

Barbara Bowman Leadership Fellows

Cohort

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The Early Childhood Leadership Academy is pleased to present the policy memos developed by the 2016 Cohort of the Barbara Bowman Leadership Fellows Program.

**Policy
Memos**

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BILINGUAL EDUCATION

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Chicago Public Schools

PROBLEM

English learners (EL) in grades Pre-K through second may not have an opportunity to participate in publicly-funded and legally-protected Bilingual education services, due to parent refusal. Since 2009 at least 10,000 parents have opted-out of the program in Pre-K to second grades in Chicago Public Schools.

An English learner is a designation given to a student who comes from a home environment where the primary language is other than English and their English language proficiency does not meet state criteria to participate in all English instruction. Research and practice has demonstrated that providing all English academic classes is inadequate for the education of ELs.

English learners are entitled to language assistance programs that fall under Part 228, of the Transitional Bilingual Education law. These researched-based programs offer ELs the services of a transitional bilingual program (TBE) or a transitional program of instruction (TPI). In a TBE program bilingual teachers use the child's native language to teach literacy skills and English as a second language to gradually transition to all English instruction, which typically takes five to seven years. A TPI program is used when a school enrolls 19 or fewer speakers of a language other than English. Schools with students from many different language backgrounds or with small numbers of ELs usually employ a TPI program that provides English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction and sheltered English to make academic content comprehensible.

Preliminary analysis of ACCESS data indicates that ELs who participate in Bilingual programs perform better on the ACCESS test which measures English language proficiency. Conversely, ELs who have not had adequate language assistance and support through Bilingual services may struggle academically and end up in a Special Education track.

CAUSE

In Illinois, parents of ELs receive annual notifications, in the form of parent letters, informing them about Bilingual program services. Parents who agree to services, may meet with teachers to inquire further, but are not required to do anything else. Consequently, parents who do not agree with such services have the right to opt their children out of Bilingual education services through issuing a written letter to the school administrator. The letter is submitted to the school Bilingual program administrator who inputs the request into the student management system, which renders the services terminated based on a “parent refusal” thus triggering the student’s placement in all English instruction.

Parents of ELs often mistakenly believe the best way for their children to become fluent in English and successful in school is to be immersed in English. They equate learning English with success. Unfortunately, Bilingual education theory is counter-intuitive and demonstrates that having a strong native language foundation assists in the acquisition of English or any second language.

Equally troubling is the fact that many parents are unfamiliar with the multiple modes of instruction that Bilingual education entails such as ESL, sheltered English, and native language instruction. Without this knowledge, parents may listen to other equally misinformed individuals who may erroneously advise them to opt their child out of the Bilingual services because they think it involves only native language instruction.

When parents opt their children out of Bilingual services, students may not receive comprehensible instruction thus limiting access to academic content. The annual compounding of inaccessible content will contribute to academic failure, which may be confused with a learning disability. Since, English learners acquiring English display similar characteristics of students with learning disabilities, more English learners will be identified as needing Special Education.

SOLUTION

A campaign to educate parents on Bilingual education law, theory, and practice should begin as soon as the child is designated as an English learner. It is imperative to provide parents with accurate information including research and policy about Bilingual education services as soon as students qualify for such services.

Parents must make an informed decision when it comes to refusing possibly beneficial services. A refining of the current process includes a layer of parent education and increased teacher accountability. The new process would add a

required step to the parent refusal process including a meeting with the Bilingual or ESL teacher to review the Parent Information Packet and a sign-off by the teacher attesting to the conversation.

The Bilingual or ESL teacher who signs off is attesting to completing a conference with the parents communicating the benefits of Bilingual education services. The teacher must advocate for Bilingual education services by clarifying misconceptions and educating parents on the importance of supporting native language in second language acquisition. To make this an official meeting, the Bilingual or ESL endorsed educator must provide their professional licensure number which will be added to the parent letter submitted to ISBE for data collection and monitoring purposes.

Strengthening native language creates a strong language foundation and supports English development while providing access to comprehensible content, which ensures academic achievement and success. Over forty years of compiled bilingual education research supports the argument that students' academic language development in their native language assists their academic language development in English and reduces the chances of students struggling academically. Researchers such as Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, and Higareda (2005) found that EL students with lower levels of proficiency in L1 (first language) and L2 (second language) showed the highest rate of identification in the Special Education categories. The authors also indicated that more EL students tend to be placed in the "learning disability" category rather than "language and speech impairment." Hence, an underdeveloped or weak native language foundation increases the child's likelihood of failure in both languages and of ending up in Special Education.

