and began the administration of PALS twice per year. Over the next several years, SFUSD expanded PALS to all 4-year-old Pre-K students. Concurrently, SFUSD collaborated with Stanford researchers to create criteria for a kindergarten readiness indicator and streamlined data from assessments into a District database for principals. Supported principals and teachers PK-5 on how to analyze reports to inform teacher PD and student instructions.

Impact

Following the implementation of data-driven coaching and ample, targeted training and peer-learning opportunities, student readiness grew annually from 45% in 2013-2014, 50% in 2014-2015, and 55% in 2015-2016. Additionally, district and community/city partners, who oversee quality care and education from a larger systems perspective, now work in partnership with SFUSD so that there are opportunities to inform the community and share best practices.

Lessons learned

- Partnerships with local universities provide invaluable guidance
- Pilot assessments, process, and criteria before going to scale
- Be mindful of initial criteria/modifications to assessments so year-to-year comparisons can be made
- Seek philanthropic partnership to provide resources to support data collection and analysis

Additional information

- Starting pilot using standardized observation form (kindergarten readiness inventory) in classes to assess performance
- Evaluating how to best use this information at the teacher and community level
- Ramping up to use assessments to compare approaches to kindergarten readiness across San Francisco
- Some data quality issues here, as parents write in what care they used before enrolling their children in school
- For more details, contact Meenoo Yashar with San Francisco Unified School District at yasharm@sfusd.edu

QUALITY

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QUALITY

Tulsa’s Head Start program has enduring positive effects

34% reduction in absenteeism

Opportunity

The Head Start Impact Study found that children enrolled in Head Start performed marginally better at statistically significant levels. Researchers at the Center for Research on Children in the US wanted to learn whether these gains, albeit modest ones, are sustained over time. The Tulsa CAP Head Start program, specifically, has demonstrated strong impacts to K-readiness in the past, including test scores that equated to an improvement worth three to five months in learning. This premise made Tulsa a good place to better understand the durability of gains made in Pre-K.

Approach

Oklahoma has one of the oldest universal Pre-K programs, and has several strong state level requirements, including requiring of teachers both a bachelor’s degree and a certification in early childhood. Oklahoma also requires a 10:1 ratio at maximum for its classrooms. In addition, CAP Head Start has several key features, such as paying CAP Head Start teachers the same salaries as public school teachers. These factors all likely contribute to higher-quality Pre-K in Tulsa.

Impact

The study found that there are enduring positive effects of Pre-K through middle school across several dimensions, including retention levels, chronic absenteeism, and state achievement tests. For example, there was a 34% reduction in chronic absenteeism, from 9% to 6%. On their own, the results from each of these considerations is not that meaningful, but when considered together, they demonstrate the strong impact from CAP Head Start.

Lessons learned

• Modest impacts are worthwhile if they are enduring
• Creating enduring impacts requires ensuring quality learning beyond Pre-K

2017 update

• OU-Tulsa partnering with Georgetown and Harvard to continue research and expand data gathering to a variety of settings (Educare, CAP-Tulsa, and community child care programs) following 900 three-year-olds through third grade to understand how skill development differs in each context
• For more details, contact Steven Dow with CAP Tulsa at sdow@captulsa.org

Last updated October 2017
Driving Impact: A National Convening on Early Learning

ENABLERS

Cleveland integrates longitudinal data to track outcomes

12 districts now included in CHILD system

Opportunity

Leaders in Cuyahoga County, in Ohio, wanted to track child well-being indicators for all children growing up in Cuyahoga County. They also wanted to understand and evaluate the impact of early childhood services provided by Invest in Children, a community-wide, public-private partnership administered by the Cuyahoga County Office of Early Childhood. The biggest challenge was establishing data-sharing agreements with key data sources, particularly school districts, and creating a business model that would sustain the program over decades.

