



FROM CRADLE TO PRESCHOOL

WINTER 2020 POLICY MEETING JANUARY 24 - 25, WASHINGTON, DC

Cradle to pre-k is a pivotal time in child development—this age sets the foundation for lifelong success. Decades of research demonstrate that access to high-quality, affordable early childhood education and care is fundamentally important in achieving successful outcomes later in life. How can cities support collaboration across systems to better serve this population? How might cities access and focus resources on the most critical years of brain development as a key strategy to eliminate racial and economic disparities? This panel will explore holistic approaches and collaboration across partners through which cities are protecting and promoting the brain development of infants through young children.



RESOURCES

PAGE

1

“Measuring Success: Healthy Child Development By Age 3,” National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers, Pritzker Children’s Initiative.

3

Alana Eichner, “The Future of Work Begins with a City’s Youngest Residents,” National League of Cities, January 4, 2019.

5

Lynne Sacks and Jessica Boyle, pages excerpted from: “Building City-Wide Systems of Opportunity for Children: Initial Lessons from the By All Means Consortium,” Education Redesign Lab, Harvard Graduate School of Education, April 2018

17

“On Track for Kindergarten Readiness: How Cities can Support a Prenatal to Age 3 Agenda,” National League of Cities.

18

“Equitable Early Care and Education System: an Alignment Framework,” National League of Cities.

19

Cailin O’Connor, “Let’s Create An Early Learning Community,” Early Learning Nation, June 1, 2019.

23

Paul Cohn, “Pre-K in 40 Large American Cities: Improvement? Yes. More Needed? Yes.” Early Learning Nation, February 4, 2019.

25

Vera Feeny, “Three New Cities Commit to Supporting a Strong Prenatal to Age 3 Agenda,” National League of Cities, April 26, 2019.

27

Pages excerpted from: “Ready to Learn, Ready for K: Somerville’s Early Education and Care Plan,” City of Somerville, MA, March 2018.

33

“New evidence helps more cities adopt Providence Talks model,” Bloomberg Cities, Medium, May 2, 2018.

35

Meghan Mangrum, “Baby University continues to change lives of new parents,” Chattanooga Times Free Press, December 31, 2017.

39

“Connecting Children, Parents and Early Education in Rochester: Mayor Lovely Warren,” Early Learning Nation, February 20, 2019.

43

Pages excerpted from: “Roc the Future: State of Our Children Report Card 2019,” City of Rochester, NY, December 2019.

51

“Innovation Brief: Creating an Ecosystem of Supports for Infants, Toddlers, and Families,” National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers.

57 “Denver’s Road to Reading Initiative Announces Award Grantees, \$25,000 to Expand Programs for Children Prenatal to Age Three,” City of Denver, CO, August 26, 2019.

59 Pages excerpted from “Promising Practices Portfolio,” Oakland Smart and Strong, July 2019.

61 “Impact by Program to Date,” Oakland Promise, December 31, 2019.

63 “In San Antonio, Building a Community for All Generations from the Beginning,” National League of Cities, November 1, 2019.

65 “Bright Cities,” Healthy Babies Bright Futures, June 29, 2018.

SPEAKERS

JAMMIE ALBERT, PROGRAM MANAGER, EARLY CHILDHOOD SUCCESS TEAM, NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

Jammie serves as a Program Manager for the Early Childhood Success Team in the Institute for Youth Education and Families at the National League of Cities (NLC). Currently, Jammie’s focus is the Cities Supporting a Strong Prenatal to Age 3 Agenda project. Within that project she works to build the capacity of city leaders to reach across their communities, align programs, design policies, and ultimately build systems that are responsive and supportive to young children and their families beginning in the early years of prenatal through age three. This work is supported by the National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers (NCIT), a project of the Pritzker Children’s Initiative. She provides technical assistance to develop and strengthen the local infrastructure of cities and communities through tools for programmatic action and promising best practices to invest in the development and healthy growth of children. Prior to joining the NLC team, Jammie served as a Human Service Worker, Family Service for Fairfax County Department of Family Services, Head Start, and as a Family Centered Specialist for the Mentor Network Institute for Families Centered Services. She obtained a Master’s of Education degree from Carlow University and Bachelor of Arts in mass media communications from Wilberforce University.

MAYOR JOSEPH CURTATONE, SOMERVILLE, MA

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone is serving a record ninth term as the Mayor of Somerville, Massachusetts. A champion of progressive values and data-based decision making, he has implemented a wide range of reforms, initiatives, and services earning both him and the City accolades ranging from “the best-run city in Massachusetts,” “50 safest cities to raise a child,” and “top 15 most influential cities,” to “best place to open a microbrewery.” Mayor Curtatone is also the Chair of the Metropolitan Mayors Coalition and is a Senior Fellow at The Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and has previously served as president of the Massachusetts Mayors’ Association and on the Board of Directors for the National League of Cities.



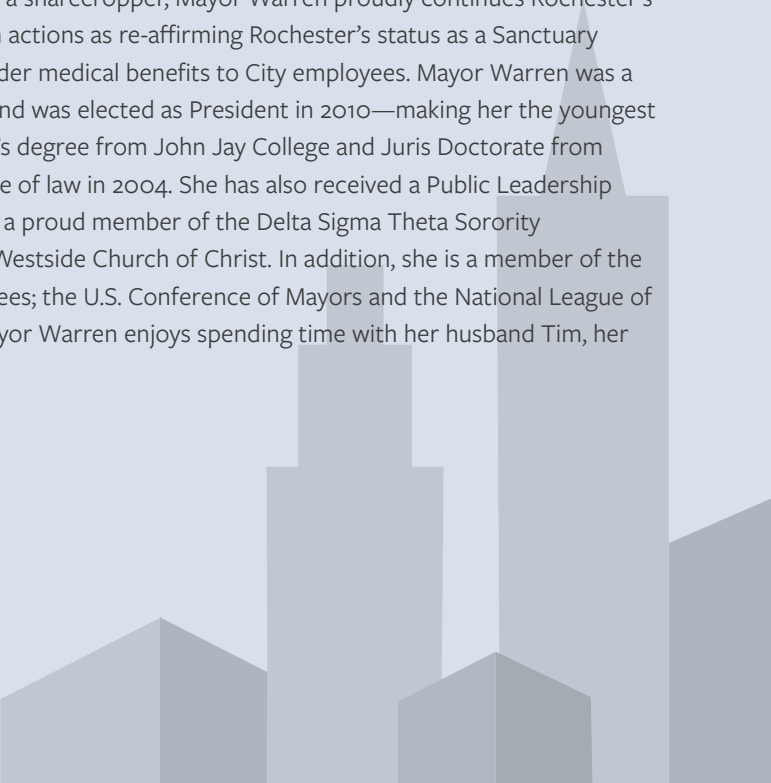
Among other issues, Mayor Curtatone is known for his passionate advocacy and ability to deliver results for equitable public education and wrap-around services for youth, immigrant rights, climate action, affordable housing, public transit and sustainable mobility, public health, job creation and training, opioid crisis solutions, systemic change to lift up vulnerable populations, smart growth, and support for the rights and dignity of all.

MAYOR LOVELY WARREN, ROCHESTER, NY

Lovely Ann Warren was sworn in as Mayor of Rochester, New York on January 1, 2014, making her the city's first female and youngest mayor in modern times. In 2017, she was re-elected to a second, four-year term. Mayor Warren's administrative agenda is focused on job creation, fostering safer and more vibrant neighborhoods and improving educational opportunities for Rochester's residents. To that agenda, she brings a demonstrated ability to forge partnerships among the public, private, non-profit, academic, citizen and neighborhood sectors. Mayor Warren is committed to building a "stairway out of poverty" by achieving economic equality and closing the "middle skills gap" for city residents. She has addressed barriers to employment on a wide range of fronts, including transportation, vocational training and small-business investment. She has raised Rochester's profile for job creators with a host of capital improvement projects, including construction of the Port of Rochester Marina, revitalization of Midtown Plaza and the conversion of the Inner Loop East Expressway to an at-grade boulevard.

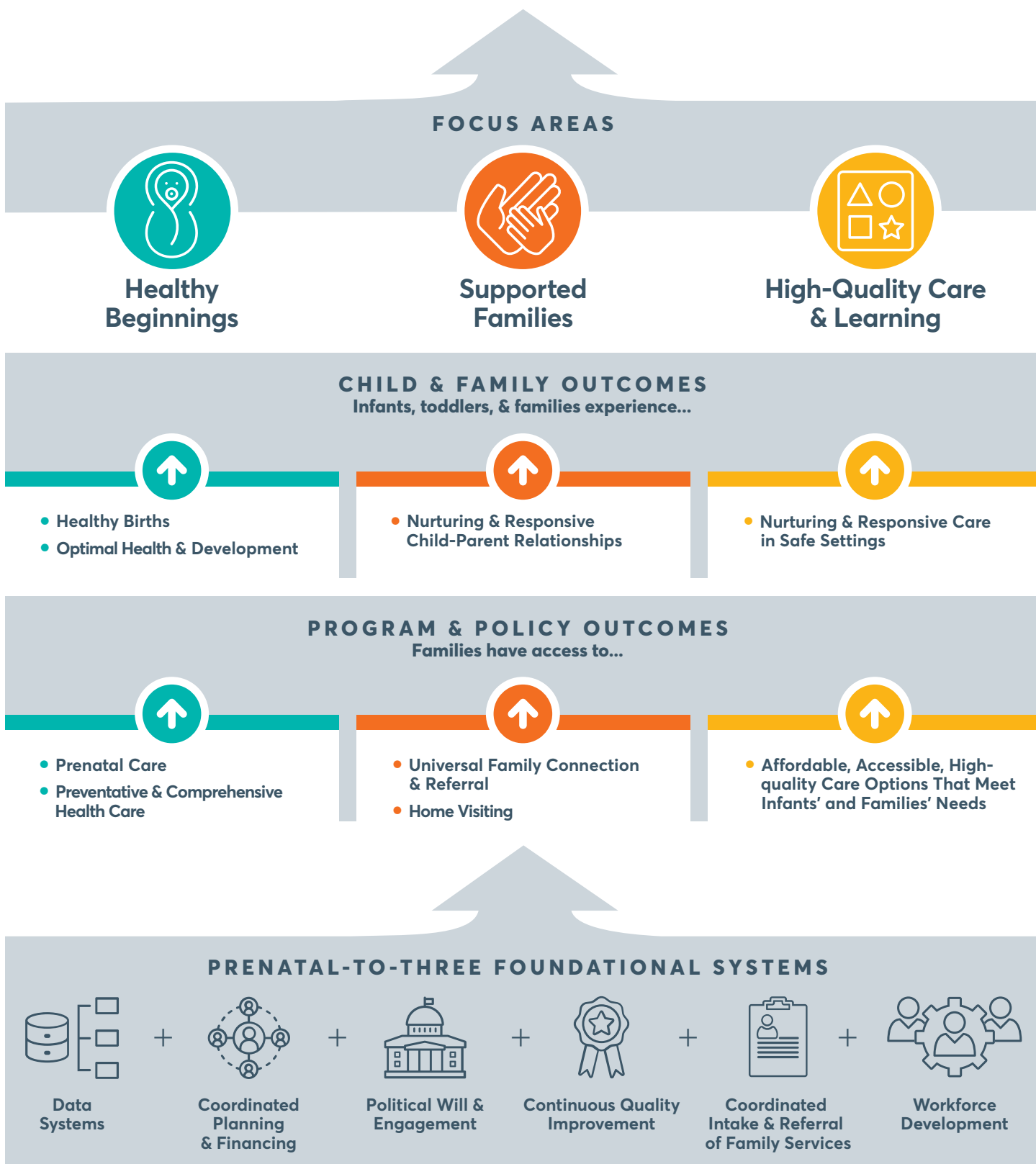
Born and raised in the 19th Ward Neighborhood, Mayor Warren has ushered in an unprecedented level of investment in neighborhoods that have suffered from decades of disinvestment, including Bulls Head, Edgerton and North Hudson Avenue. Rochester's bond rating was upgraded by two Wall Street rating agencies in her first term and the ratings were re-affirmed in her second term. Rochester has the highest municipal bond rating of New York's largest cities outside New York City. Major crime rates in the city of Rochester fell to a 30-plus-year low during her tenure, and the Rochester Fire Department achieved a Class 1 rating from the national Insurance Services Organization. An advocate of school choice, Mayor Warren helped the Rochester City School District increase pre-k enrollment by 1,200 percent in 2016 and fostered partnerships to enable the screening of thousands of children for developmental delays. She eliminated library fines for children and has overseen the distribution of thousands of free books to children in the city.

The daughter of an immigrant and granddaughter of a sharecropper, Mayor Warren proudly continues Rochester's legacy as a leader in human and civil rights with such actions as re-affirming Rochester's status as a Sanctuary City, supporting living wages and providing transgender medical benefits to City employees. Mayor Warren was a Rochester City Councilmember from 2007 to 2013 and was elected as President in 2010—making her the youngest President in City Council history. She has a bachelor's degree from John Jay College and Juris Doctorate from Albany Law School. She was admitted to the practice of law in 2004. She has also received a Public Leadership Certificate from the Harvard Kennedy School. She is a proud member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated, Rochester Alumnae Chapter and the Westside Church of Christ. In addition, she is a member of the African American Mayors Association board of trustees; the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities' Youth Education and Families Committee. Mayor Warren enjoys spending time with her husband Tim, her daughter, Taylor and dog, Rocco.



Measuring Success: Healthy Child Development By Age 3

With a focus on equity, states and communities can build and sustain locally responsive programs, policies, and systems that meet the needs of infants, toddlers, and their families. Policy outcomes support child and family outcomes, and prenatal-to-three systems create a sustainable infrastructure to ensure families get the right services at the right times.



The Future of Work Begins with a City's Youngest Residents

By [Alana Eichner](#) in [Early Childhood](#), [Economic Development](#), [equity](#), [Future of Work](#), [General](#) on [January 4, 2019](#)

As city leaders across the country develop strategies to prepare residents for changing job trends, here is one strategy you might not have considered: early childhood education. While young children may seem a far cry from our workforce, there are several reasons why any city leader preparing for the future of work in their communities should be thinking about early childhood.

To move toward the vision of the early care and education professions as jobs of the future, for the last two years NLC has provided in-depth technical assistance to a cohort of cities to help local leaders increase recognition of the importance of the early childhood workforce in their communities and implement programs and policies to better support and prepare that workforce.

NLC is excited to now launch a new initiative to continue this important body of work. With continued support from the Foundation for Child Development, NLC will create an organizing tool to provide specific action steps cities can take to support for the early childhood workforce and make the case for why this workforce is key to preparing their community for the future of work.

1. **Early childhood programs build a strong future workforce.** It is well known that brain development starts prenatally and is [90 percent complete by age 5](#). Neuroscience reveals a critical window of opportunity in which early experiences shape children's physical, social and emotional development. This development builds the foundation for lifelong skills such as problem solving, emotional intelligence and communication. Yet too many children lack access to high-quality early learning environments that promote early development, particularly children from low-income backgrounds. Without these opportunities, [children are less likely to be reading at grade level by third grade, less likely to graduate from high school and more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system](#). If we want our children to possess the skills needed to meet the changing demands of work, serve

in the military and help our country compete globally, the work to prepare children for future success must start before children are even born.

2. **Early childhood programs are part of a city's infrastructure.** Any elected local leader will tell you that a sustainable system of infrastructure is integral to a modern economy. Just like roads and bridges allow parents to make it to work in the morning, the large percentage of the workforce who are parents could not be productive employees without the peace of mind that comes with knowing one's child is in a high-quality early learning environment. Both parents work in 65 percent of families with children under six, and too many of these parents struggle to maintain stable employment because they lack access to reliable, safe and affordable child care. This in turn impacts a city's economy. Nationally, [\\$4.4 billion in economic productivity](#) is lost each year due to employee absenteeism resulting from child care break-downs. As we think about the need to update our nation's infrastructure, we should think about the early care and education system as a key component of that infrastructure.
3. **Early childhood jobs are job of the future – let's make sure they are quality jobs.** NLC's [report about the impact of automation lists preschool teachers among the top seven jobs that technology cannot easily replace](#). Care and education jobs, such as those in early childhood education, cannot easily be automated or outsourced. However, too often early childhood educators lack the compensation, preparation and opportunities for career advancement to truly make these forward-thinking jobs of the future. All of the benefits of early childhood education are described above are not possible without a prepared, skilled, and well-compensated early childhood workforce. The [median hourly wage for a child care teacher is \\$10.72](#) and systems of professional advancement and professional development are patchwork at best. We need to think systemically to increase pathways and credential opportunities for early childhood educators.

Local elected officials are already leading the way by prioritizing the early childhood workforce and explicitly [connecting investments in early childhood education to the future of work](#).

Whether it is convening focus groups of parents and providers to gather input or allotting city budget dollars for scholarships for teachers to increase their credentials, there are numerous small and large steps city leaders can take to prepare their workforce and improve the quality of early learning experiences.



About the author: Alana Eichner is the Early Childhood Senior Associate in [NLC's Institute for Youth, Education, and Families](#).