OUTCOME

By adopting this new procedure and adding it to current policy, parents will receive timely and accurate information on Bilingual education services. This newly acquired knowledge will equip parents with the necessary information and confidence to make an informed decision on access to necessary language supports for their children, thus decreasing the likelihood of opting their children out of the program.

Schools and teachers may adopt a more proactive stance and begin holding parent meetings to provide parents with pertinent information about the Bilingual program throughout the year. Additionally, teachers may also begin to advocate for Bilingual program services prior to referring ELs to Special Education. By giving their children the opportunity to participate in Bilingual education, parents may assist them in acquiring a stronger foundation in their native language,

increasing access to comprehensible content, and thus opportunity to achieve academically.

CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

TIFFANY R. CARTER

Children's Home and Aid

PROBLEM

Many families in Illinois are not participating in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Safe, reliable child care is expensive and families are finding it hard to pay monthly co-payments. Even on a national level, five out of six children eligible to receive child care assistance under federal rules are not enrolled in CCAP.¹ Quality child care matters to all families and there is a need to address restrictive eligibility and income guidelines currently in Illinois administrative rules.

In many states, even parents who are eligible for CCAP cannot access the program while looking for a job. Nineteen States in 2013 had waiting lists or frozen enrollment in the program.² This is concerning because, by 24 months, low income children are six months behind in skills critical to language development. By age three, low income children have heard 30 million fewer words than their affluent peers.

All children benefit from high quality child care, yet low income children benefit more.³ Partnering with families to meet child care needs allow parents to enter the workforce leading toward financial stability, children receive continuous child care, and child care programs are better able to operate and meet the needs of low in-come families.

CAUSE

¹ Estimates of Child Care Eligibility and Receipt for Fiscal Year 2006, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, April 2010, <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/10/cc-eligibility/ib.shtml>.

² National Women's Law Center; http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/final_nwlc_2013statechildcareassistancereport.pdf

³ https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/child_care_state_profiles_illinois.pdf

Due to the rising cost of child care, many families are not receiving the services to support continuity of care for their children. A growing number of mothers with children are in the workforce and require child care and after-school care. The cost of child care can be a significant part of a family budget. One out of three families with young children earns less than \$25,000 a year, yet full-day child care can cost anywhere from \$4,000 to \$10,000 and up per year.⁴

SOLUTION

It is recommended that administrative and budgetary constraints be identified to make changes to the current restrictive guidelines in the CCAP program. Access to affordable and dependable child care for low-income children supports their development.

- Strengthen income verification procedures with other low-income subsidized agencies in Illinois.
- Strengthen monitoring and training of caseworkers and Child Care Resource and Referral agencies.
- Conduct periodic audits of all CCAP participants to ensure their eligibility and redeterminations are approved as quickly as possible.
- Refer to the Child Development Block Grant Act⁵ for additional changes for programs to maintain best practices and funding.

OUTCOME

Increased investment and attention to burdensome administrative policies and procedures in child care subsidies help to reduce the financial burden on low-income families. In a study of low income single parents receiving child care assistance, half of parents reported other benefits such as improved financial well-being, the ability to afford other non-child care services, and the ability to save money, pay bills, and reduce debts.⁶ Investing in families by allowing less restrictive guidelines will provide support to parents pursuing work and selecting quality child care for their children.

⁴ <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education/reports/2013/05/08/62519/the-importance-of-preschool-and-child-care-for-working-mothers/>

⁵ The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) helps low-income families, families receiving public assistance and those families transitioning from public assistance in obtaining child care. The program, created in 1990, is authorized under the Person Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-193).

⁶ Nicole Forry "The Impact of Child Care Subsidies on LowIncome Single Parents: An Examination of Child Care Expenditures and Family Finances," Journal of Family and Economic Issues 30, no. 1 (2009): 43-54.

Access to child care subsidies is linked to improved employment outcomes for parents.⁷ Illinois received approximately \$221 million federal Child Care Development Fund dollars in 2016. With the help of federal assistance, 54,200 children from 31,600 families in Illinois can access child care with 52,700 providers in the state serving participating children.⁸

⁷ 4 For a review of the research see Gregory Mills, Jennifer Compton, and Olivia Golden, Assessing the Evidence About Work Support Benefits and Low-Income Families, Urban Institute, February 2011, <http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412303-Work-SupportBenefits.pdf>.

⁸ <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/child-care-across-america>

PROBLEM

Since July 2015, parents who are enrolled in training and education are not eligible for the State of Illinois' Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Even when families meet the income guidelines for CCAP, State Administrative Rule and CCAP policy finds parents who are enrolled in training and education ineligible for assistance.

