
earlymattersdallas

A Historic Coalition on Early Education

Dedicated to educational success for children
age 0-8 across Dallas County

Early Matters Dallas Strategic Plan

12.11.15

Summary

The pages that follow lay out the Early Matters Dallas (“EMD”) strategic plan, a joint effort of the 9 members of the Governing Board and more than 70 community members who have given (and will continue to give) input through the Alignment Council and other avenues

What comes first is a preamble to the plan, laying out the context behind the plan, assumptions and definitions, next steps ahead, key Early Matters contacts, and responsibilities.

What then follows is an overview of the 5 levers of the plan, with key objectives and strategies; further details, including key progress indicators, are provided in the appendix

Next steps include setting Dallas County 3rd Grade Reading and Kindergarten Readiness goals and mapping existing assets and efforts to the levers

Context behind the Plan

The Community Goal

Increase the number of children in Dallas County who are ready for Kindergarten and reading on grade level at the end of 3rd grade

- *Success will be measured by the annual increase in these statistics across the County*

Why We Need a Plan

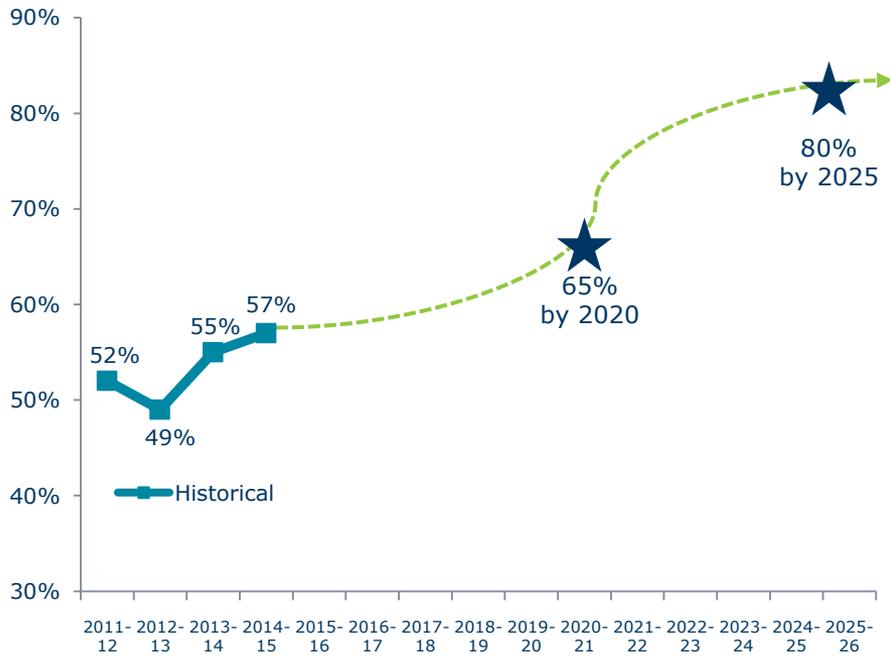
To provide a template that can be used to analyze the work being done and identify where more/different efforts are needed

The Plan's Origin and Development

- The Dallas County Early Childhood (“EC”) Plan originally germinated from the Ready framework developed by the Commit! Partnership EC Support Council
- It grew further from the DISD EC Team’s work and has since expanded to address issues and strategies not specific to DISD—based on input from more than 70 community members including the Alignment Council, Joint 0-5 Convening body, and others
- The plan incorporates current and prospective strategies for Dallas County to meet K-Readiness and 3rd Grade Literacy goals, serving as a guiding roadmap and a communication tool to help the community determine who is working on each strategy and to identify gaps and overlaps