BUILDING CITY-WIDE SYSTEMS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR CHILDREN:

INITIAL LESSONS FROM THE *BY ALL MEANS* CONSORTIUM



April 2018



AUTHORS

Lynne Sacks, Ed.D.
Jessica Boyle, Ed.M.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was made possible with generous support and guidance from The Oak Foundation. In addition, we express appreciation to our research assistants, Vicky Kawesa, Chelsea Myers, and Matthew Robinson, and to the city team members who gave us their time and advice as we drafted these cases.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The cases contained within this report were researched and written between December 2016 and January 2018.

ABOUT THE EDUCATION REDESIGN LAB

The Education Redesign Lab was founded and is led by Paul Reville, the Francis Keppel Professor of Educational Policy and Administration at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and former Massachusetts Secretary of Education. The Lab's mission is to partner with communities to build integrated education and child development systems, to research and disseminate best practices in the field, and to advance a new vision for education in order to restore social mobility and close achievement and opportunity gaps.

BUILDING CITY-WIDE SYSTEMS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR CHILDREN:

INITIAL LESSONS FROM THE *BY ALL MEANS* CONSORTIUM

When Paul Reville ended his five-year tenure as the Massachusetts Secretary of Education in 2013, the state was widely acknowledged as a nationwide leader in K–12 education. Massachusetts students consistently ranked at or near the top of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and other national rankings of student achievement, and Massachusetts students also outperformed those of many other countries on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) exams. Despite these successes, Reville could not shake an uncomfortable truth: the overall achievements of Massachusetts students masked large gaps on every measure of performance that correlated strongly with socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, disability, and English language learner status.

These gaps are not unique to Massachusetts; they exist in every state across the country. Poverty in particular has been a persistent and overwhelming predictor of poor outcomes on all measures of child achievement and wellbeing across the United States, which several decades of school reform have not been able to change. Conversations about education reform have generally avoided or minimized the impact of poverty on student success, either because of the belief that poverty is too difficult a challenge to address directly or out of concern that poverty will be used as an excuse for poor performance.

Despite this reluctance to discuss the effects of poverty directly, its impact on children is clear and pervasive. Children living in poverty experience disadvantages at every life stage relative to their better-resourced peers. By age three, children in low-income families have heard 30 million fewer words than children in better-off families. Only about 46 percent of children aged three through six in families below the federal poverty line are enrolled in center-based early childhood programming, compared to 72 percent of children in families above the federal poverty line.¹ Poor children

are about 25 percent less likely to be ready for school at age five than children who are not poor.² Once in school, these children lag behind their better-off peers in reading and math, are less likely to be enrolled in college preparatory coursework, less likely to graduate, and over 10 percent more likely to require remediation if they attend a four-year post-secondary institution.³ All of these issues compound one another to create a cycle of low opportunity: children in poverty are less likely to achieve high educational attainment, and low educational attainment leads to lower median weekly earnings and higher rates of unemployment.

Children in poverty are also more likely than other children to experience multiple adverse childhood experiences (ACE)—e.g., witnessing violence, having substance abuse in the home, or having an incarcerated parent—which have been shown to hinder academic and social-emotional growth. Children in families below the poverty level are more than three times as likely to experience two or more adverse child and family events as children in families at 400 percent or more of the poverty level.⁴ These ACEs in turn contribute to disproportionately high adverse health and mental health outcomes for children in low-income households. This multitude of non-academic and academic challenges traps low-income children in a self-reinforcing cycle that causes and perpetuates gaps between them and children with access to more resources.

Socioeconomic status is not the only category in which disparities persist. Substantial opportunity and outcome gaps are also prevalent between white students and students of color, students with disabilities and students without, and English learners and those proficient in English. While 20 years of education reform has yielded some progress for America's students, it has failed to achieve the central goals of American public education: excellence and equity for all.

Creating the Education Redesign Lab and the *By All Means* Consortium

Recognizing the need for a new children's opportunity agenda, Reville founded the Education Redesign Lab at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 2014. The Lab's goal is to create systemic, silo-breaking approaches to addressing the comprehensive needs of children, especially those living in poverty, by developing personalized systems of support and opportunity both within and outside of school. The core ideas underpinning the Lab's work are that schools alone cannot address all the factors that lead to negative outcomes for children and that it will take a coordinated, system-wide approach to make real change.

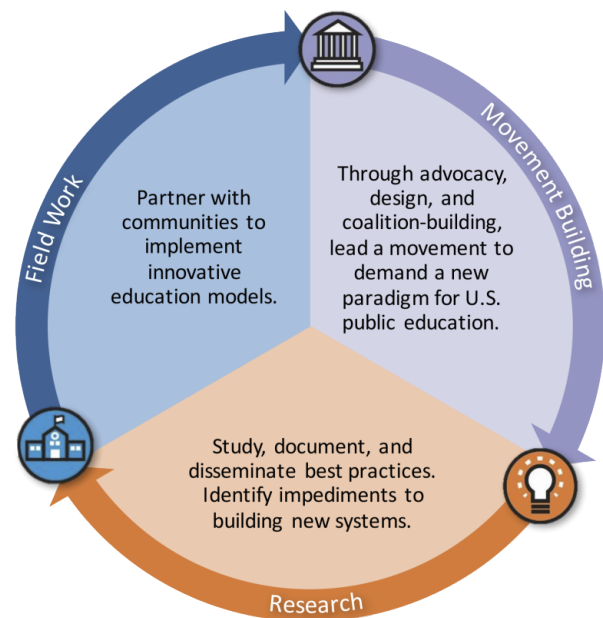
To overcome widespread inequity in supports, opportunities, and outcomes for children, the Lab is working to ensure that all children have access to personalized systems of support and opportunity starting in early childhood and throughout a developmental pathway that builds student engagement and agency while preparing them for success in higher education and careers. Features of these personalized systems include:

Systems of whole-child support: No matter how much schools improve, children need more than academic supports or improved schools to thrive; they must also be physically and emotionally healthy to be prepared to learn throughout their K-12 years. In a true support model, early childhood, health, mental health, and social service supports will be comprehensive, braided with educational services, and designed to address critical barriers to learning and development.

Student-centered, tailored learning: Meet children where they are and give them what they need to succeed. Through well-executed, student-centered learning, each student is able to achieve academically to the best of his or her abilities. This definition of learning broadens the typical "personalization"

field to include a whole-child personalized approach, so that cities create learning environments where students are at the center.

Systems of opportunity: Systems of opportunity enable each student to chart his or her own path toward a rewarding career. Low-income children are much less likely to participate in preschool or out-of-school enrichment activities than their more affluent peers, and when they do, the programs are generally inconsistent in quality and availability. To address these gaps, a coordinated system of programs and services needs to be crafted so that every child has access to preschool, expanded learning, summer, and work-based opportunities that enrich them as learners and help them build the important skills, networks, and social capital that will serve them in the future.



THE LAB'S INTEGRATED STRATEGY

The Lab leverages three key strategies to define and advance this vision for whole-child personalized systems:

1. **Field Work:** Supporting city leaders and teams to accelerate the implementation of effective practices, enabling conditions, and systems integration;

2. **Research:** Disseminating curated and original actionable research on the critical components and examples of redesigned education systems; and
3. **Movement Building:** Promoting this vision, in collaboration with key partners, through strategic communication, capacity building, and advocacy around critical state and local policies.

In February of 2016, the Lab launched the *By All Means* initiative to test and refine its theory that meeting the complex array of children's needs and developing their interests and talents requires a system-wide approach. Six small- to mid-sized cities joined the initiative to work in partnership with the Lab over a two-and-a-half-year period: Louisville, Kentucky; Oakland, California; Providence, Rhode Island; and Salem, Somerville, and Newton in Massachusetts.

The goal was for the cities to begin designing and implementing new, personalized systems for serving children while the Lab supported and documented this process in order to identify enablers of and barriers to progress that could help other cities take on this work.

By All Means (BAM) is informed by a mayor-driven “collective impact” approach to addressing social challenges through collaborative action.⁵ Mayors have a unique ability to drive this work. According to Oakland mayor Libby Schaaf, “As mayors, we have the opportunity to change how public systems work, as opposed to just starting another program. . . . We can change the expectations and beliefs of an entire generation of children. There is no nonprofit organization that can deliver that kind of promise, and we should really be aware of that opportunity that only government has.”

Collective impact encompasses a number of core practices, including having one or more strong champions, identifying shared goals and common metrics, and creating a “backbone” organization to support the work.⁶ A second defining frame for this work is the central role of leadership in effecting change. Ronald Heifetz’ theory of “adaptive leadership” acknowledges the complexity of many leadership challenges and the need for new mindsets and

ways of leading rather than simply technical solutions to many leadership challenges.⁷

The Lab chose to work with cities as the unit of change because they are increasingly emerging as sites of innovation and leadership on issues that are struggling to gain traction nationally. Cities also represent relatively discrete systems that already provide a number of direct services to children. Four of the six BAM cities are in New England, one is in the South, and one on the West Coast. The cities range in population from 760,000 (Louisville, KY) to 43,000 (Salem, MA). They represent the complex array of governance relationships between mayors, school superintendents, and school boards across the country, from mayors who directly select superintendents, to those with have no formal influence on the schools at all. Finally, they vary demographically, with differing levels of poverty, different racial and ethnic makeups, and different histories. The variations among the cities have afforded the Lab opportunities to compare how a city-wide initiative could be implemented in different contexts.

FORMING THE CONSORTIUM

The Lab identified cities for potential inclusion in BAM through a combination of word of mouth, research, and outreach, which included a presentation at an October 2015 meeting of the United States Conference of Mayors. Using the criteria below, the Lab then invited the cities to submit applications for membership.

Mayoral Commitment and Leadership: Mayoral commitment and willingness to lead a collective action approach was the first essential element for participation. The rationale for this is that addressing all the factors affecting children's wellbeing requires a city-wide effort, and that this starts with strong leadership from the top. The Lab believes that mayors have the political capital and convening power to make BAM a high-visibility, high-impact effort.

City-School District Partnership: While mayoral leadership is central to the Lab's theory of action, schools are and will continue to be the hub of service provision for children. The aim of BAM is to

create a broad coalition to share the responsibility for children with the schools. For this to happen, it is essential that the mayor and school superintendent have a strong working relationship and a shared commitment to the BAM work.

Existing Work: By design, each of the cities chosen for the consortium had already begun to take action toward a more comprehensive approach to serving children. The expectation was that BAM would build on and accelerate these actions while knitting together different initiatives under a single framework, rather than helping cities build something completely new. In some cases, cities already had a substantial number of initiatives underway.

Stability: Although there is no way to guarantee this—as shown by the unexpected leadership departures in several BAM cities—the Lab looked for cities that appeared to have some degree of stability in their key leadership positions. It also looked for sites that were relatively stable financially, while recognizing that cities and school districts face constant financial pressures.

Size: The Lab intentionally targeted small- and mid-sized cities for BAM, since these offered the greatest chance of success and learning in the early stages of the work.

CORE COMMITMENTS AND SUPPORTS

Because BAM is intentionally designed to be experimental, with variation across cities, the Lab took a “light touch” approach to core city commitments and Lab supports. Each city agreed to participate in the following required elements of BAM’s model, and the Lab provided resources on best practices rather than prescriptive requirements on how to best implement or take advantage of them:

Children’s Cabinet: Children’s Cabinets are the governance structure for each city’s BAM work. These cabinets create a high-level mechanism to coordinate services for children across city and non-governmental organizations. Each city in the consortium has formed a cabinet that is chaired

by the mayor, is co-chaired by the superintendent or another city leader, and includes representation from health and social services and other government and community organizations.

Consultant: To ensure the work of the cabinet moves forward between cabinet meetings and has a designated facilitator, the Lab supports a part-time consultant in each city. The Lab and the cities worked together to identify candidates for these positions; in some cases, the consultants already had deep local experience, while in others they were newcomers to the city contexts. The role is envisioned as a process facilitator rather than a content expert.

Twice-Yearly Convenings: To further support the cities’ work, the Lab sponsors a semi-annual series of convenings at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Starting with the first convening in May 2016, city teams have come together with the Lab staff and outside experts as a way to deepen and accelerate the work and to build opportunities for cross-city sharing of information and resources. Each convening has included a mix of presentations and panels by top education and policy experts, “team time” for city teams to work together, and opportunities for cross-city sharing of progress. The Lab also arranges for individual meetings between cities and experts in particular areas of interest, such as financing, equity, or early childhood education.

Documentation and Evaluation: Cities agreed to participate in an ongoing documentation and evaluation process, which serves multiple purposes: to share lessons with a broader audience; to assist cities in tracking their progress on a range of process, opportunity, and outcome measures; and to inform the Lab’s iterative approach to supporting the cities in this work.

Additional Supports: The Lab has provided a range of additional supports tailored to the needs of each city that has included Reville and others’ participation in key city events, helping cities identify and connect with program partners and potential funders, and assistance with data use and outcome measures.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

As the cities began their work, there was an obvious need to create a way of measuring each city's progress toward its goals. For an initiative initially designed to last only two-and-a-half years, this presented a challenge: it would take time to design and implement the elements of the work that could lead to improvements in student outcomes, with the first potential child outcomes likely not coming until near the end of the time period or even later. The early work in each of the cities focused on creating the Children's Cabinets, and the variation in initiatives from city to city meant that using common measures across all six cities was unfeasible.

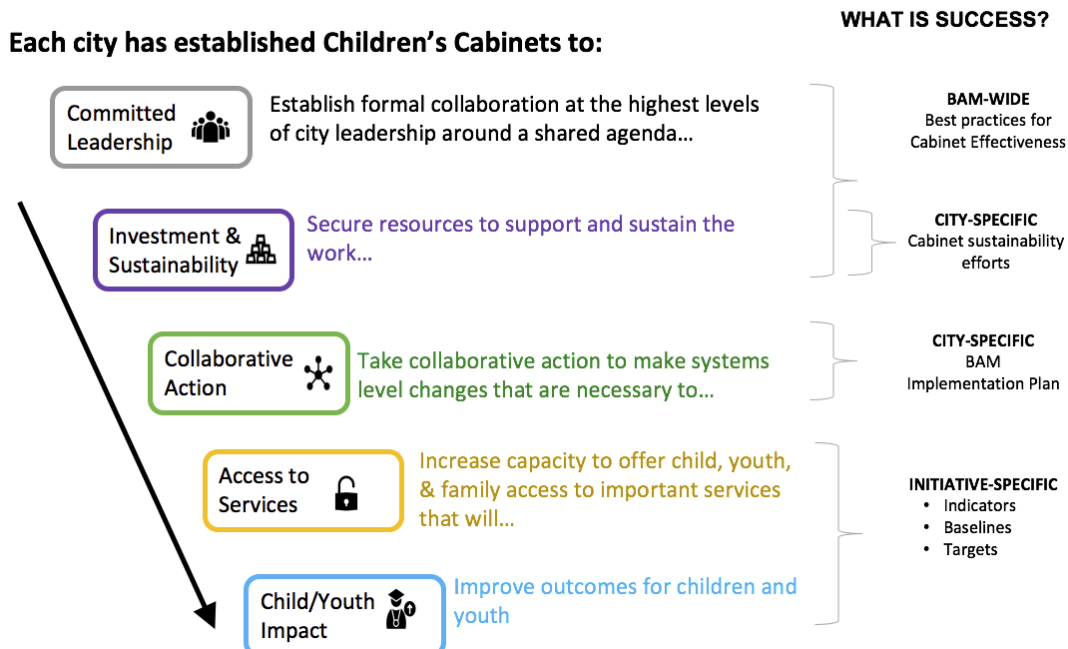
To address these issues, the Lab developed a framework through an iterative process that acknowledged the three phases of the work in each city:

1. Creating cross-agency governance structures through the cabinets;
2. Providing increased programming and services to children; and
3. Improving outcomes for children.

The Lab shared an early version of the framework with city teams prior to the October 2016 convening and met with the cities' data or evaluation representatives during the convening to review it and its use. The current framework, derived from collective action approaches, contains three process-focused categories that can be measured qualitatively through evidence, and two outcome-focused categories that can be measured quantitatively through data.

This Measures of Success framework serves several functions: it tells a story about the systems-level work to better serve children and youth across multiple initiatives, it provides accessible information that can be used to inform cabinet-level conversations and discussions with potential partners and funders, and it can trigger conversations and collaborative action to improve capacity to use data for effective decision-making. The Lab also hoped to identify a small set of common quantitative measures that could provide some cross-city comparison of progress, but this proved impossible given the range of initiatives and focus on different age groups. Instead, the Lab has included chronic absenteeism as the single measure to be tracked in

Measures of Success Framework



each city. While this measure will not make it possible to compare progress across city initiatives in any meaningful way, it does provide a common indicator that can serve as a proxy for a number of factors that influence child wellbeing, including health, mental health, and family stability.

The Lab asked each city to define its outcomes and obtain cabinet approval for them prior to the May 2017 convening. Though this was accomplished, the measures carry different levels of weight in different cities: while several cabinets have begun using the measures framework during meetings to track their progress, others have not yet incorporated them into ongoing discussions about the work. In addition, some teams have seen the work shift in a way that necessitates a change in the outcomes. Since the spring of 2017, the Lab has been working with the consultants and city data leads to identify and collect the specific data that cities will use to track their outcomes.