Approach

The team created the Childhood Integrated Longitudinal Data (CHILD) system, a database that contains continuously updated public administrative and program information on every child born in the county since 1992. It includes data from almost 20 different government and nonprofit sources, including Medicaid, supplemental nutrition assistance programs, birth records, foster care, protective services, home visiting, early childhood mental health services, and exposure to high-quality early learning (through the Universal Pre-Kindergarten project). It also includes data on older youth, including public school attendance and proficiency test data, childhood lead exposure, public housing, homeless shelter use, and juvenile justice involvement. There are over 500,000 children (and counting) in CHILD, and it is recognized as one of the most comprehensive integrated data systems on children in the nation. It was created by the Poverty Center at Case Western Reserve University, which uses CHILD for research projects. Case Western Reserve University worked patiently with each data source to craft agreements with terms acceptable to all.

Impact

Cuyahoga County has an invaluable community resource that supports the work of Invest in Children and PRE4CLE (a citywide plan to ensure all 3- and 4-year-old children in Cleveland have access to a high-quality preschool) and additional other community projects. CHILD allows detailed needs assessments and longitudinal evaluation studies of child outcomes.

Lessons learned

- Before creating a data system, identify the “champions” and funders in the community who will provide long-term support, identify the entity that has the confidence and trust of the community to house the system, and create a governance structure to stipulate access to and cost to use the system
- Meet with all potential data sources early on to secure buy-in and data-sharing agreements

2017 update

- Still challenging to convince school districts to share data; successful in adding 9 additional districts using Federal Pay for Success grant to explain importance with superintendents and mandate Universal Pre-K program districts join
- Continuing to explore financial sustainability for CHILD with community advisory committee to discuss various business models to support the basic “care and upkeep” of data system
- For more details, contact Rebekah Dorman with Cuyahoga County Office of Early Childhood at rdorman@cuyahogacounty.us

Last updated October 2017
ENABLERS

Cleveland and Cuyahoga county establish strong city-country partnership

Opportunity

The City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County wanted to leverage their strengths to increase access to high-quality preschools. Cleveland developed a plan, called PRE4CLE, to ensure all 3- and 4-year-old children in Cleveland have access to a high-quality preschool. Meanwhile, Cuyahoga County already had a preschool program, Universal Pre-K (UPK), that served a portion of children in the city. Because the two entities worked together so closely, it wasn’t always easy for community partners to understand how their roles differed.

Approach

As PRE4CLE was being created, the county was included from the very beginning as a core partner at the leadership table. To avoid duplicating efforts, the county and city worked together to maximize funding, coordinate services, and shape mutual preschool goals. Both programs chose Starting Point as their lead agency, and a mutual research team at Case Western Reserve University, which kept their work aligned. PRE4CLE adopted UPK’s model for expansion and adopted the same progress measurement for children (Bracken Assessment) to ensure standard measurements across programs. To further support this partnership, the county served on PRE4CLE’s executive committee, and vice versa. In response to feedback that the roles blurred between PRE4CLE and UPK, they developed communication tools to articulate their unique roles and offered joint presentations to key stakeholders.

Impact

The city-county partnership allows a much stronger, more unified approach to preschool for families, providers, and the community. By creating joint leadership teams to establish community-wide strategies, and by streamlining programmatic goals to eliminate redundancies, the two organizations were able to make a much greater impact together than they could have done independently.

Lessons learned

- Take the time up front to understand the early learning investments and infrastructure that already exists in the community, and make sure any new plans consider how to maximize the resources and partnership that already exist
- When possible, work together to streamline programmatic goals and strategies for preschool, to reduce confusion and redundancy for families, providers, and the community
- Create joint leadership tables to work through community-wide goals and strategies

2017 update

- Now considering longer term goals to come together as a fully integrated entity with a path to sustainability for the Universal Pre-K program, which is funded to 2020
- For more details, contact Rebekah Dorman with Cuyahoga County Office of Early Childhood at rdorman@cuyahogacounty.us
ENABLERS