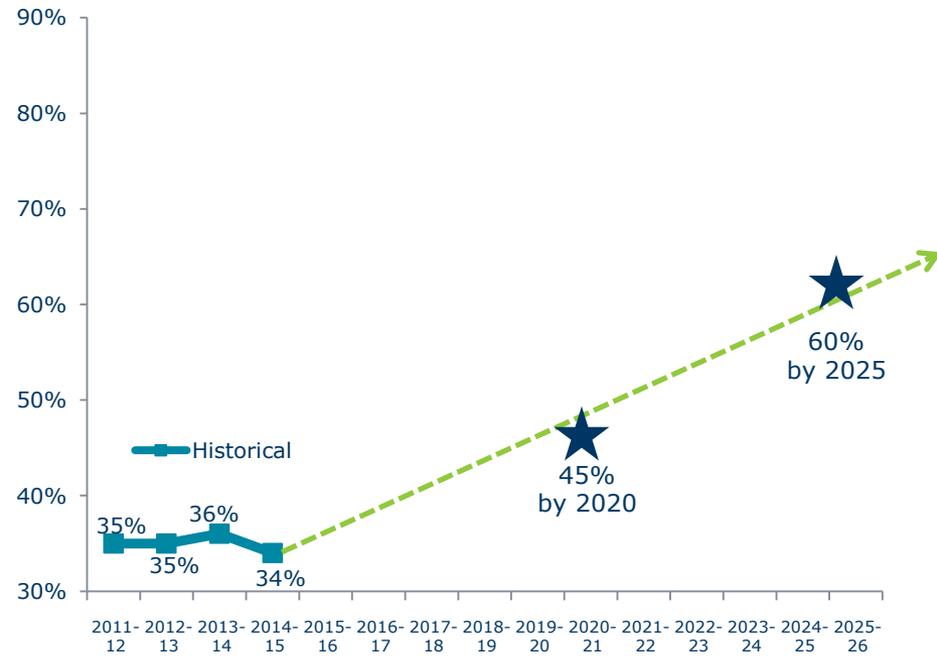
2025 Early Matters Dallas Goals: Increasing K Readiness and 3rd Grade Literacy

Kindergarten Readiness



Measure: Presently literacy-based Kindergarten Readiness assessments administered individually by districts within first 60 days of school; assessments vary across districts

3rd Grade Reading



Measure: Percentage of 3rd graders who reach the Level 2 Final Recommended level on state end-of-year STAAR reading exam

Assumptions and Definitions

Assumptions

- The Plan considers EC any of the environments in which children aged 0-8 or 9 (3rd grade) are spending their time
- The Plan intends to address improvements needed in all types of EC—including parent education and home visitation programs, family day homes, child care centers, pre-schools, home schools, private and public schools, and programs providing out of school time programming, in addition to time spent with parents or other family members

Definition of Quality

Quality is referenced throughout the plan, with its meaning varying depending on the context:

- For parent education and home visitation programs: those that implement research-based practices
- For child care programs: those that have NAEYC, TRS, NAC or Montessori rankings/certificates
- For Pre-K to 3rd grade classrooms: yet to be codified and based on district definitions
- For out-of-school time programs largely serving children in Kindergarten through 3rd grade: yet to be codified and may be based on Dallas AfterSchool's rubric scores

Regardless of context, a quality EC program requires appropriately trained and educated teachers for all children. While matters related to educator quality, including training, education, pipeline, and supports, are integral to this plan, there is expected to be a separate effort focused specifically on teacher pipelines with which the EMD team will coordinate

Next Steps Ahead

Asset Mapping

- The next step will be to asset map as many EC programs as possible to determine (1) what agency/entity is serving each geographic community and age group, (2) the approximate numbers served and/or size of agency budget, (3) which strategies in the plan their work currently addresses, and (4) what, if any, metrics they are using to track outcomes

Synthesis and Reporting

- The Alignment Council will help determine what tools to use, what indicators to measure, and what questions to ask to inform their practices and track progress against the plan
- Staff at Commit will synthesize this information and present to the Alignment Council
- We then will work to get consensus on how everyone will collect and report their data, with Commit receiving and synthesizing it to generate reports for any group—in particular the Governing Board—to identify what the data indicates about the success of each strategy

Determining New Priorities

- As many are already working towards each strategy, determining new priorities--including areas needing more attention and/or funding--is a discussion that can only be undertaken once we understand what is happening now, requiring a fairly complete asset map

Responsibilities

Governing Board Members

Those who have agreed to serve on the Governing Board are volunteering to take responsibility for ensuring the plan's success. Board members act as the "switchboard" to receive all information and reports, to analyze progress towards the goals, and to ask questions or offer suggestions for follow-up.

The Board will also ultimately determine – with input and guidance from the Alignment Council – the priorities for increased focus (and increased funding) needed to reach the goal. Once a new priority, or emphasis on a current priority, is adopted by the Board, the members have volunteered to lead the fundraising and/or advocacy that will be needed.