DOCUMENTATION OF PROGRESS

Documenting and learning from the work of the *By All Means* consortium is a central component of the Lab's iterative approach. This research is designed to distill the enablers of and barriers to this cross-sector work, in order to inform the ongoing work of the consortium as well as to provide actionable research for other cities interested in undertaking a similar comprehensive agenda for children. This report documents the first 18 months of BAM's initial two-and-a-half-year duration and focuses on the following elements: leadership, including cabinet effectiveness; partnerships and relationships; external factors; data; and funding. The final report, to be released in 2019, will focus on sustainability, moving to implementation, the experiences of participants in the new programs and services, and trends in outcomes for children across a range of metrics.

Data for this overview include multiple, in-depth interviews with each city's mayor, superintendent, and other key participants in the change process;

observations of Children's Cabinet meetings; reviews of minutes from additional cabinet meetings; and anonymous surveys given to participants at the conclusion of each of the Lab's convenings. To date, Lab researchers have visited each of the six cities twice, at approximately six-month intervals.

Building Collaborative City-Wide Change

During the early stages of *By All Means*, the six cities in the consortium created Children's Cabinets if they did not already have one, identified specific areas of focus for their work, and began, in most places, implementing initiatives directly benefiting children. Among the initiatives the cabinets have undertaken are increasing access to preschool, improving behavioral health services, expanding access to personalized learning and summer programming, and implementing individualized supports and enrichment plans. Several cities have also focused on creating data-sharing agreements between different agencies. In each case, the goal is to move toward creating systems that integrate services and supports in order to make it possible for every child to come to school ready to learn every day. In addition, each city has identified an initial set of measures by which it will track its progress, and most have either secured funding or developed a funding strategy.

The following overview provides initial findings of the enabling factors that have been important in determining how the work has unfolded and some of the challenges cities have faced in their efforts to create new systems. It features brief illustrations of these enabling factors and challenges where possible. The city-specific summaries that accompany this overview provide greater detail on how BAM has evolved in each city.

LEADERSHIP

Mayoral Leadership Enables High-Level Collaborative Action

Putting mayors at the forefront of BAM marked a notable change from many collective impact efforts. The Lab's goal was to ensure that this would be a collaborative, city-wide effort with the political clout that comes from mayoral involvement. The experiences of the BAM cities confirm the value of leading with mayors: cabinet members pointed to the mayors as the most crucial factor signaling BAM's high priority and a key draw in bringing cabinet members and executives to the table.

Mayors also have a unique platform to shine a spotlight on the joint moral and economic imperatives of ensuring the success of the children in their cities. A number of mayors have spoken out forcefully on the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing poverty that goes beyond schools. In addition, several mayors have used their political capital to help raise money for their cities' BAM and other child-focused efforts. In one city, the mayor expended significant political capital on behalf of an effort to bring integrated student supports to schools by pushing through a funding mechanism that was not initially supported by the City Council; this persistence resulted in substantial benefits for K–8 students that fall. In another city, the mayor has used her prominent position to raise millions of dollars in scholarships for students, including an annual birthday celebration that raises money for the cause.

Mayors have highlighted the value of the twice-yearly convenings, mentioning four elements in particular: the opportunity to talk informally with other mayors about the work; the opportunity to meet with their teams outside of their cities, which enables them to form closer relationships and make substantial progress on strategy and planning; the “peer pressure” of publicly sharing their progress at each convening; and the leadership sessions with Ronald Heifetz, an internationally recognized expert on adaptive leadership. Mayors have, in all but one city, regularly attended the Children's Cabinet meetings,

and all mayors have participated in the convenings at Harvard.

There are also risks to linking collective action efforts so closely to mayors. If a mayor leaves, it may be difficult to sustain momentum under the new leadership. For this reason, it is important for the entire cabinet to be deeply engaged in and committed to the effort.

Cabinet Members Need the Decision-Making Authority to Enact Change

Setting up a Children's Cabinet and calling it to meet is—with mayoral leadership—relatively straightforward; creating a cabinet with the right members and a clear plan that enables cross-agency work is much harder. An important feature of successful cabinets is the decision-making authority necessary to enact real change. In all but one city, the mayor and superintendent attended nearly every meeting, which signaled to their staff and other cabinet members that the work was a priority and catalyzed action; their absence affected the level of discussion at the meetings. Successful cabinets also saw serendipitous funding opportunities arise when representatives from local businesses or foundations participated as cabinet members. Additionally, cabinets with the most productive meetings established clearly defined, action-oriented agendas, as well as processes for capturing and sharing updates and action items from each meeting.

In the early stages of BAM, most cities struggled to find the right membership and function for the cabinets. To this end, Elizabeth Gaines, Senior Fellow at the Forum for Youth Investment and an expert in supporting Children's Cabinets, shared best practices with the city teams at the first BAM convening. Still, it took time for cities to determine who should be at the table, how frequently they should meet, and what the goals of the meetings should be.

A few cabinets initially did not reflect a diversity of backgrounds and experiences. Several cities tackled this issue by engaging in a stakeholder mapping process and bringing on leadership that represented constituents who were not initially included. All six

cities refined their initial membership over time, and most also created one or more separate working groups to move the effort forward between meetings.

One city refined its cabinet structure and processes after seeing meetings swell to as many as 30 people. The team set clear guidelines for inclusion: only the top executive from each organization would be at the table. Should that executive be unable to attend, a designee granted decision-making authority attends in his or her place if possible; if not, the absent cabinet member is expected to respond to any action items within 48 hours. Cabinet members can bring additional staff from their organizations, but those staff do not sit at the table. This new setup allows the group to clearly determine who is on the cabinet, but also enables critical staff to share updates with the cabinet and stay up-to-date on cabinet work. Every cabinet meeting has action items, from crafting an elevator speech that each member can use to talk about the work in the same way, to agreeing on the broad frame for a data-sharing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). A cross-sector core team meets weekly between cabinet meetings to move projects forward, oversee other working groups, and set future agendas. These formal structures and processes were built around the work that had already been initiated, enabling the team to produce a structure that made sense and would not impose unnecessary rigidity.

Across cities, the frequency of cabinet meetings varied from every three or four weeks to just a few a year, with the BAM convenings providing two additional meeting opportunities per year. The cities meeting most regularly made substantial progress in their BAM work: they formed the strongest relationships between the cabinet members, engaged most stakeholders regularly, and generated collective decisions and plans. Among those meeting less frequently, the amount of progress was highly dependent on whether there were people on the team making a strong effort to move the work forward more informally.

Strategies for Effective Cabinets

- ☐ Consist of decision-makers and executives who are representative of the community. Meet regularly (monthly or bi-monthly).
- ☐ Collectively establish a common vision for and understanding of the work.
- ☐ Articulate structures and processes that help streamline complex efforts.
- ☐ Create action-oriented agendas to make cross-agency decisions, share progress, and plan next steps.
- ☐ Carry the work forward between meetings via working groups or small teams.

Cities Must Create Dedicated Internal Capacity

The part-time consultants hired by the Lab are tasked with moving the work forward and providing process support to the city teams, but this logistical and motivational work cannot depend on them alone. Since cabinets rely heavily on executive leadership, it is important for supporting staff to be deeply embedded in the work as well. Otherwise, these high-level leaders would not have the capacity to coordinate the logistics of day-to-day systems change. In several of our cities, internal support has come from the deep involvement of one to three staff members, from either the school or city side (or both), who work closely with the consultant. In one city, for example, the consultant works closely with staff across three sectors: one from the mayor's office, one from the school district, and one from a nonprofit organization with experience as a backbone structure. This structure is ideal, since the transition of any one person would be less likely to deliver a significant blow to the work's momentum.

In another city, a school district employee has taken on much of the work in partnership with the consultant. While this has resulted in a strong and fruitful partnership, it poses risks to sustainability if one should leave. Another city, with a similarly heavy reliance but on city staff, experienced some

momentum loss when both the consultant and the key city staff role turned over mid-initiative. It is beneficial, then, for staff support to come from multiple people across multiple sectors, both to maintain momentum and to ensure long-term sustainability.

In addition to having key support staff participate in the logistics and moving the work forward, broader staff involvement is beneficial to generating a truly collective approach. This involvement fosters relationships between agencies and creates a network of activity that is harder to disrupt when there is a leadership change or an unexpected obstacle. Several consultants saw a rapid uptick in productivity when cabinets formed working groups to move the content-based work forward between meetings. Across the cities, these working groups focused on topics like governance, data sharing, out-of-school time initiatives, preschool access, and communications.

Strategies for Creating Internal Capacity

- ☐ Determine who will be responsible for moving the work forward and how much time they will need to do it.
- ☐ Free up time for staff people to do this work or identify funding to hire additional staff.
- ☐ Clarify roles and responsibilities.

Sustaining Momentum Despite Leadership Turnover

Given the high rates of turnover among urban superintendents and mayors, changes in leadership are inevitable. There is no denying that this can pose serious challenges to the momentum and sustainability of a leadership-initiated collective impact model, and *By All Means* has not been immune to this phenomenon. Within 15 months of the launch of BAM, three key leaders left or announced plans to leave their positions. One superintendent opted to leave mid-year to become the chancellor of a different urban school district, while another

superintendent resigned under pressure from the local school board. In late 2016, a mayor in the cohort announced he was not running for reelection, and announced his bid for governor that spring.

One city navigated a superintendent transition smoothly because, according to participant interviews, the cabinet had already identified and articulated a shared vision for children prior to the superintendent's departure. In addition, the strong relationships that had formed across leaders and staff as a result of frequent cabinet meetings enabled them to proceed without disruption. When encountering this obstacle and others, the cabinet members agreed that the work was too far along to stop or slow. Reflecting the district's commitment to the work, the incoming acting superintendent began attending cabinet meetings during the transition period, ensuring there would be no gap in school department involvement. While it is too early to assess the long-term persistence of BAM in any city, the factors interviewees identified as most central to its continuation through leadership changes at the district are the continued support of the mayor, the continuity of key staff, the cross-agency relationships developed among staff, the existence of tangible plans to carry out the work, and the strength of broad-based support in the cabinet and the community.

Community understanding of and demand for a comprehensive agenda to support children is important for long-term sustainability, especially as the work begins to involve changing practices and new funding. As the work has progressed, most cities have begun developing strategies for engaging their communities and linking the elements of BAM together to create a city-wide movement. One city held a community-based education summit in the spring of 2017, with grant support facilitated by the Lab, to solicit input on a cohesive local vision for education. That summit resulted in a report with recommendations that are being incorporated into the local work. Several other cities are giving the work a name, such as Our Salem, Our Kids or Louisville Promise, as a way of succinctly framing and messaging a complex set of undertakings. Other efforts to engage the

community include the co-creation of short elevator speeches that all cabinet members can use to describe goals and actions using common language, and the development of websites that describe the comprehensive work and include links to a broad set of community resources. While these efforts are still in the early stages, cities are finding that engaging with their communities more actively—particularly the communities they are hoping to positively impact—is an important component of the work, and is likely an effective strategy for sustaining momentum through leadership change.

PARTNERSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Collective impact approaches require strong individual relationships and organizational partnerships to succeed. In the context of BAM, the most important partnership is between the mayor and superintendent; while mayors lead the effort to create a new city-wide responsibility for children, superintendents govern the largest and most important child-serving agency. All BAM superintendents welcomed the recognition that schools alone cannot address all the challenges of children living in poverty and the shift to a more collaborative responsibility for providing practical supports.

Strong City-School Relationships Are a Primary Predictor of Progress

Cities with strong partnerships between the mayor and superintendent were, not surprisingly, able to move forward more quickly to implement child-facing initiatives. There is a complex array of governance relationships between mayors, school superintendents, and school boards across the country, and the cities in the consortium reflect this range. In a number of the cities, the mayor has a role in selecting the superintendent. In one city, for example, the mayor chairs the school committee, which then selects the superintendent. In another city, the mayor appoints all members of the school committee. At the other end of the spectrum, two of the cohort's mayors have no direct influence over the selection of the superintendent.

In some cities, the mayor-superintendent relationships were collaborative even before joining the consortium, while in others there had been little shared work. In two cities, the shared vision between the mayor and superintendent around developing a comprehensive agenda for children was strong enough that the school district's strategic plan was created in alignment with the cabinet's priorities. There was strong consensus that the convenings were effective as a means of deepening relationships between mayors and superintendents and in facilitating the creation of a common vision. Cities in which the superintendent left in the midst of the initiative found that the continuation of the city-school partnership depended on whether there was strong staff support and buy-in.

Children's Cabinets Facilitate New Working Partnerships

Partnerships and relationships with other city agencies and outside organizations are also crucial to this work. As cabinet members developed relationships with each other, unanticipated partnerships emerged. Cabinet members across the six cities highlighted examples of ways their new relationships facilitated innovative and efficient partnerships, from informal arrangements, like the Department of Health and Human Services lending a bus to facilitate transportation for growing afterschool programming, to the creation of formal MOUs and data-sharing agreements signed across agencies. A few cities benefited from having already built at least a partial foundation of cross-agency work, and saw those relationships and partnerships accelerate with BAM.

Partnerships have also emerged with organizations not present on the cabinet. From fully-developed interventions that come with institutional infrastructure to funding support to thought partnership, ongoing connections with outside organizations expand the scope of what cities are able to accomplish. Several cities, for example, partnered with nonprofit organizations that provide out-of-school programming or in-school integrated student supports that allowed them to expand the services available to children without having to build the capacity internally.

On Track for Kindergarten Readiness:

How Cities can Support a Prenatal to Age 3 Agenda



In partnership with the Pritzker Children's Initiative (PCI), National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers the National League of Cities' (NLC), Cities Supporting a Strong Prenatal to Age 3 Agenda (PN-3) offers city leaders guidance and support to establish and strengthen prenatal to age three strategies to achieve better outcomes for their youngest residents through improving kindergarten readiness for all children. The first three years are the bricks and mortar of brain development, setting the foundation for all learning. During this time the brain develops at a speed never to be repeated later in life, which is why taking advantage of the early years including in policies that promote healthy development is so important. Investments in the early years builds the foundation for all future learning, behavior, and health.

GOAL AREAS

Anchoring this work is the outcomes framework of the National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers. This framework identifies systems-level, policy/program-level, and child/family level outcomes that can help to ensure children are on track for school readiness by age three in the areas of: **Healthy Beginnings, Supported Families, and Quality Care and Learning.**



Healthy Beginnings:

A prenatal to age three agenda that supports healthy beginnings works to ensure that pregnant women and children are healthy.



Supported Families:

Children live in safe, stable, and nurturing families and communities.



Quality Care and Learning:

Children are cared for in high-quality settings that support their social, emotional, and intellectual development.

Indicators of a robust Prenatal to Age 3 Early Childhood System:



Cities can use indicators to better monitor the health and well-being of infants, toddlers, and their families. These data points can help inform citywide planning efforts, set goals, track progress, and hold programs accountable for implementing reforms and measuring the success of early learning initiatives.

Healthy Beginnings:

- Infants, toddlers and families experience healthy births and optimal health and development through age 3.
- Families have access to prenatal care, as well as preventative and comprehensive healthcare.
 - Reduction of incidents of child injuries, death, and health issues.
 - Increases in the availability of evidenced-based home visiting models that are designed to provide ongoing supports to newborns who have been identified as at-risk.

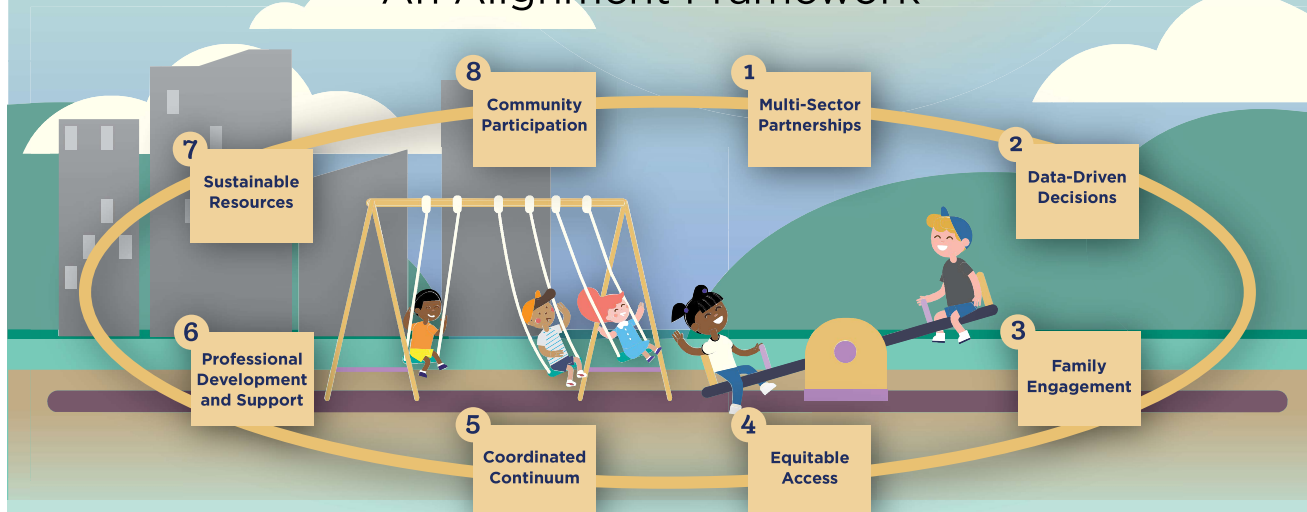
Supported Families:

- Develop a collaborative network of early childhood stakeholders, identify models for coordinated intake.
 - Increasing the number of family and caregiver engagement to services and programming available in their community.
 - Advocate for policy change to improve local and state family services; increase access to resources and address the social, economic, and political factors that harm health; and ensure the financial sustainability of a high functioning public preconception, pregnancy, and early childhood system.