Denver campaigns for Pre-K funding

70% of four-year-olds in public Pre-K

Driving Impact: A National Convening on Early Learning

Opportunity

The Denver Preschool Program (DPP) makes preschool possible for four-year-olds throughout the city—regardless of neighborhood or socioeconomic status—through tuition support, quality improvement supports to participating programs, and access to information for parents to help them choose the best preschool for their child. DPP is funded through a dedicated preschool sales tax first approved by voters in 2006 and renewed and expanded through 2026 in 2014. Advocates began working toward the ballot initiative in the late 1990s, which led to two failed attempts in 2000 and 2001 before the successful 2006 campaign. When preschool was first proposed on the ballot, it faced significant opposition in the legislature, with some legislators and voters believing that children should learn at home.

Approach

DPP consistently advocated for preschool and provided information to voters and legislators on the importance of early learning. While initial advocacy efforts were somewhat narrow, they were eventually broadened to include businesses, parents, educators, and others. Advocates identified multiple community partners to target with their message on early education—tapping into business, media, and other outlets—and shared concrete success stories to demonstrate outcomes and impact. To pass the mill levy, Denver Public Schools mobilized the community to help determine what would be on the ballot. The Denver Preschool Program also had broad representation when working to pass (and later extend) the sales tax. When building support, they adhered to the mantra “go broad.”

Impact

Approximately 70% of four-year-olds in Denver attend publicly funded preschools through various funding programs. The DPP work has resulted in higher-quality ratings for preschool programs in the district and the community. In addition, DPP and the Denver Early Childhood Council provide extensive professional learning experiences. Denver Public Schools now provides full- and half-day programs for 5,816 three-year-olds and four-year-olds. The community is also funded through Denver Public Schools to serve an additional 1,862 half-day slots.

Lessons learned

• Involve a broad constituency in efforts
• Lobby wisely; choose partners for the campaign and determine effective messages through communications planning
• Target key communicators and networks to get the message out; provide specific success stories and impacts

2017 update

• DPP Board voted to increase the program’s tuition credit scale budget to $14 million plus additional funding to better support the cost of quality and address the needs of families experiencing the “cliff effect.” The scale is approved for three years and will increase each year according to Denver’s economic growth
• For more details, contact Cheryl Caldwell with Denver Public Schools at Cheryl_Caldwell@dpsk12.org

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ENABLERS

Memphis supports preservation of Pre-K funding

Opportunity

In 2015, following the release of the Peabody Vanderbilt study, opponents of Pre-K attempted to use the study’s findings to redirect $89M in voluntary Pre-K funding toward other programs. The Vanderbilt study’s findings were distorted by opponents of Pre-K, who didn’t acknowledge that there was a bump in scores from Pre-K to kindergarten.

Approach

The movement to preserve the funding started in Memphis with PeopleFirst Partnership, Memphis Fast Forward, and the Memphis Chamber of Commerce. It expanded as partners joined from across the state, including the Chattanooga, Jackson, and Nashville Chambers of Commerce, in addition to leaders in business, law enforcement, and philanthropy. These parties all came together to mount a campaign to preserve Pre-K funding. They also highlighted the fact that quality measures were not seen in Pre-K programs across the state and looked for ways to add quality to the programs that were in place. Tennesseans for Quality Early Education (TQEE), a 501c4 organization was founded in order to lobby as needed. Supporters of Pre-K in the House and Senate were identified and agreed to carry a bill to add quality measures to Pre-K. The bills were introduced, and the statewide, multi-sector support effort began with letter writing, visits to Capitol Hill, local visits, a vibrant social media campaign, and email contact with all legislators. The effort was successful, and the bill passed both houses on March 21, 2016 and was signed into law by Governor Haslam.

Impact

The $89 million Tennessee investment in voluntary Pre-K was maintained and quality measures were put in place to ensure high-quality programming in Pre-K centers across the state.

Lessons learned

It’s important to have a broad coalition of supporters who are willing to work hard, mounting an aggressive and supportive campaign to inform the elected representatives.