Alignment Council Members

Alignment Council ("AC") members have agreed to help complete the asset map project by sharing their own information and encouraging others to do so as well. AC members will help determine appropriate progress indicators and help determine the best way to collect information in a standard manner. AC members are responsible for encouraging the EC community to participate in the collection and reporting of the agreed upon measures/data.

Commit! Partnership Staff

Commit will be the central location for all data and information which is gathered. Commit! staff will be responsive to the community and will analyze data and generate reports as requested by key stakeholder groups

Close

This is a work in progress. No single individual or entity sees themselves as the “owner” of this project. But as Dallas County has never before worked against a plan, those serving on the Governing Board have agreed to take the responsibility for adopting a plan and holding the community accountable for acting in a coordinated and collaborative fashion to reach the goals that impact all of us living in the region.

We hope that everyone with a stake in the success of our community will choose to join the work by registering for Early Matters Dallas either as a member of the Alignment Council (someone working in the EC field in some capacity) or as a supporter of the work.

Participating in the asset mapping, working together to determine what data/information is most useful to everyone and, ultimately, agreeing to collect and report information in a standard fashion will help us all to be successful. Without comprehensive inclusion of as many working in the field as possible, it will be difficult to make a difference in these lofty goals.

Please join us!

-Regen Fearon, on behalf of the Early Matters Dallas Governing Board

To increase 3rd grade literacy, the Early Matters Dallas action plan centers on **five levers**

To ensure every child has a solid educational and developmental foundation so she or he is reading on a college-ready pace by 3rd grade, we as a community must:

- 1 Improve the **quality** of early childhood education
- 2 Increase **access** to quality early childhood education
- 3 Ensure **awareness and demand** for quality early learning
- 4 Extend the **continuum of care** to support children and families from birth
- 5 Ensure **sufficient resources** are available to enable the work in the other 4 levers

Improve the quality of early childhood education

Objectives

- More children receive Early Childhood Education in quality environments, whether spent at home; in a family day home or child care setting; in a private, public or home school; and/or in programs that serve children in out-of-school times
- Every child has access to a trained, quality professional or educated, informed parent in his or her EC environment

Key Strategies

- A. Align on **common defined components** of quality ECE in all settings
- B. Strengthen the EC **teacher pipeline** both for new professionals and for existing Teaching Assistants to become lead teachers
- C. Improve **professional development** for existing EC professionals
- D. Improve the **economics** for quality ECE
- E. Increase **licensing requirements** (e.g., adult-to-child ratios) to nationally recommended levels
- F. Optimize **learning environments**
- G. Implement age-appropriate **assessments** for monitoring and intervention

Increase access to quality early childhood education

Objectives

- All children ages 0–8 have affordable and geographically appropriate options for seats or places in high quality early learning environments that meet their individual needs
- All children ages 0-8 have access to quality resources at home to enhance their learning and development

Key Strategies

- H. Increase the **number of quality seats** available in ECE care options
- I. Match supply of quality early education seats to need** and demand
- J. Maximize **private-public partnerships**
- K. Increase quality **out-of-school time services** provided

Ensure awareness and demand for quality early learning

Objectives

- From birth, parents and caregivers make decisions for their children to maximize early development, promote Kindergarten Readiness, and grow early literacy skills
- The local and state community grows awareness of, support for, and investment in quality early learning

Key Strategies

- L. Educate parents of the **importance of quality early education** & how to identify and access it
- M. Strengthen **parent interactions** at home
- N. Support parents in **finding culturally responsive resources and services** outside of the home
- O. Develop and execute county, district, and neighborhood coordinated **campaigns**
- P. Plan for and coordinate **legislative efforts** to increase funding for culturally responsive, quality early education
- Q. Expand **networks and coalitions** across educators and providers for improved communication, coordination and practice

Extend the continuum of care to support children and families from birth

Objectives

Every child accesses essential health and support services for early development

Key Strategies

- R. Increase the likelihood that **babies are born healthy and stay healthy** during the early childhood years
- S. Increase usage of and access to culturally responsive **behavioral and mental health care**
- T. Increase identification of and treatment for **special needs**
- U. Ensure **safe outdoor environments** exist to support an active and healthy lifestyle
- V. Prevent child and family **abuse and neglect**