Quality Care and Learning:

- Infants, toddlers and families experience nurturing and responsive care in safe settings
- Families have access to affordable care options that infants, toddlers and families' needs
 - Increases in children receiving and referral through surveillance, screening, or assessment.
 - All infant and toddler caregivers have opportunities to build competencies through education, training, coaching, and other effective forms of professional learning that are appropriate for the settings of care.

Equitable Early Care and Education System: An Alignment Framework



Through alignment, city leaders can work across sectors and their communities to align programs, design policies and ultimately build a system that is responsive and supportive of young children and their families. Through alignment, city leaders can prevent duplication of services; address gaps in services; unify citywide policies and practices to improve quality and wellbeing; and create an equitable early care and education system. In an equitable early care and education system, all children and families have what they need to ensure all children reach their potential.

Eight Elements of an Equitable Early Care and Education System



1. Partnerships with multi-sector, collaborative structures

Public and private sectors work together to ensure the community has the policies, resources and infrastructure for creating an aligned and equitable early care and education system.



2. Data-driven practices, policies and strategies that inform policy and support equitable outcomes

A shared system for data collection, analysis and reporting informs the decisions of all stakeholders.



3. Family engagement and support

Families are fully engaged partners and cities foster relationships that fully engage families and children in successful, equitable early learning experiences.



4. Access to affordable, high-quality early care and education

All families have access to affordable, diverse, high-quality early care and education environments.



5. Coordinated continuum of developmentally appropriate care and education

The continuum of care in each community is aligned and offers developmentally appropriate care and education to its children.



6. Professional development and support for the early childhood workforce

The early learning workforce is elevated and valued for its contribution and is appropriately compensated, trained and supported to give high-quality learning experiences to all children.



7. Sustainability and coordination of sufficient resources, funding, policies and practices

Strong, sustained and coordinated community support on behalf of children and families ensures sufficient resources and funding.



8. Community awareness and engagement

An equitable early care and education continuum is a priority for all elected officials and community stakeholders.

Using the Framework:

Each element has four sections that can be used by local coalitions and city staff to reflect on the current early childhood landscape within their city and consider areas of opportunity.



Vision Statement

A high-level vision of what the element would look like if it were fully realized within a city. A brief discussion follows the vision statement and provides insight and learnings from the revision process.



Components and Attributes

Provides specificity and deepening of the element definition.



City Support

Potential ways city leadership and municipalities can take action to achieve this element.



Equity Considerations

Provides questions to consider in order to build equity into all elements and aspects of early care and education.



THE GATHERING PLACE FOR #BRAINBUILDING COMMUNITIES

Let's Create An Early Learning Community

Wait, What's an Early Learning Community?

By Cailin O'Connor
on June 1, 2019

Did you know that children's earliest experiences—with their families and caregivers, and in their neighborhoods—establish the foundation for their health, learning and future success? In turn, parents' and caregivers' abilities to provide the best possible experiences for young children are influenced by the communities in which they live.

The influence of "place" on child and family well-being is becoming more and more clear. Earlier this year, [ZERO to THREE](#) and [Child Trends](#) collaborated to create the *State of Babies Yearbook: 2019*, a first-of-its-kind resource that provides a state-by-state snapshot of how babies and their families are doing. One of the most powerful revelations from the report is that the state where a baby is born makes an outsized difference in the child's chance for a strong start in life. (Read more about the [report on Early Learning Nation](#).) Other research, such as Raj Chetty's recent analysis of long-term outcomes of the [Moving to Opportunity](#) study, demonstrate how a community and neighborhood in childhood can affect people for a lifetime.

This is why the [Center for the Study of Social Policy](#) (CSSP), in partnership with the [National League of Cities](#) (NLC) and the [Bezos Family Foundation](#), are supporting cities and counties across the country to become Early Learning Communities.

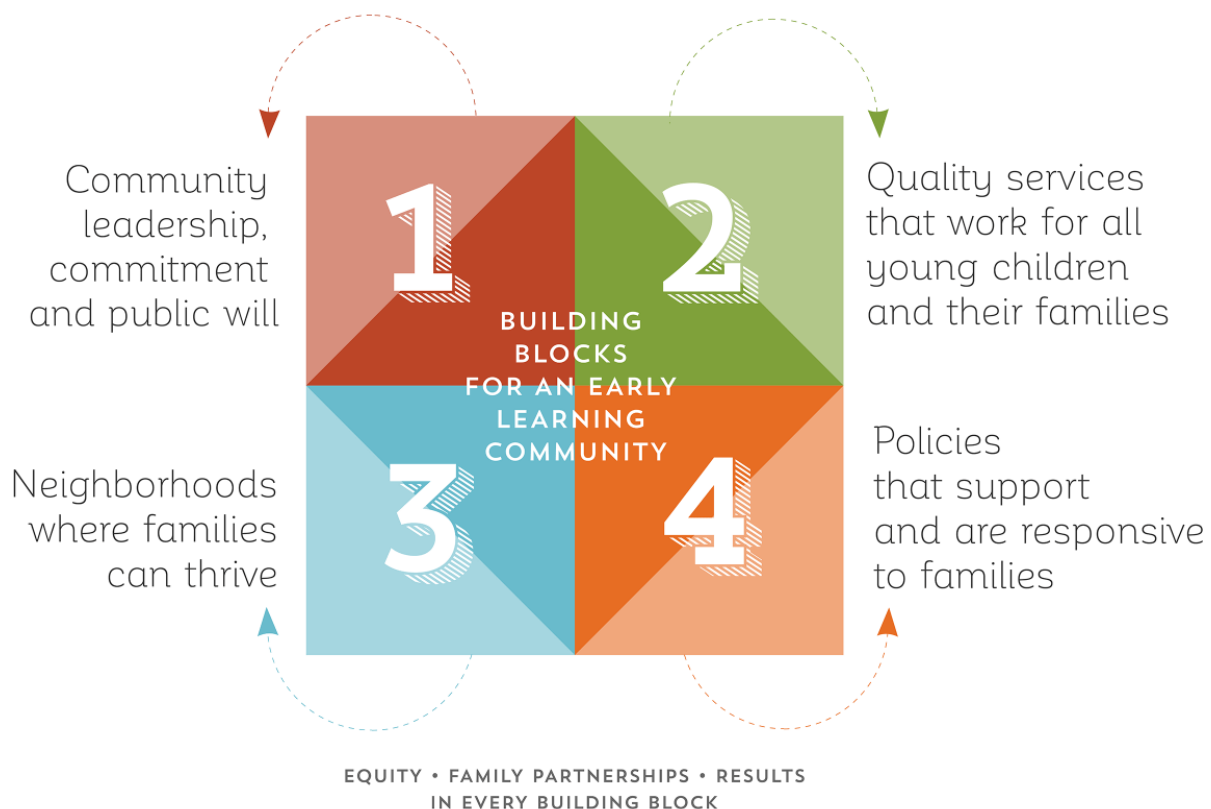
What is an Early Learning Community? It's a place where babies are welcomed into families that have all the opportunities and support they need to nurture and promote their children's early learning and healthy development.

Many communities around the country are actively engaged in achieving this vision. I'm lucky to get to work with leaders and champions from 14 such communities through CSSP's [Early Childhood Learning and Innovation Network for Communities](#) (EC-LINC). We've worked with leaders from these communities to learn about their challenges, successes and what they see as critical to successfully becoming an Early Learning Community. Over the past three years, we've worked with EC-LINC communities, our partners at NLC and the city leaders they convene, and other national experts, to develop the [Early Learning Community Action Guide and Progress Rating Tool](#).

4 Building Blocks for an Early Learning Community

The Action Guide and Progress Rating Tool are built around **four key building blocks**—community characteristics and actions that promote healthy child development and family well-being—that form the foundation of an Early Learning Community. These four building blocks were gleaned from lessons learned in EC-LINC communities and years of deep research on what young children and their families need:

1. **COMMITMENT:** Community leadership, commitment and public will to make early childhood a priority
2. **SERVICES:** Quality services that work for all young children and their families
3. **NEIGHBORHOODS:** Neighborhoods where families can thrive
4. **POLICY:** Policies that support and are responsive to families



For each of these building blocks, we've established a set of 3-6 "targets": descriptive statements about what an ideal community would look like – and described three levels communities may have achieved in working toward those targets.

For example, within building block 2 (services), target 2.4 is "Parents and families are actively engaged as partners."

- A community just getting started might be at level 1 for this target: *All child and family service providers receive training and support to help them approach parents as partners.*
- A community further along in the work may have reached level 2: *Parent leadership is integrated into every sector of the early childhood system.*
- A community that has put in significant work in this area could be at a level 3: *Parent leadership and resident engagement are the established norm throughout the community, including for government and government-funded activities.*

Action steps describe specific ways a community might reach each of these levels.

Each community's early childhood leaders, parents and other stakeholders can assess what level their community has reached for each of the targets in the Progress Rating Tool—soon to be released as an interactive, digital tool— then work together to identify priorities and develop an action plan to reach new levels in each of the building blocks.

Parent engagement and leadership was the focus of the target I used as an example above. In fact, family partnerships is one of three themes that run throughout the building blocks and the Early Learning Community Action Guide; the other two are equity and a focus on results.

Both CSSP and NLC are working on the ground with cohorts of cities and communities that have committed to becoming Early Learning Communities. We're exploring opportunities to share the approach with other networks of communities at the state and national levels.

We view the work of becoming an Early Learning Community as an ongoing process, where there's always room to improve current efforts, reach out to new partners and build more connections to strengthen communities. We couldn't be more excited to get more and more communities engaged in becoming Early Learning Communities!

EC-LINC Network of Partners Supports Families, Improves Results for Young Children

Fourteen exemplary communities with long histories of building effective early childhood systems are members of the Early Childhood Learning and Innovation Network for Communities Learning (EC-LINC). Their perspectives and experiences are invaluable to guiding the work and solving common challenges faced by communities together. Member communities and their leading organizations include:

- Alameda County, CA: [First 5 Alameda County](#)
- Boston, MA: [United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley](#)
- Denver, CO: [Denver's Early Childhood Council](#)
- Hartford, CT: [The Office for Community Child Health at Connecticut Children's Medical Center](#)
- Guilford County, NC: [Ready for School, Ready for Life](#)
- Kent County, MI: [First Steps](#)
- Lamoille Valley, VT: [Lamoille Family Center](#) and [Building Bright Futures](#)
- Los Angeles, CA: [First 5 LA](#)
- Multnomah County, OR: [Early Learning Multnomah](#)
- Onondaga County, NY: [Early Childhood Alliance](#)
- Orange County, CA: [Children and Families Commission of Orange County](#)
- Palm Beach, FL: [Children Services Council of Palm Beach County](#)
- Volusia and Flagler Counties, FL: [Thrive by Five](#)
- Ventura, CA: [First 5 Ventura County](#)

Cailin O'Connor

Senior Associate at [Center for the Study of Social Policy](#)

Cailin O'Connor is a Senior Associate at the [Center for the Study of Social Policy](#), where she works to promote better outcomes for young children and their families. Her focus promotes the protective factors that children, families and communities need to thrive. This includes supporting communities in their work to build innovative early childhood systems through the Early Childhood Learning and Innovation Network for Communities (EC-LINC), and coordinating the Strengthening Families National Network of 35 states using CSSP's Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework.



THE GATHERING PLACE FOR #BRAINBUILDING COMMUNITIES

Pre-K in 40 Large American Cities: Improvement? Yes. More Needed? Yes.

By [Paul Cohn](#)

In [Community Engagement](#) on February 4, 2019

The CityHealth organization and the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) at the Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University have just released an evaluation of pre-K programs in 40 cities across the country.

CityHealth is an initiative of the de Beaumont Foundation and Kaiser Permanente that “provides leaders with a package of evidence-based policy solutions that will help millions of people live longer, better lives in vibrant, prosperous communities,” while NIEER conducts and publishes original research on early childhood education policy.

The title of their report, **“Pre-K in American Cities: Quality and Access Grow, but Cities are Missing Opportunities to Create Lasting Benefits for their Youngest Learners”** neatly summarizes its findings: that while cities have been expanding the availability of publicly-funded pre-K to young learners, many of them are failing to meet the benchmarks of high-quality pre-K that should be met for these investments to bear fruit.

What Features Do Best Cities for Pre-K Have?

The 40 cities (listed below) are evaluated based on features that NIEER has found to be commonly held among among effective, high-quality pre-K programs. These features include:

- Learning goals: Comprehensive early learning and development standards to guide teaching and assessment
- Curriculum supports: Guidance for choosing and using content-rich curriculum
- Teacher education level: Lead teachers required to have a bachelor’s degree
- Teacher specialized training: Lead teacher has specialized training for teaching pre-K
- Assistant teacher education: Assistant teacher has a formalized entry-level credential such as the Child Development Associates
- Professional development: Ongoing training for teachers and assistant teachers
- Maximum class size: Maximum number of children per classroom is 20
- Teacher-child ratio: Ratio of teachers to children is 1:10 or better
- Health screening and referral: Screenings for vision, hearing, health, and development concerns, along with referrals to needed services
- Continuous quality improvement system: System to assess program quality used to guide improvement

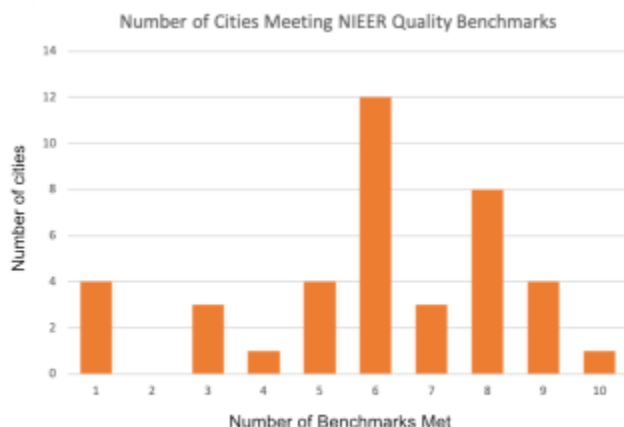
The evaluation also notes whether the program offers salary equity between pre-K teachers and K-12 teachers; enrollment levels; whether the jurisdiction has a local funding stream; and if that funding is used for expanding access or quality.

The report highlights the following findings:

1. Only 60 percent of the cities have programs that reach more than 30 percent of the four-year-old population.
2. Just 23 cities meet the quality benchmark for class size of one teacher and one teaching assistant for every 20 children.
3. While most programs have specialized educational requirements for pre-K teachers, only 6 of the 40 cities require that teachers receive ongoing training, and only 15 require that pre-K teachers be paid comparably with those in the K-12 system.
4. Only 9 cities require that children who are enrolled in pre-K receive vision, hearing, health, and developmental screenings and referrals.
5. 25 cities have “a coordinated system to monitor program implementation and use that information to improve Pre-K practices.”

Historically, cities (and, presumably, employers) have funded child care programs to enable parents of small children to work, with educational quality being a secondary consideration. Cities now are expressly funding child care and pre-K programs to improve children’s school readiness and educational and health outcomes in a variety of ways, using general or targeted funds, and extending the programs either to the general population or to lower-income families.

Access Remains “Highly Unequal”



Clearly, this is a positive step. Nonetheless, in the country as a whole, “access to quality Pre-K remains highly unequal, with low-income and minority children having the least access,” and even in this sample of 40 cities, there is great variability on the delivery of *high-quality* programs: for example, while Washington, DC reaches nearly all of the 3- and 4-year olds in the city, its program meets only 3 of the 10 NIEER quality benchmarks, while Albuquerque, NM, which has a “low” level of enrollment, meets 9 of the 10.

CityHealth and NIEER conclude the report

with the recommendation that these cities continue to strive toward meeting all of the benchmarks while others design programs using these criteria as well.

The cities include Albuquerque, NM; Atlanta, GA; Austin, TX; Baltimore, MD; Boston, MA; Charlotte, NC; Chicago, IL; Columbus, OH; Dallas, TX; Denver, CO; Detroit, MI; El Paso, TX; Fort Worth, TX; Fresno, CA; Houston, TX; Indianapolis, IN; Jacksonville, FL; Kansas City, MO; Las Vegas, NV; Long Beach, CA; Los Angeles, CA; Louisville, KY; Memphis, TN; Mesa, AZ; Milwaukee, WI; Nashville, TN; New York City, NY; Oklahoma City, OK; Philadelphia, PA; Phoenix, AZ; Portland, OR; Sacramento, CA; San Antonio, TX; San Diego, CA; San Francisco, CA; San Jose, CA; Seattle, WA; Tucson, AZ; Virginia Beach, VA; and Washington, DC.