2017 update

- TQEE defended the investment again this past year and started enacting the Pre-K Quality Act passed in 2016
- Network has expanded to engage leadership from across the state and Department of Education
- For more details, contact Lisa Wiltshire with Tennesseans for Quality Early Education at Lisa.Wiltshire@tqee.org

$89M preserved

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Opportunity

A tax on sweetened beverages was levied in order to fund improvements in quality of life within Philadelphia—and Pre-K was one of several items that benefited from the tax. However, Big Soda lobbied hard against the beverage tax, investing millions to convince Philadelphians that the tax would hurt their pocketbook.

Approach

The mayor of Philadelphia was strongly committed to this funding, and made it a focus of his election campaign. The team established a broad-based coalition to support the tax strategy. Multiple initiatives were bundled into the sweetened-beverage tax, which helped to create the broad levels of support within the community. In response to lobbying from Big Soda, the team built up a strong coalition of parents, early education providers, and concerned citizens to organize an “Our Kids Are Worth It” campaign. The effort was announced in March 2016 and passed by City Council in June 2016.

Impact

This innovative funding mechanism, the tax on sweetened beverages, generated funding for a new Pre-K initiative, leveraging the state’s quality rating and improvement system. For the 2016-17 fiscal year, $14 million will be made available to support Pre-K. Over the next five years, the city will invest $200 million in Pre-K, and by fiscal year 2021, will be spending $60 million on Pre-K annually. The Pre-K initiative promotes both access in the form of free Pre-K for families (2,000 currently, planning to expand to 6,500) as well as quality improvements, so that there are quality options in every neighborhood.

Lessons learned

- It’s vital to have committed and effective political leadership, as well as a strong coalition
- It’s also important to make the case to the public, so they can engage and talk to their City Council members

2017 update

- Appeals process has delayed timeline for expansion, currently with state court of appeals, which will hopefully decline to hear the case by November
- For more details, contact Julie Beamon with Philadelphia Mayor’s Office of Education at Julie.Beamon@Phila.gov

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ENABLERS

San Antonio drives collaboration through data

8 building blocks

Opportunity
The United Way and ReadyKidSA Coalition developed a county-wide results scorecard for children 0 to 8 utilizing a results-based accountability process in San Antonio. However, with differing assessment instruments, different information management systems, and lack of unity on the purpose of the data, the team faced numerous challenges.

Approach
The school districts created various agreements to share data (including a memorandum of understanding) and persuaded stakeholders to use an early development instrument (EDI) in kindergarten. One concern of districts and agencies was how the data would reflect their effort when compared. To alleviate fears of unfair comparison, the program did not compare districts and agencies side by side, but instead used population data. There were numerous parties who came together for this effort, including school districts, Head Start, the United Way, PreK4SA, P16Plus, newly created ReadyKidSA Coalition, community colleges, local universities, local foundations, non-profit providers and the Archdiocese. The success with utilizing EDI as the key metric for kindergarten readiness was the culmination of 8-10 years of work, involving a regular and tireless commitment from many advocates who stayed with the effort the whole time.

Impact
- Student attendance rates have increased
- Stakeholders involved with the initiative developed greater trust for one another
- Many are now aligned through ReadyKidSA, which has become the umbrella organization for early childhood work

Lessons learned
- Reduce fear about how data will be used by focusing on the right view
- Keep talking, planning, experimenting, and work to sustain the energy
- Communicate one another's success stories, demonstrating the value-add that EDI brings to EC work

2017 update
- EDI is now in place in 7 districts, and more data-sharing agreements are being negotiated by United Way/ReadyKidSA
- Sharing data across school districts is sensitive, as worries arise about audiences drawing unfair comparisons
- National conversations have helped put pressure on San Antonio to increase participation and data sharing
- Keeping district information confidential for the time being in light of these concerns
- For more details, contact Sarah Baray with Pre-K 4 SA at Sarah.Baray@sanantonio.gov