Three New Cities Commit to Supporting a Strong Prenatal to Age 3 Agenda



By [Vera Feeny](#) on [April 26, 2019](#)

Fort Worth, Texas; Saint Paul, Minnesota; and Atlanta joined the National League of Cities' (NLC) [Cities Supporting a Strong Prenatal to Age 3 Agenda initiative](#). Launched In 2018 by the NLC Institute for Youth Education and Families (YEF), the project offers city leaders guidance and support to establish and strengthen prenatal to age 3 strategies to achieve better outcomes for our nation's children.

Earlier this month in Fort Worth, representatives from the three adjunct cities came together to hear from early childhood champions, connect with one another, and share stories of their work.

Participants discussed the importance and need to invest during the prenatal-to-three period as it is critical for healthy development. A child's brain develops faster from birth to age three than at any later period in life, building the foundation for all future learning, behavior, and health.

As adjunct cities, Atlanta, Fort Worth, and Saint Paul will continue their work to strengthen local early learning agendas with a focus on infants, toddlers, and their families.

Through participation in this initiative, the City of Atlanta Office of Equity and Resilience and the Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS) will align with the Promising All Atlanta Children Thrive (PAACT) recommendations, which are focused on providing children ages zero- to five-years-old access to the services they need to be healthy in all aspects of their lives.

The City of Saint Paul has continued to make investments in early learning with initiatives such as the AmeriCorps VISTA program. Saint Paul 3K will expand its effort to increase the awareness and importance of financial stability beginning at birth. Through the Office of Economic Empowerment, they will work to support College Bound Saint Paul, creating college savings accounts for every child born in the city as of January 2020.

The City of Fort Worth and the Early Learning Alliance will work with organizations participating in the Tarrant County Infant and Toddler Developmental Screening Initiative to promote a coordinated system for healthy development through continued screening, referrals, and services to support Fort Worth babies to be born healthy and meeting their milestones.

The first cohort of cities selected for this project includes Austin, Texas; Baltimore; Chattanooga, Tenn.; Cleveland; Denver; and Minneapolis.

The Cities Supporting a Strong Prenatal to Age 3 Agenda initiative is part of the National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers funded by the Pritzker Children's Initiative. The vision of the Pritzker Children's Initiative is to expand equitable access to and participation in high-quality services for at least one million infants, toddlers, and their families by 2023 to get them on track for school by assuring healthy beginnings, supported families and high-quality child care.

The YEF Institute's technical assistance initiative seeks to increase the number of children on track for kindergarten by age three.



About the Author: Vera Feeny is a program associate at the National League of Cities *Institute for Youth, Education, and Families*.

Ready to Learn, Ready for K: Somerville's Early Education and Care Plan

A Plan for our Children's Future

Presented by the Somerville Early Education Steering Committee
March 2018



SomerPromise



Contents:

Executive Summary	1
Main Report	3
Appendix A: Data as Context	23
Appendix B: Workflow Diagrams	39
Appendix C: Single Point of Entry Research	44

Somerville Early Education Steering Committee:

Almi Abeyta, Somerville Public Schools
Krista Brother, Somerville Public Schools
Lisa Brukilacchio, Cambridge Health Alliance
Nomi Davidson, Somerville Public Schools
Sarah Davila, Somerville Public Schools
Anna Doherty, SomerPromise
David Gibbs, CAAS Head Start
Bruce Johnson, Tufts University
Doug Kress, Somerville Department of Health and Human Services
Lisa Kuh, Somerville Public Schools
Vince McKay, Somerville Public Schools
Gale Morano, Open Center for Children
Susanna Morgan, Somerville Public Schools
Cheryl Piccirelli, Somerville Public Schools
Kretcha Roldan, Elizabeth Peabody House
Christine Trevisone, Somerville Public Schools

Report developed with support from Titus DosRemedios, Strategies for Children

Ready to Learn, Ready for K: Somerville's Early Education and Care Plan *A Plan for our Children's Future*

Executive Summary

In 2014, the report, *Maximizing Children's Potential: The Somerville Five-Year Plan for Early Education and Care*, laid out a vision for a fully integrated system that would best support young children and their families. That document has guided Somerville's remarkable progress in early education and care. This new report, ***Ready to Learn, Ready for K: Somerville's Early Education and Care Plan*** reviews the progress to date and sets a bold vision and strategic direction for the next three years.

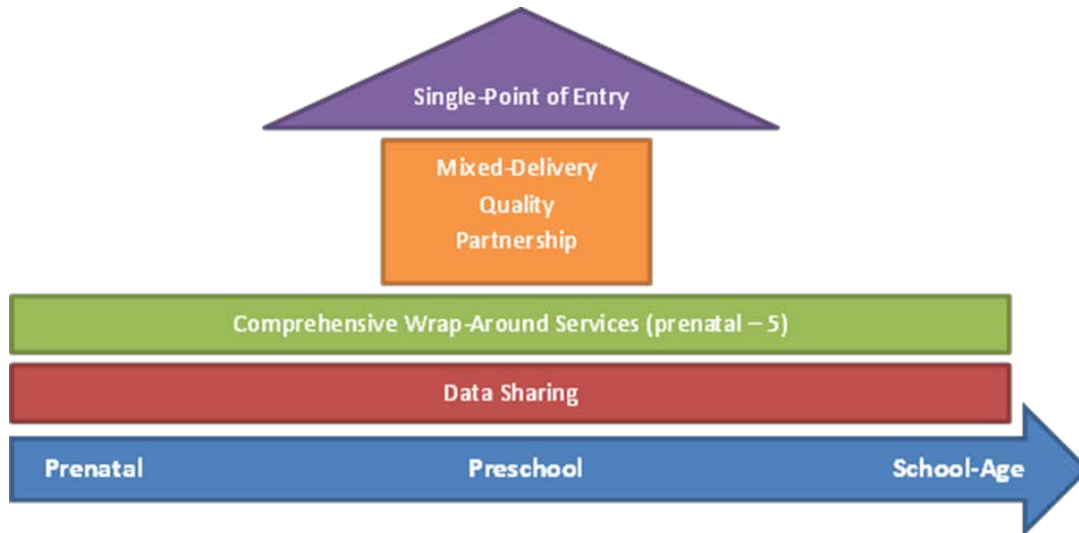
Current data on school readiness has shown that for our vulnerable students, persistent learning gaps remain that predict later success in school and in life. This reality is broadly understood within our community to be unacceptable, increasing a sense of urgency to build on practices and programs that have proven to be successful in reducing these gaps. We must make early education and care a top priority in Somerville at a time when there is local momentum, rooted in our City's core commitment to equity, to create a system that serves all children.

Our solution is to develop, over the next three years, a "braided" system of early education that makes access to high-quality programs an option for every family in Somerville. The focus areas for this new direction includes realignment of School Department, private and City resources in support of the commitment to universal kindergarten readiness. This will require a new leadership structure and new, targeted resources to fund critical program improvements, bringing the currently fragmented system of care into a coordinated team. In this way, the City's family-centered values will be reflected in a system that truly serves all children.

This report identifies four essential needs for Somerville to meet its commitment to children and families, and makes recommendations for each.

- Identified Need #1: Mixed-Delivery Partnership Model to Achieve High-Quality Early Learning in All Settings
- Identified Need #2: Single Point of Entry: Information and Access for Families
- Identified Need #3: Building and Sustaining Prenatal-Age 5 Comprehensive Wrap-Around Services
- Identified Need #4: Data Sharing - Student Insights for Early Education

Plan components:
The building blocks of high-quality early childhood experiences.



Recommended Capacity-Building: New Structures and Interagency Positions

- Year 1 (2017-18): Current staff restructuring, job descriptions, team building
- Year 2 (2018-19): Hire part-time system designers, determine support positions
- Year 3 (2019-20): Hire full-time coordinators, full implementation

Desired Outcomes

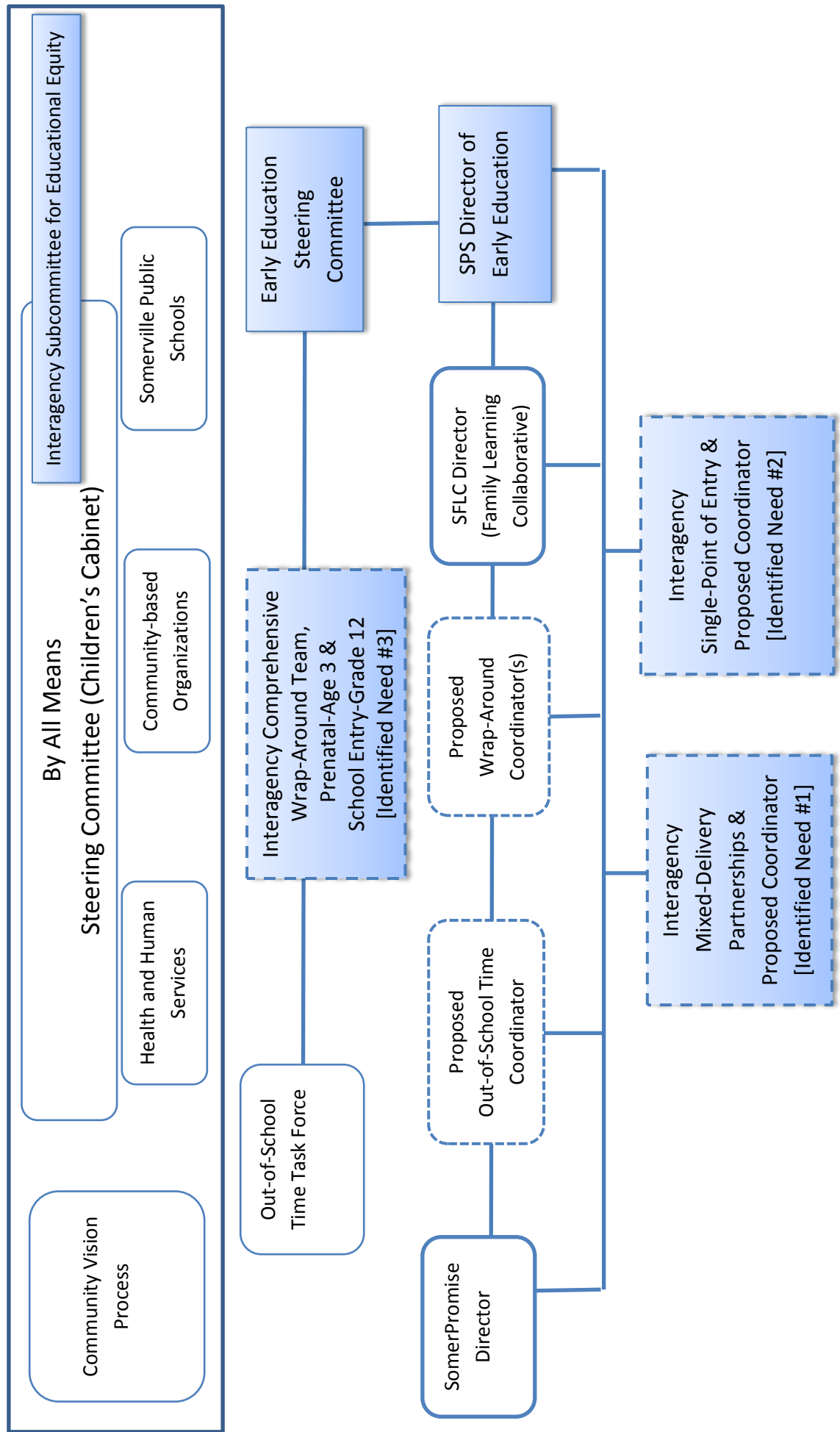
- ❖ All participating programs meet same high-quality standards.
- ❖ Directors and teachers supported in meeting quality goals.
- ❖ Families have a range of programs to choose from that meet need.
- ❖ Families have "one stop shopping" for a range of programming.
- ❖ Families can easily be referred to and register for openings in a timely manner.
- ❖ Families knowledgeable about child development and readiness.
- ❖ All families connected to resources and have relationships with supporters and providers.
- ❖ System grows to serve older children and broader range of need.

By formalizing the relationships between city, school, and private community-based agencies, ensuring consistent funding, and designing a tailored mixed-delivery system for Somerville, attainment of our goals of quality, access, and readiness is within reach. These identified needs and accompanying recommendations are an attempt to build on our successes and move Somerville from a siloed system of education and care, to a cooperative, collaborative, integrated system that better meets the needs of children and families, and those who serve them.

Appendix B: Workflow and Collaboration Chart

Blue = Preschool and K Readiness White = Related entities

Solid Line Boxes = Existing Structures/Entities Dotted Line Boxes = Proposed Teams, Positions



Notes:

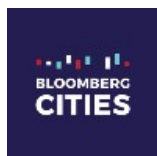
- **By All Means Children's Cabinet & Interagency Subcommittee for Educational Equity.** Goal: Policy change. An offshoot of By All Means Children's Cabinet, consists of 5-7 leaders, including: Mayor Curtatone or designee, Somerville Public Schools Superintendent or designee, Director of Health and Human Services or designee, Executive Director of at least two community-based early education and care programs, and one state legislator. Chairperson rotates annually. Meets three times per year or as needed, with staffing support by SPS Director of Early Education.
- **Early Education Steering Committee (EESC).** Goal: Effective programming implementation. Consists of directors, practitioners, implementers, parent representatives, and other content experts. Facilitated by SPS Director of Early Education. Meets monthly to share implementation updates, fine tune tactics.
- **Recommended Capacity-Building: New Structures and Interagency Positions**
 - o Year 1 (2017-18): Current staff restructuring, job descriptions, team building
 - o Year 2 (2018-19): Hire part-time system designers, determine support positions
 - o Year 3 (2019-20): Hire full-time coordinators, full implementation



Medium

New evidence helps more cities adopt Providence Talks model

[Bloomberg Cities](#); May 2, 2018



Four years ago, **Providence**, R.I., changed the conversation about conversation itself — particularly as it pertains to children from birth to age 3.

City leaders designed a program aimed at closing what's known as the “word gap.” The term refers to the fact that children in low-income households hear fewer spoken words each day than peers from higher-income households — 30 million fewer by the time they reach kindergarten. Research shows that robust interaction with language is crucial for children’s vocabulary building, brain development, and school readiness.

Now, a **new study from Brown University** shows that Providence’s strategies for addressing this problem are working. At the same time, communities across the U.S. are beginning to replicate and adapt parts of the Providence model.

The core of the program, known as **Providence Talks**, is data collected via a recording device that children wear. Like a pedometer counts steps, the device tallies the number of words children hear each day, as well as turns in the conversation between adult and child. Parents and caregivers get coaching on the importance of speaking more with the children, and how to use the recording device to track their progress.

Providence has impacted more than 2,500 children through three separate program models. In the first, coaches meet one-on-one with families in their homes over an eight-month period. The second is based around playgroup sessions, with a facilitator engaging a number of families at the same time. The third is a professional development model targeted at staff working at childcare centers. Experimentation with these models was funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies — Providence won the **\$5 million grand prize in the 2013 Mayors Challenge**.

The **Brown study** concluded that “Providence Talks constitutes a promising strategy to disrupt the status quo to advance early learning for all children.” Looking specifically at the home-visiting and playgroup models, the study found children made significant gains overall, not only in the number of words and conversational turns they heard but also in language development. The largest gains came among children who started out the furthest behind.

For most of the children Providence Talks has reached, school remains a ways off: Large numbers of them won’t begin entering kindergarten until the fall of 2019. But, so far, the results look good. “The Providence Talks intervention,” the study found, “is having a strong impact on the families it’s serving.”

Replication, not duplication

This research comes at a time when a growing number of communities are tackling the word gap. Some are seeking advice directly from Providence, whose team has fielded numerous phone calls and site visits, shared their **curriculum** and **operations manual**, and published a **playbook for how to replicate the model**.

Cities also are taking inspiration from **Thirty Million Words**, a University of Chicago initiative founded by Dana Suskind, whose **book** popularized the word-gap problem. And they're hearing about it from **LENA**, the Colorado-based nonprofit that makes the voice recording devices, software, and curricula for launching similar programs.

According to LENA President Stephen M. Hannon, variations of programs that resemble the Providence model are underway in **more than 35 communities**. "It looks different in each community," Hannon said, noting that many places are starting small, and often with just one of the service models, such as home visiting or organizing playgroups.

Another difference is that the key partner often is not the city government, as is the case in Providence, but rather a local school district, library, hospital, or childcare center. "What's unique about Providence is they're doing it at full scale, citywide, across a significant percentage of families," Hannon said. "Hopefully other cities will get to that, but they're getting to it in different ways."

In **Hartford**, Conn., the program lead is a nonprofit agency for children and families called The Village. Before launching their "**Words Count**" initiative using a home-visiting model in 2016, organizers visited Providence twice to learn from their work. A year later, they attended a Bloomberg Philanthropies **event for cities and funders interested in replicating the Providence model**. There, they learned about how Providence had used playgroups to scale up and reach more caregivers at a time.

According to Tammy K. Freeberg, associate vice president for strategy and planning at The Village, Words Count has reached more than 230 children in the Greater Hartford area. "This is at the heart of what we're trying to do," Freeberg said. "The whole idea is that we want to close the literacy gap, but we also want to build the other protective factors that can help children thrive in potentially stressful situations and environments."

Another community adapting the Providence model is **Cherokee County**, S.C. There, the "**Talk to Me**" initiative is led by the county school district, in cooperation with a number of community partners. Laura Camp, early childhood coordinator for the schools, said the idea is to begin intervening with children long before they get to school and vocabulary deficiencies begin showing up in third-grade reading tests.

"This program is the most exciting thing I've worked on in my 25 years as an educator," Camp said. "Because I finally see we're doing something to prevent the achievement gap before it starts."

Cherokee County is a rural community, about 15 miles east of **Spartanburg**, S.C. Its program is smaller than the one in Providence: The county served 30 families through home visits last year, and expects to reach 90 this year. Additional families are reached through group sessions, which need to be strategically located owing to the long distances participants need to travel. Sessions are hosted out of local schools, churches, and the library, generally at times when parents might be going to those places anyway.

Key to the Providence model, Camp said, is that it's data-driven. That makes it easier to sell to funders, such as the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee, which seeded the Cherokee County initiative with a grant. "If you're asking people to fund your projects, you need measurable outcomes," Camp said, noting that the Brown University study builds the case even further. "Anybody looking into this can see it's research-based and informed by evidence."

WRITTEN BY **Bloomberg Cities**

Celebrating public sector progress and innovation in cities around the world. Run by

@BloombergDotOrg's Government Innovation program.

Chattanooga Times Free Press

Local Regional News

Baby University continues to change lives of new parents

December 31st, 2017 | by [Meghan Mangrum](#)

Life with a toddler can be hectic. It's even more hectic when you live in an extended-stay motel and you're pregnant.

This is Rachel Galorath's reality.

And she's exactly the type of mother that Baby University, Mayor Andy Berke's hallmark early childhood development initiative, aims to help.

Baby University is a **city-funded partnership** among the City of Chattanooga, Signal Centers and BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee. The program uses an intensive-case management model to provide support and resources to pregnant mothers through their child's toddler years.

"It started with the idea that early childhood is one of the most important investments you can make in our future," Berke said. "It's hard to win a race when you start out 10 yards behind everyone else."

By the numbers

- › 100 percent of pregnant Baby U moms received prenatal care.
- › 53 families have improved their housing conditions and/or are no longer homeless.
- › 92 families have obtained employment since Baby U enrollment.
- › Home safety hazards are being decreased through home safety education and links to resources such as hygiene products, safe sleep environments and car seats.
- › 71 families were linked with car seats.
- › 118 families were linked with Pack and Plays/safe sleep environments.

Lack of prenatal care, low birth rates and an infant mortality rate higher than the state average are all significant issues in the neighborhoods the program targets — East Lake, Alton Park and Highland Park (ZIP codes 37407, 37404 and 37410).

Poverty and parents without much education are factors that make babies born in these communities more likely to start kindergarten behind their peers.

Because of this, the program serves the entire household, not just the mother and baby. Now, 162 families totaling more than 600 adults and children are enrolled.

Galorath, 31, is not a new mom, but she credits Baby University for many of her family's successes.

Galorath's fourth child is due in late February. She shares one room at an extended-stay motel with her toddler, Jackson, who is nearly 3, and her husband, Shaun Galorath, 34.

Her other children, 12-year-old Brent and 8-year-old Braxton, live out of state.

Rachel Galorath has participated in Baby University for almost two years. She checks in every couple of months with her assigned case manager, Sania Khan, who has a caseload of about 25 families.

"Sometimes I feel alone and I have to remind myself that I am not. I can call Sania and say, 'Hey, I'm having a bad day,' and she's there," Rachel Galorath said. "She sent me a card at Christmas reminding me that I am a good mom, because sometimes I have to be reminded. I can only do so much, and sometimes it doesn't feel like I'm doing enough."

Baby University's intensive case management model is intentional, Signal Centers CEO Donna McConnico said.

"We do whatever it is that the family needs," McConnico said. "We assess what is the need for the family and what are their goals. Do they want to find employment? Do they want to find housing? Do they have everything they need to provide a safe environment?"

"We find that every family we are working with wants what every family needs, for their children to thrive," she added.

Yet, sometimes life events make providing basic necessities for that to happen difficult for some families.

Aside from not having custody of her oldest sons, Galorath has been the victim of sexual assault and emotional domestic abuse. She moved back to Chattanooga, her hometown, after a "nasty divorce" from her first husband in Michigan.

Case managers serve as links to resources and services at more than a dozen partner agencies that can help parents like Galorath, whether that means helping a mother or father find a better-paying job, secure housing or even provide transportation to and from doctor appointments.

One hundred percent of Baby University's participants receive prenatal care (more than 42 percent of pregnant mothers in East Lake do not), they receive car seats and safe sleeping kits in an effort to reduce the neighborhood's nearly 10 percent infant mortality rate.

For the Galorath family, their goals included becoming more financially stable and buying a car. Since entering into the program, both parents have obtained jobs at the motel, caught up on some bills, arranged a visit with one of Rachel's out-of-state sons and bought a car, a 2010 Hyundai Sonata.

Rachel Galorath is especially grateful the program included her husband, Shaun Galorath, the father of her fourth child.

"That is why I like Baby U, because they involve the fathers," she said. "Sania asks about him a lot. She helped take me to the housing authority to help [Shaun find] a better job. He's really good."

Shaun Galorath, who now works as a maintenance man, was raised by his mother in Montgomery, Ala. He dropped out of high school in the 10th grade, but didn't bat an eye at taking

on the responsibility of not only his own child, but Rachel Galorath's other sons. He credits her with saving his life.

"When we first started talking, we started out as friends actually, she saved my life," Shaun Galorath said. He credits his own father's lack of involvement in his life with his motivation to step in and be there for the boys.

"I don't consider it being a stepparent," he said. "I'm just a parent."

Shaun Galorath is just one of the 92 adults that were either unemployed or underemployed when the family entered the program that have now improved their job situation, according to the program's data.

Seventy-one children have been born in the program and 20 enrolled mothers are now pregnant.

Berke announced the launch of the program, which grew out of his focus on early childhood development, in 2015. The **City Council approved Signal Centers** to administer the program after two local organizations submitted proposals.

"There was a real need to give families extra resources," said city spokeswoman Marissa Bell.

"Locally and nationally, children who start out behind are less likely than their peers to ever catch up."

Research shows that children from low-income families and parents with less education are more likely to be born early and show up in kindergarten developmentally behind their peers.

"Baby U is helping them understand how to have a healthy pregnancy and how to raise a healthy child up until kindergarten," Bell said. "[It's] helping children meet those developmental milestones up until kindergarten."

Baby U partners with the **health department** and the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office to provide car seats and "Pack and Play" **safe sleeping kits** for families. The program also partners with **Read 20** and the United Way's **Imagination Library** to provide books to families.

In conjunction with Chattanooga 2.0, Erlanger and Parkridge East Hospital, this year Baby U will train hospital volunteers on orienting new mothers, teaching them about **Chattanooga Basics**, an awareness program created by Chatt 2.0, enrolling them in **Ready4K** texts and giving them information about other resources in the community.

"The goal would be that every new mom who has a child born in Hamilton County would learn about the basics, enroll Ready4K texts and sign up for the Imagination Library," said Baby U program coordinator Elizabeth Coeellese.

The program, which has a **\$575,000 line in the annual budget**, gets about 75 percent of its funding from the city. It also received a \$250,000 grant from BlueCross BlueShield to operate.

Most of the program's operation budget is staff salaries.

"The goal is to get them into the homes, in front of the families," McConnico said.

The program now staffs 11 case managers, most of them with early childhood or social work backgrounds. Baby U also holds events, like last week's Christmas party, in order to connect the families to each other.

"When a family maybe has a crisis of some kind, those are times when families really try and reevaluate themselves, we are partners with them at that time," McConnico said. "We're trying to help build a community — the families get to know each other, they provide a natural, organic support system."

Eventually, **the goal is to "graduate" families from the program**, which looks different for each of them, Coellese said.

"Generally we are graduating families after one to two years, if they are achieving their goals and moving toward greater stability," she said.

Baby U regularly assesses its families, including health and safety assessments, self-sufficiency and parent assessments and evaluating children's scores on the Adverse Childhood Experiences scale.

The program also targets teen mothers — there are now 28 families with teenage mothers enrolled — with specific goals for them, including ensuring the mother completes high school and does not have another pregnancy before graduation. Baby U now partners with the Howard School and Brainerd High School (funded by a private donor) to provide caseworkers specifically in those schools.

Brainerd, Coellese said, has had a large number of teen mothers.

The program has so far graduated 35 families — 62 adults and 87 children. Despite graduating them, Signal Centers still checks in with them every six months and hopes to track them when the first set of children enters kindergarten in a few years.

"They've done an amazing job," Berke said. "I see it when I talk to the mothers and fathers. A lot of times they'll talk to me about what Baby U has given them in terms of resources, and most of them say Baby U has given them an advocate."

One day, Rachel Galorath hopes to have all four of her children under one roof. She hopes to be able to get ahead on some of her bills, get Shaun Galorath a driver's license, and be able to afford special things more often, like the Playstation 4 game console the family got for Christmas.

Shaun Galorath agrees.

"I would like to be sitting on a boat someday, with nothing to worry about," he said. "To know the bills are paid, the wife is taken care of, the kids are taken care of."

But for now, Rachel Galorath is grateful for what her family has. Soon, she'll throw a gender reveal party before her baby arrives. She already knows the sex of the baby, but Shaun Galorath doesn't.

They hope it's a girl.

Contact staff writer Meghan Mangrum at mmangrum@timesfreepress.com or 423-757-6592. Follow her on Twitter @memangrum.

Connecting Children, Parents and Early Education in Rochester: Mayor Lovely Warren



By [The Editors](#) on February 20, 2019

Editor's Note: The Early Learning Nation Studio recently attended the ReadyNation International Global Business Summit on Early Childhood, where we spoke with early learning researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. The full collection of video conversations can be found [here](#).

As one of her first acts as Mayor of Rochester, NY, Lovely Warren convened an Early Learning Council. Since then, the Mayor and her city have become national leaders in connecting children, parents, and early education. How does she do it? That's what we discussed.

Transcript: Mayor Lovely Warren, Rochester (NY)

Early Learning Nation: Mayor Warren, thank you so much for coming to the Early Learning Nation's Studio.

Mayor Warren: Thank you for having me.

Early Learning Nation: You took office on January 1, 2014 – you don't need me to remind you of that. In March of that year among the first things that you did was to convene your Early Learning Council. What was that, and why did you prioritize it so significantly just two months into your tenure?

Mayor Warren: The Early Learning Council was a council made up of experts, parents, and just community leaders around the issue of early education. We needed to make sure that we give our children a fighting chance at life, and what we found was that the data was telling us that the formative years were the most important. We were spending a lot of money, and a lot of time, and energy on the older years, and it's really too late.

We needed to get to parents early. We needed to talk to them about them being their children's first teacher. We needed to engage with them. We also needed the community to understand that they had a role to play in making sure that our children were getting the best chance at life by giving them the support that need early on in life, from zero to third grade.

Early Learning Nation: So a lot of folks who care about early childhood development, early childhood learning, are listening to you, and they're thinking, "This is awesome! We've got the mayor of a big town. She gets it. She's into it." How did you get into the early learning? Was it something that you were personally interested in previously? How did you get into it?

Mayor Warren: I have a daughter, and so I know what it was like for me when it was time to enroll her in a daycare program, in a high quality Pre-K program. I could sympathize with other parents, but I also know the challenges of our city. Many of our children growing up and living in poverty, being the third largest city in New York State, and we had challenges. We wanted to make sure that we were working with the experts that told us that we needed to make sure investments in early childhood learning.

The city school district is not necessarily under the mayors control, but our library, our recreation centers, and what we do with children before, by kindergarten, was in our control. We wanted to make the investments that we could, and making sure that parents understood that we were their partner in this. We wanted their children to be able to succeed.

Early Learning Nation: So, take me back again, please, to March of 2014. What did you hear at those public hearing, I guess both from parents, but also from experts? Then I'll ask you about some of the outcomes from that council.

Mayor Warren: What we heard was that parents didn't know what resources were available to them. Parents wanted to have support in the community, but they just didn't really know where to find them. What we also heard from experts was the fact that we needed to be screening children early. If we made the investments in speech pathology, in hearing, in sight, and all of those things we would be able to possibly reverse the learning lag by the time the child got to kindergarten.

So, we started screening two and three year olds. We screened over 1,200 kids the last year. We are continuing to do that because we know that if we can get them hearing aids, or get them eye glasses, in front of a speech pathologist, and also develop their motor skill, and all of that that makes it easier for them to transition, and be ready for kindergarten. By third grad be ready to basically compete with the world.

Early Learning Nation: I want to ask you in a moment about the [Three to Three Initiative](#). You can't Google Mayor Lovely Warren Rochester and not also get the Three to Three Initiative up in the results as well. First, the council that you ran in 2014, that we've been talking about, came out with four recommendations. You may not remember each one of them exactly, it's been four years, and I know I've forgotten a ton from four years ago. Can you tell me about some of those specific recommendations that the council came out with? And then let's talk about the Three to Three Initiative.

Mayor Warren: So the first thing was to engage with parents early. We expect that parents know how to be parents, but what we found was that you just do what you know how to do, or what was done to you. We know that that's not always best for children. So, engage with parents, and have them be a part of the discussion. Provide high quality Pre-K, meaning that we needed kids enrolled in Pre-K programs that were of high quality, not sitting in front of grandma's TV.

So, we went out and we searched for dollars to actually enroll preschool kids, Pre-K three, and Pre-K four, and we were able to increase their enrollment by 1,200%,

because the state was able to give us dollars to do that. We're continuing to advocate for that.

The other part was that we needed to screen, and we needed to get involved early with our parents, and with our children so that they had a fighting chance at life. Also, of course, reading at grade level by third grade. That's why it's Three To Three. So, it's high quality Pre-K program, reading by grade level by third grade, and all the supports in between to make sure that children have a fighting chance at life.

Early Learning Nation: That is the Three To Three Initiative. Just to close out, I don't mean to be ungrateful – the Three To Three Initiative and everything you have done is great... now what's next?

Mayor Warren: Well we're focusing on early ... Not early childhood, we're really doing our data. Tracking the data, and making sure that that's working well, but then we need to move on up. We have children that's in the system now that we need to support as well. We want to focus on high school graduation rates, and career technical education. We have a significant number of job opportunities, but we have people that are in our community that can't fill them. So, we need to give them the technical skills that they need in order to fill those jobs. We'll be focusing on career technical education next.

Early Learning Nation: Have you started to get the data from Three To Three, or that hasn't come out fully yet?

Mayor Warren: Our numbers have started to improve in third grade reading, as well as I said Pre-K enrollment is up. More students are starting kindergarten, ready for kindergarten, but we are still tracking the data. We will continue to improve when necessary, and take step back and regroup when necessary; because I think that is important that sometimes you think that you're going down this road and everything is going well, and then you need to take a detour, and we're okay with that.

The focus is making sure that we give ever child in our community a fighting chance at life. So, we're going to do that one child at a time. One family at a time. One neighborhood at a time.

Early Learning Nation: Isn't that what it's about giving them a fighting chance at life?

Mayor Warren: Absolutely.

Early Learning Nation: Yes, that's terrific. Thank you.

Mayor Warren: Thank you so much, I appreciate it.



STATE OF OUR CHILDREN
REPORT CARD
2019

Focused on Children's Success. **TOGETHER.**

ROC the Future is an alliance of over 60 leading Rochester-area institutions and community partners. We promote the alignment of community resources to improve the academic achievement of Rochester's children.

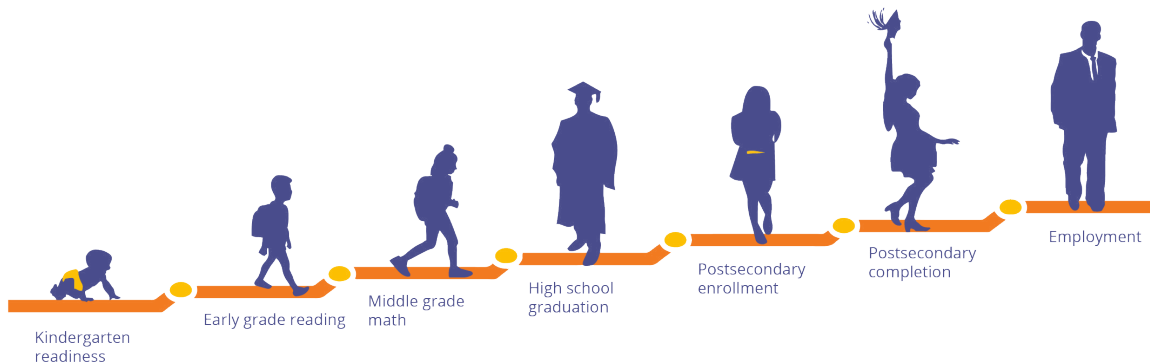


Table of contents

Goal 1: Every Child is School Ready	4
Goal 2: Every Child is Supported.....	8
Goal 3: Every Child is Successful	12
Goal 4: Every Child is College and Career Ready ...	17
Key Partnerships	20
Leadership/Conveners	21
Outcome Teams and CAN Memberships	22

ROC the Future is not one organization, office, or staff. ROC the Future is all of us working together. **ROC the Future is you.**

Collective Impact

ROC the Future amplifies the efforts of the community. We have an impact by

- **Sharing a common agenda**
- **Measuring common outcomes**
- **Using evidence-based practices**
- **Staying in continuous communication**
- **Mutually reinforcing one another's efforts**
- **Mobilizing resources**
- **Increasing equity**

Rochester's Children Are...

Diverse

Our children have a wide range of experiences, perspectives, and talents. The cultural diversity among our children is rich. At least 75 languages are spoken by RCSD families¹ and 11% of school-age children were born outside of the United States.²

Our families come in many sizes and forms. Most children are being raised by a parent in families with one or two children.³ However, 14% of children are being raised by another relative or adult.⁴

Our children have a wide range of interests. From drawing to double dutch, orchestra to outdoors, soccer to science — playgrounds and schools are full of energy and potential.

Resilient

Our children overcome many challenges. 91% are economically disadvantaged, and 21% have a disability.⁵ Many children have experienced trauma. Yet, they are resilient.

Many of our youth are responsible employees. They volunteer in the community and lead their own community initiatives. Center for Youth, Hillside Work-Scholarship, R-Centers, ROC2 Change, Rochester Youth Climate Leaders, Teen Empowerment are but a few of the places where you will find our children making a difference in our community.

Nurtured

Our children are nurtured at school. More than 80% of four year old children are enrolled in Rochester's nationally-recognized pre-K classrooms.⁶

Our children are nurtured at home. 83% of teens say they have clear rules at home and are helped and supported by their families.⁷

It is time for all of Rochester's children to thrive.

¹ Rochester City School District

²⁻³ American Community Survey

⁴ American Community Survey

⁵ Rochester City School District

⁶ Children's Institute

⁷ Monroe County Department of Public Health





Every Child Is *School Ready*

Kindergarten Readiness 2018 - 2019⁹



“Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, *play is serious learning.*” – Fred Rogers

⁸ As measured by the COR Advantage

⁹ The Children’s Institute, 2019



Brae'lynn beams as she reads aloud to her mom. Brae'lynn is thriving in school because she has been nurtured by her family, school, and community. Knowing the importance of early education, Brae'lynn's mother enrolled her in Ibero's infant program. Teachers there noticed delays in Brae'lynn's speech and motor development. Through the advice her mother received from the Ibero team, intervention services, and the support of Summer Leap, Brae'lynn is flourishing. Brae'lynn's mother is paying it forward. She completed the Rochester Area Parent Program, a 12-week course to strengthen parenting skills and is now teaching other parents.

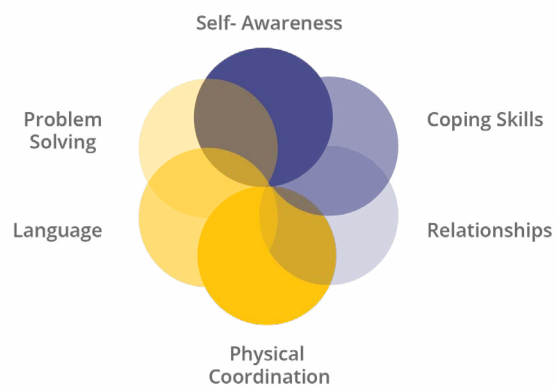
Success in school begins long before a child enters the classroom. Children grow rapidly — physically, intellectually, and emotionally — during the first years of life. Together, families, schools, and the community can ensure that all of Rochester's children have the opportunity to succeed.

In School...

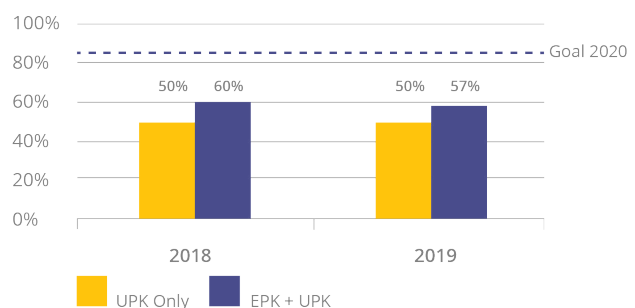
Rochester's pre-kindergarten programs, through both RCSD and community-based organizations, are nationally known for their quality. The Rochester Early Childhood Assessment Partnership (RECAP) has been evaluating early childhood education in our community for more than 20 years. The most recent assessments show that Rochester's pre-K classroom initiatives and teacher support result in:¹⁰

- High-quality classroom routines and environments
- Effective teaching strategies
- Positive family-teacher relationships
- Readiness for kindergarten

The benefits of children participating in two years of pre-kindergarten education are becoming clear. Students who attend two years of preschool programming are more prepared for kindergarten than those who attend only one year.¹¹



Children Ready for Kindergarten at End of Universal Pre-K*



¹⁰⁻¹¹ The Children's Institute, 2019

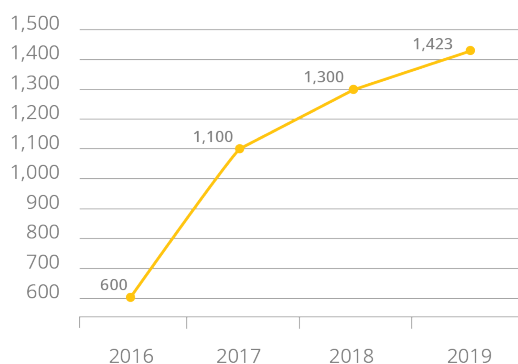


In the Community...

Making sure our children are ready for kindergarten requires a coordinated network of providers who can ensure children are meeting developmental milestones. Through GROW-Rochester, free screenings are available to check children's vision, hearing, thinking, language and communication skills, social and emotional development, dental health, and movement skills. The number of 3-year olds being screened is increasing each year.¹²

When children are identified as having delays, it is imperative that they receive prompt, professional intervention. Building on The Children's Agenda's documentation of the shortage of professionals serving young children,¹³ parents, community members, and organizations successfully advocated this year for an increase in the preschool special education rates paid by Monroe County for occupational, physical, and speech therapy.

3-Year Old Developmental Screenings



At Home...

A child's first educators are in the home. Through nurturing relationships, play, and everyday learning, children develop a foundation that supports them when they start school. Parenting has its rewards, and it is also challenging.

Parents need friends, family, and people in the community that they can trust to help them. This year, ROC the Future supported a review of parent education programs in Rochester.¹⁴ The study found 18 programs that are grounded in research. More programs are available that provide family support and engagement. Parents as Teachers is currently implemented across most agencies and Nurse-Family Partnership is serving the most families.

ROC the Future will continue working to increase the capacity, completion, access, and coordination of these programs.

¹⁰⁻¹¹ The Children's Institute, 2019

¹² The Children's Agenda, 2019

¹³ The Children's Agenda, 2019

¹⁴ Boland & Hiley, 2019

Spotlight On ACTION

ROC the Future's School Readiness Outcomes Team has four goal areas. If your organization can help us reach one of these goals, please get involved!



Ready Child

- Increase the number of children in high-quality education programs
- Identify and meet the developmental needs of children 0-8 years old



Ready Family

- Increase the number of families in evidence-based support programs
- Increase the number of families who understand their child's development



Ready Schools & Organizations

- Increase professional learning
- Improve human resource/capital initiatives
- Strengthen school and center-based climates



Ready Community

- Increase number of organizations providing comprehensive developmental screenings
- Align existing community resources to promote whole-child health
- Increase number of adequately credentialed child-serving professionals

In 2018



1,312 families were served with evidence-informed parent education programs



20-85% of families **completed** the programs



The stigma of **programs** as punitive or marginalizing is a barrier to participating



Fewer than **20%** of the programs have a waitlist, but providers report challenges in accessing programs

You Can Make a *Difference*...

Businesses Provide paid time off for parents to attend school conferences • Host book drives • Require teen employees to attend school and have passing grades • Put children's books in waiting areas • Provide on-site childcare • Pay livable wages • Provide paid time off for children's medical and dental appointments • Offer high school internships and summer employment

Childcare Providers Get training on developmental milestones • Refer children for developmental screenings when needed • Read with children every day • Teach children social and emotional skills • Use Ready Rosie videos

Coaches Require players to attend school and have passing grades • Connect players who are struggling in school with tutoring and support services • Expect positive behavior on and off the field

Faith Communities Host book drives • Provide afterschool, weekend, and summer programs for children • Mentor youth

Government Invest in youth development programs • Prioritize affordable housing • Build neighborhood playgrounds • Put mini-playspaces at major bus stops • Invest in the early childhood and youth development workforce • Train all recreation staff in social-emotional learning and trauma-informed practices • Hire more teen literacy aides • Invest in community-wide literacy projects • Invest in universal pre-kindergarten programs for 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds

Medical Professionals Ask parents and children about school attendance • Conduct comprehensive developmental screenings and refer children when further evaluation is needed • Teach parents about developmental milestones • Give children books to take home when you see them for an appointment

Property Owners Keep sidewalks cleared in the winter for children walking to school • Provide new renters a welcome basket with children's books • Maintain outdoor playspace on your property • Provide free wi-fi to tenants

Neighbors Help parents get their children to school • Ask teenagers why they aren't in school • Host reading parties on your front porch • Ask neighborhood children what funny or interesting thing happened at school today

Parents and Families Read to your child daily from birth through eight years • Get a library card • Take your child to the library regularly • Visit city parks • Take your child for a hike • Take your child to the beach • Visit a museum • Cook with your child • Use Ready Rosie videos • Take your child to doctor and dental check-ups every year • Learn about developmental milestones • Get to know your child's teachers • Get your child to school every day • Get to know the parents of your child's friends • Make sure your child has a designated place and time to do homework • Ask for help when you need it

Philanthropists Align your funding priorities with cradle-to-career outcomes • Provide resources for evaluation of process and outcomes

Bridgeport, Connecticut

Innovation Brief: Creating an Ecosystem of Supports for Infants, Toddlers, and Families

SYNOPSIS

In Bridgeport, Connecticut, Bridgeport Prospers and community partners are implementing a multi-year strategy to increase the number of infants and toddlers on track for success in school and life by age three. This strategy focuses on building an ecosystem of supports, rather than focusing on one single intervention, and is grounded in the neuroscience of early development—which demonstrates the developmental importance of the first three years of a child's life and the negative effects that toxic stress can have on young brains. While still in the early stages, this initiative holds promise for strong short- and long-term results because its strategy is grounded on the use of data, financial flexibility and innovation, strategic planning and communication, workforce professional development, and continuous quality improvement.

THE PURPOSE

Bridgeport, Connecticut, is a community facing significant challenges. Although the city is in the same county as some of the highest-earning areas in the country, 99 percent of Bridgeport's school-aged

children qualify for free or reduced lunch, 63 percent of the city's annual births are funded by Medicaid, and less than 20 percent of fifth grade students are proficient in math.

Recognizing the challenges in Bridgeport and that early supports for infants, toddlers, and their families benefit the entire community, Bridgeport Prospers—a collective impact initiative that aims to achieve positive, measurable and sustainable impact on outcomes for all Bridgeport children and families—is collaborating with partners across sectors to improve outcomes for infants and toddlers by building an ecosystem of supports rather than focusing on single interventions.

This initiative, called Born Healthy and Ready at Three, is aiming for all of the roughly 1,800 babies born in Bridgeport in 2018 to be born healthy and to meet age-appropriate developmental milestones by age three to set the foundations for lifelong success. This multi-year effort, known as the Baby Bundle strategy, is grounded in brain science research that underscores the importance of healthy early brain development and the negative effects that toxic stress can have on infants and toddlers.

Many Bridgeport families struggle with varying types of trauma, which is why Bridgeport's early childhood interventions, programs, and services are grounded in evidence-based, protective and preventative trauma-sensitive practices along with health-promoting, resilience processes.



Bringing together a large group of diverse national, state, and local partners, the Baby Bundle strategy relies on real-time data, financial flexibility and innovation, strategic planning and communication, workforce professional development, and continuous quality improvement for success.

THE MODEL

The Baby Bundle initiative brings together businesses, academic institutions, and non-profit organizations at the national, state, and local levels to design and implement systems of support for infants, toddlers and their families.

Recognizing early on that Bridgeport has many disparate programs for infants and toddlers but few system-wide supports that make it possible for coordinated, comprehensive care, the Baby Bundle strategy framework was built to provide the tools needed to build a coordinated, systematic approach to supporting pregnant women, infants, toddlers, families, and other primary caregivers.

The Baby Bundle framework focuses on five core strategies:

1. Expanding Care and Support for Parents

Research shows that stressors such as unstable housing and acrimonious family conflict can become toxic to young children when not buffered by caring, present adults. Toxic stress can damage children's development and mental health. That's why a major component of the Baby Bundle strategy is to establish universal screenings—using an innovative new mobile app called Sparkler—to identify the need for early interventions. Through the app, parents will also be connected to maternal wellness, child care, early literacy, and universal home visiting programs. Sparkler is designed to improve early learning and developmental outcomes by creating communication and collaboration channels between parents, caregivers, and doctors.

Baby Bundle partner organizations working together to implement these programs include:

- Family Connects International, a universal home visiting program, provides nurse home visits, regardless of income or demographic risk, to guide and support parents of newborns.
- Reach Out and Read works to increase the number of parents reading to their children through primary pediatric care visits.
- All Our Kin trains family child care providers in the delivery of high-quality, neuroscience-informed early learning experiences and helps informal family care providers successfully complete the licensure process.
- Boston Basics parenting videos on assessments, coaching, and referral programs are being incorporated into the Sparkler mobile app.

2. Increasing Authentic Neighborhood Engagement and Case Practice for Families Through Innovation and Better Connections

Collaboration and connections among local partners are distinguishing features of this research and place-based initiative. Developing new and innovative community linkages—such as connecting senior citizens to infants in need of care—are meant to foster and support innovation at the neighborhood level and to augment the initiative's success through an increase in positive relational touches in the lives of young children and their parents.

Additionally, work is proceeding with the National Interoperability Collaborative, a joint initiative created to facilitate data-sharing practices in healthcare, and the Connecticut Department of Social Services to analyze how the case process can be improved to advance better outcomes for individuals and for families as a unit.



3. Bolstering Civic Engagement Through an Army of Advocates and Helpers

This strategy is anchored in the use of the acclaimed documentary *Resilience* and relies on engaging pediatricians, the faith community, librarians, higher education faculty, and other civic advocates to support children and their primary caregivers.

4. Building a Diversified Investment Portfolio

Core to the Baby Bundle's construction and launch is establishing connections between existing programs. With new linkages, partners can review resource effectiveness and coordinate to pursue new funding opportunities.

Supplementary funding for the Baby Bundle strategy is being raised through private philanthropy using creative strategies, such as "Baby Scholarships," and through events like "Brunch for the Babies" to deeply engage with donors in Fairfield County.

In addition, Bridgeport Prospers is working with Connecticut's Medicaid redesign team to fund parts of the Baby Bundle. Two-thirds of Bridgeport births are covered by Medicaid, strongly suggesting that expanding coverage to Baby Bundle's preventive interventions could reduce long-term costs to the state. Connecticut's Medicaid redesign team is responsible for improving care accessibility and controlling costs in the state health care program, but it relies on care coordination and the types of preventive measures proposed by the Baby Bundle initiative.

Additional funding is required to launch or expand supports at the neighborhood and city level, and Bridgeport Prospers is working with the Institute for Child Success, a nonpartisan research and policy organization, Medicaid, and a private resource development consultant to identify new innovative financing solutions.

5. Tracking and Measuring Impact

The initiative is also focusing on collecting and analyzing accurate data to connect infants and toddlers to the right services at the right times and to assess the overall effectiveness of the Baby Bundle strategy. Quantifying outcomes is imperative to sustaining the framework's many moving parts with new and reallocated funding, especially from private entities in the first three years of the work.

To connect state and local data systems and provide the data necessary for evaluating and facilitating outcomes, Bridgeport Prospers is working with the National Interoperability Collaborative, Connecticut Department of Social Services, Yale New Haven Health, Bridgeport Hospital, St. Vincent's Medical Center, Connecticut Office for Early Childhood, and other organizations.

The National Interoperability Collaborative is working closely with the Connecticut Department of Social Services and the Baby Bundle team to increase data accuracy and availability. The new data will be used in evaluating the performance of early child development interventions. Technical guidance is also being sought from the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) to apply its tools and accountability processes.

To drive population-level change, the Baby Bundle approach requires that actions within each of the five core strategies move simultaneously. While each individual strategy is important to the success of the overall initiative, it's the coordination of all activities together that will ultimately bring about a sustainable ecosystem of supports for infants, toddlers, and their families.

WHAT THE EFFORT HOPES TO ACHIEVE

The Baby Bundle initiative was born out of a strong, data-driven foundation. In 2016, Bridgeport Prospers conducted a landscape analysis that identified community challenges and opportunities and



assessed the state of early childhood development in Bridgeport. As part of the landscape analysis, Bridgeport Prospers initiated an asset-mapping project to assess resources throughout the community. This project allowed the organization and its partners to build the Baby Bundle strategy with real solutions to meet the community's needs, including additional activities and supports to take successful programs to-scale and to add new programs that close gaps in services.

For example, the asset mapping project identified that when Bridgeport mothers and infants leave hospital care after birth, mothers are given a packet of information with available services that can help with challenges like maternal depression. The analysis revealed that in most cases, mothers who need help do not reach out proactively and therefore do not receive the care needed. Thanks to the asset-mapping project, Bridgeport Prospers proposed a universal home visiting program to close this gap in care and align expectations with realities on the ground.

The Baby Bundle's core strategies also benefit from the extensive application of neuroscience on the effects of trauma, toxic stress, and resilience for infants' and toddlers' developing brains. Many Bridgeport families struggle with varying types of trauma, which is why Bridgeport's early childhood interventions, programs, and services are grounded in evidence-based, protective and preventative trauma-sensitive practices along with health-promoting, resilience processes.

Because of Bridgeport's innovative approach, neighboring communities are becoming interested in Bridgeport's Baby Bundle strategy. This expanding interest is creating the opportunity to link multiple jurisdictions and stakeholders across Fairfield County for the first time. And because of Medicaid reform, which is coupled within the Baby Bundle strategy, the framework that began in Bridgeport has the potential to be scaled statewide.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Data-based program assessments demonstrate that there isn't just one intervention that can provide the support that infants, toddlers, and families need for healthy development. To meet the needs of all families, communities must build ecosystems of support. In Bridgeport, creating this system to achieve positive outcomes for infants and toddlers requires implementing all five strategies at once: expanding care and support for parents, increasing authentic neighborhood engagement and case practice, bolstering civic engagement, building a diversified investment portfolio, and tracking and measuring impact.

This framework approach is designed to be implemented over multiple years—a long-game approach with an organic process that involves listening to community members and learning about the assets they would bring to a methodical system.

While some changes will take several years to be implemented, meaningful progress can be made in the short term without securing new funding. For example, adapting existing community service practices to be trauma-sensitive, especially in communities like Bridgeport that are wrestling with high levels of trauma, is an important step forward that can be accomplished with some labor hours and knowledge of the community's assets.

Looking forward, the core concepts underlying the Baby Bundle framework are being examined and vetted at various national convenings leading to new partnership opportunities and efforts to refine the design process and speed up implementation. Data, financing, services, and case processing design issues all benefit from this increasingly broad and collaborative knowledge-development process.



For more information, contact:

- Allison Logan (alogan@unitedwaycfc.org), executive director of Bridgeport Prospers, United Way of Coastal Fairfield County
- Janice Gruendel (janice.gruendel@aya.yale.edu), PhD, a developmental psychologist and research professor at the University of North Carolina Charlotte

For further reading:

- "Summary Report: B-3 CAN, PK-3rd Grade CAN" (Community Action Network), 2016, United Way of Coastal Fairfield County and Bridgeport Prospers, Cradle to Career, <http://www.unitedwaycfc.org/sites/unitedwaycfc.org/files/Final%20CAN%20Summary%20Report%20%207-27-16.pdf>
- "Fact to Act -- Mid-Year Convening Research Summary," 2017, United Way of Coastal Fairfield County and Bridgeport Prospers, Cradle to Career, http://www.unitedwaycfc.org/sites/unitedwaycfc.org/files/Bridgeport%20Prospers_Mid%20Year%20Research%20Summary.pdf
- "The Bridgeport Baby Bundle," 2017, United Way of Coastal Fairfield County and Bridgeport Prospers, Cradle to Career, <https://bridgeport.thebasics.org/>
- David Brooks, A Really Good Thing is Happening in America, October 8, 2018, New York Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/08/opinion/collective-impact-community-civic-architecture.html>
- "Learning from Bridgeport," 2018, Resource Library, KidsReadyNC, Institute for Emerging Issues, North Carolina State University, <https://iei.ncsu.edu/kidsreadync/resources/bridgeport/>
- "What about the Babies? The Baby Bundle Meets Medicaid's First 1000 Days," October 2018. Harvard and Accenture 2018 Health and Human Services Summit. This work may be accessed either at the URL above, the Resource Library, or directly at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1j6i2x_dU1s-bE6JkDIkvtRA9TIrweAyQ/view?usp=sharing



Denver's Road to Reading Initiative Announces Award Grantees, \$25,000 to Expand Programs for Children Prenatal to Age Three

Aug 26, 2019

DENVER – The [Road to Reading initiative](#), a citywide partnership between the Office of Children's Affairs, Denver Public Schools, Mile High United Way, Children's Museum of Denver, Denver Public Library, and Denver Human Services awarded \$5,000 grants to five local organizations to increase access to high-quality, early learning opportunities for children from birth to age three.

"Learning and literacy count from day one, and lay the foundation for a child's success in school and in life," Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock said. "Our city and partners for the Road to Reading initiative are committed to supporting the families of these early learners and ensuring they have the necessary tools to build a strong academic future for their children."

The Road to Reading community partnership is guided by the [Birth to Eight Roadmap](#). It's designed to provide resources for families, caregivers and educators to best support a child's early years of development and ensure they enter school ready to learn. Local, nonprofit organizations located in the Westwood, Montbello, Sun Valley, College View and Elyria-Swansea neighborhoods were each selected to receive a \$5,000 grant based upon their experience in delivering high-quality programs in early childcare. These funds were made available through a \$25,000 grant awarded to the Office of Children's Affairs from the National League of Cities in recognition and support of their work around early language and literacy with Denver families and children prenatal to age three.

"We're excited to move the Birth to Eight Roadmap initiative from recommendations to action by providing funds to nonprofit organizations in our communities who are transforming the lives of Denver's youngest learners," said Charles Dukes, Education Policy Director for the Office of Children's Affairs. "Research shows that brain development is crucial during the first five years of life, so it's important that we create high-quality learning opportunities for children during those early developmental stages."

"It is critical to support boots-on-the-ground work," said Lisa Roy, Executive Director of Early Education for Denver Public Schools. "These micro grants will ensure that families with young children have the supports they need to enhance the language and literacy skills of their children."

The five grantees selected, include:

- La Piñata del Aprendizaje
- Motherwise
- Parents for Parity
- Roots Family Center
- Venture for Success Preparatory Learning Center

Grantee organizations will connect their programs to the Birth to Eight Roadmap throughout the school year by implementing early learning opportunities outside of the classroom, such as play and learn groups, home visiting programs, language and literacy programs, and training for Family Members, Friends and Neighbors (FFN providers).

Oakland Promise, Brilliant Baby

<https://oaklandpromise.org/programs/brilliantbaby>

Oakland Promise's mission is to ensure every child in Oakland graduates high school with the expectations, resources, and skills to complete college and be successful in the career of his or her choice.

Oakland Promise serves low-income parents with new babies and K-12 students in Oakland public and charter schools, with a particular focus on underserved and low-income populations. Brilliant Baby enrolls MediCal-eligible families with newborns. As of early 2019, it had enrolled 360 babies: 49% Latinx, 32% African American, 9% two or more races; 7% Asian, and 2% White.

OUTCOMES:
PK EXPERIENCE,
SCHOOL READINESS

AGENCY TYPE:
CITY

FOR AGE GROUP:
0-5 YEARS

Program Model: Brilliant Baby

Brilliant Baby (BB) is the early childhood strategy for Oakland Promise, engaging parents in the first year of their child's life. The BB program includes a college savings account for baby seeded with \$500, financial coaching for parents, and family engagement. The financial coaching program offers up to six sessions with a certified financial coach to support parents' self-identified financial goals, unlimited access to financial workshops, and the opportunity to earn up to \$300 in stipends and another \$200 as a savings match.

Promising Practices

Cultural Responsiveness: All parent information is printed in English, Spanish and Chinese, and translation headsets are provided at all family events. The financial coaching staff are all people of color, and several speak Spanish in addition to English.

Family Collaboration: Financial coaching is driven by each family's personal goals, with coaches offering support and resources. Coaches also facilitate 4-8 families who choose to collaborate in learning or taking action together. The program holds an annual community event for BB families, communicates through an e-newsletter, and convenes quarterly meetings of the Family Leadership Group (FLG). The FLG provides a forum for collecting feedback on the BB program, and for connection and learning guided by parent interests.

Systems Partnership: BB trains the staff of early childhood programs and pediatric medical care providers to explain BB and sign up families for the program. Partners include Alameda County Public Health Department home visiting programs, City of Oakland Early Head Start, UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital, the Unity Council, Brighter Beginnings, Fruitvale Academy, Bananas, and the Community Child Care Council of Alameda County.

Evidence Based Practices: Using a social determinants of health framework, Brilliant Baby draws on research in the fields of early childhood development, two generation anti-poverty strategies, and asset building. For instance, a [2017 CFED report](#) (Institute for Higher Education Policy and the Corporation for Enterprise Development) found that children from low-income families who have as little as \$500 in a college savings account are three times more likely to attend college and four times more likely to graduate than those without any college savings.



Photo courtesy of **Brilliant Baby**

Evidence Based Results

Child and Family Well Being: After one year of participation in Brilliant Baby, 77% of parents said that the program "brings valuable resources to my family" and 85% that the program "positively influences the way I think about my baby's future."

Oakland Promise:

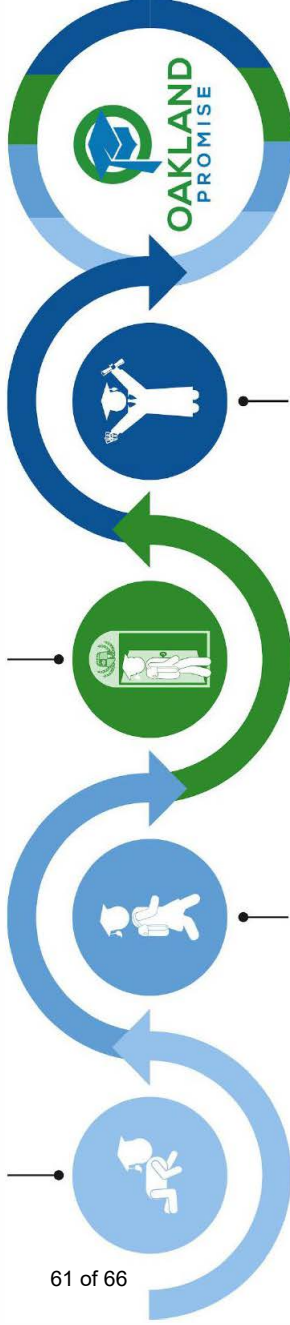
Impact by Program to Date

Brilliant Baby

530 Brilliant Baby College savings accounts opened
60% Brilliant Baby families participating in financial coaching

College Access

10,147 High school students receiving targeted college and career readiness supports
90% High school seniors at OP schools completing FAFSA and Dream Act Applications forms



K2C: Kindergarten to College

15,000 Oakland elementary school students with a \$100 K2C Early College Scholarship Fund
451 Family owned college savings accounts opened through K2C
62 Elementary and middle schools participating in K2C

College Scholarships & Completion

1,449 Students receiving OP scholarships and persistence supports
93% OP Scholars who persisted from first year to second year of college

In San Antonio, Building a Community for All Generations from the Beginning



By [NLC Staff](#) in [Community](#), [General](#), [Youth](#), [Youth employment](#) on [November 1, 2019](#)

San Antonio has built a thriving city that works for all – and it started with a commitment to its youngest. In November, when city leaders head to San Antonio, Texas for the National League of Cities annual City Summit, the host city is a shining example of local leaders working to build a community for all generations.

The City of San Antonio, Texas has a long-established history of addressing issues of early childhood through public policy and philanthropy. This commitment, engagement and support, along with the broader community and civic leaders' awareness, are keys to San Antonio's workforce development success and the launch and continued success of Pre-K 4 SA, the city's initiative to develop a highly skilled workforce in one generation through high quality early childhood education that benefits all young children in San Antonio

A History of Early Childhood Investment

In 1999, the city sought to reframe its disparate early childhood, college scholarship and workforce training efforts as a unified economic development strategy. The "Better Jobs Campaign" focused on improving the skills and quality of San Antonio's labor force. An early childhood task force brought together key partners, including the local workforce board, United Way, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio area school districts, KLRN-TV, a business leaders, the Annie E. Casey Foundation and community-based organizations to support the early childhood workforce and improve the quality of child care.

In 2006, San Antonio's Mayor Phil Hardberger held an education summit to craft an agenda across the educational pipeline from cradle-to-career. Mayor Hardberger established the P16 Council to collaborate across the many education agencies.

In 2009, Mayor Julian Castro, who campaigned on an explicit education agenda, took office. In fall 2010, the mayor convened SA2020, a visioning process that resulted in six shared community goals. With SA2020 in place, the city worked in partnership with

schools and other community partners to press for better alignment and reporting of kindergarten readiness across the 15 school districts located within San Antonio.

In May 2011, Mayor Castro formed the Brainpower Task Force, composed of the most highly respected community and business leaders, to identify what works in education, with a particular focus on early learning, dropout prevention, and college readiness. The task force determined the best way for San Antonio to improve the city's workforce was to invest in high quality preschool. From this recommendation, Pre-K 4 SA was developed.

In November 2012, tax levy was approved by voters to support Pre-K 4 SA and the first two centers opened in August 2013.

Communications, along with building and maintaining community support, is a focus of Pre-K 4 SA's ongoing success. Other key factors in their success include: Intentional partnerships with multi-sector, collaborative structures; focus on family engagement and support; and Using data-driven practices, policies and strategies to inform their work.

Putting It Together

For cities to thrive, they need to work for all its members, from the very beginning of all of life's stages. Investments in early childhood education benefits communities for all generations. Children that have access to high-quality early learning experiences are more likely to succeed in school and reach their potential at each stage of life.

To learn more about how San Antonio is supporting its young children and families attend the NLC City Summit mobile workshop, *Innovation in Education: Municipal PreK and Library Public/Private Partnership*.

To learn more about NLC's Early Childhood Success program, contact Jammie Albert at albert@nlc.org and Nancy Zuech Lim at lim@nlc.org or visit the website at: <https://www.nlc.org/early-childhood-success>.

About the Authors: *Nancy Zuech Lim is a program manager at NLC's Institute for Youth, Education, and Families.*

Jammie Albert is a Program Manager, Early Childhood Success at the National League of Cities.

HBBF PROGRAM:

BRIGHT CITIES

Bright Cities works with local governments and stakeholders to adopt policy and program changes to reduce their community's exposures to toxic brain drain chemicals. The Bright Cities program aims to lower the levels of these chemicals in air, water, food, soil and the products we use every day. In time, lower exposures will reduce the incidence of IQ loss, autism, learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, behavior problems and low birth weight in each Bright City.



WHY CITIES?

Cities are expanding their role in protecting citizen health. Bright Cities is helping them take action to protect the vulnerable developing brains of their city's youngest residents from dangerous brain drain chemicals. Local governments provide services at the intersection of exposure sources and policy solutions: water quality, air quality, healthy food, early childhood education, public health and many others. America's swiftly urbanizing population also indicates a need for city action.

The Bright Cities program is designed for the specific functions and unique characteristics of cities. The program consists of assessment, strategic and tactical development, public engagement and implementation phases. Informed by the early assessment work, each community commits to a set of actions in a negotiated, publicly supported agreement to protect their residents and sets performance measures to quantify reductions in exposures to neurotoxic chemicals.

In 2016, Bright Cities was launched in four cities and the program completed its assessments for each city. In 2017, each of the first four cities will implement at least two actions and additional municipalities will join the program and complete their initial assessments.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:

FACILITIES AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Restricting the use of toxic pesticides on lawns, parks and pets.
- Implementing integrated pest management in public housing and public buildings.

PUBLIC HEALTH

- Increasing screening of blood lead levels in pregnant women and infants.
- Bolstering policies to reduce exposures to mercury and PCBs in locally caught fish and shellfish.

AIR QUALITY

- Reducing emissions through no-idle policies, diesel engine retrofits and other common sense programs in high traffic areas.
- Reducing emissions from wood stoves, to include requiring EPA certified models.

WATER QUALITY

- Reducing lead, arsenic and perchlorate levels in drinking water.
- Replacing lead water distribution system mains and service lines.

PROCUREMENT

- Avoiding purchase of products containing neurotoxic chemicals including mercury, flame retardants, pesticides, phthalates, lead and arsenic.
- Setting performance measures to quantify reductions in exposures to these chemicals.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- Keeping dangerous chemicals off the menu and out of the water supply in childcare centers.
- Educating childcare providers on hand-washing, dust reduction and other practices that reduce exposures.

FOOD

- Testing soil in community gardens and playgrounds located on public land and remediating as needed.
- Educating the public about safer food options.

HBBF provides considerable resources to communities to achieve the goals of the program:

- Expert testimony/briefings.
- Policy and strategy assistance.
- Funding resources.
- Written materials including fact sheets, talking points and draft policy documents.
- Media assistance (local and national).
- Cohort networking and best practices information.
- Networking with allied local, state and national NGOs.
- Fundraising support for more resource-intensive city activities.
- Assistance with measurement and analysis of activities.
- Assistance with public education.

The first four cities to join the Bright Cities program include Dearborn, MI; Minneapolis, MN; Seattle, WA; and Salt Lake City, UT.