Furthermore, the State of Illinois' CCAP policy is in direct conflict with the State's goal to increase the proportion of adults with meaningful degrees and credentials to 60 percent by 2025.⁹ Illinois' CCAP eligibility rules must change to support adult learners and to help the State meet the education goal. If the current rate of degree production continues, Illinois will fall 723,000 degrees short of its 60% goal.¹⁰

CAUSE

A survey¹¹ in October 2015 found that 13 percent of CCAP parents could not enroll in or had to quit school after Illinois changed CCAP eligibility rules concerning education in July 2015. Adults who need child care assistance to attend adult education and training cannot obtain this support. In 2010, 21 percent (1.7 million) of Illinois adults ages 18-64 needed adult education and training.¹²

⁹ Illinois State Board of Education. Board Meeting Packet. Page 4. Retrieved from: <http://www.isbe.net/board/meetings/2016/jan/packet.pdf>

¹⁰ Lumina Foundation. A Stronger Illinois through Higher Education. Page 1. Retrieved from: <http://www.collegechangepseverything.org/dotAsset/604f8ea6-1ec7-44cc-9528-e694f5e40cba.pdf>

¹¹ Illinois Action for Children. Survey Confirms Devastating Impact of Child Care Changes on Children and Working Families. Page 2. Retrieved from: http://www.actforchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/IAFC_Policy_Brief_CCAP_Changes_10.13.15_F.pdf

¹² National Center for Higher Education Management Systems. Illinois Profile of Adult Learning. Page 1. Retrieved from: <http://www.nchems.org/c2sp/documents/IllinoisAdultProfile.pdf>

SOLUTION

Illinois must file administrative rule changes to make income-eligible parents who attend English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, General Education Development (GED) classes, or post-secondary education eligible for CCAP.

A public policy focused on positive long-term economic outcomes should encourage as many individuals as possible to pursue post-secondary education given the state goal. This is an ambitious goal that Illinois will not reach unless older adults return to school.

The current eligibility rule has negative long-term economic consequences for low income families and for the State. Educational achievement is the single most important determinant for future earnings. By denying CCAP access to parents in school, the State is creating a group of families who rely more on State benefits and pay less in taxes.

People who earn a high school degree or above earn more money and experience less unemployment than those who do not. Over the course of a lifetime, the average worker with a bachelor's degree will earn approximately \$1 million more than a worker without a postsecondary education.¹³

PERSONAL ECONOMIC OUTCOMES IN ILLINOIS BY LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT¹⁴

Educational Attainment	Median	Average	Unemployment
Less than High School	\$18,700	\$22,973	16.1%
High School	\$28,200	\$36,060	9.5%
Some College, No Degree	\$28,800	\$37,585	8.2%
Associate's	\$36,000	\$42,870	5.3%
Bachelor's	\$50,000	\$68,165	4.2%

The above chart clearly shows that individuals who complete a high school degree or above earn more and are unemployed less than individuals who do not. When low income parents are not eligible for CCAP it compromises their ability to pursue training and education, creates barriers to continued education,

¹³ Carnevale, Anthony P. "The Economic Value of College Majors Executive Summary 2015." Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, McCourt School of Public Policy (2015): 1-44. Retrieved from: https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/fact-sheet-focusing-higher-education-student-success#_ftn2

¹⁴ Manzo, Frank. Illinois Income Report – How Are You Doing This Tax Season? Illinois Economic Policy Institute. Page 4. Retrieved from: <http://illinoiseipi.org/countrysidenonprofit/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ILEPI-Economic-Commentary-Illinois-Income-Report.pdf>

and can significantly reduce parents' earning potential and the State's future tax base.

OUTCOME

The State of Illinois must change its Administrative Rule and CCAP policy to make income-eligible parents who only attend ESL, GED, or post-secondary education eligible for CCAP. This change can:

- Help the State achieve its goal of 60% of Illinois adults earning a high-quality degree or credential by 2025
- Positively impact families' long-term earnings
- Reduce parents' unemployment rates
- Reduce long-term reliance on State benefits
- Increase the State's long-term tax base

KINDERGARTEN TRANSITIONS

ANGELA BRITO

Chicago Public Schools

PROBLEM

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is the third largest school district in the United States, serving over 380,000 students in over 500 public schools. This year, nearly 26,000 students transitioned to kindergarten within CPS. Kindergarten students within CPS come from varied backgrounds and educational experiences—including public and private preschools and daycare providers, Head Start programs, and home child care settings.

Under the current model, information regarding student background, learning needs, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) interventions, and assessment data from preschool programs are not readily available to receiving elementary schools. As a result, elementary schools in CPS are not required—and have limited ability—to create transition plans to support incoming kindergarten students and families, which would tailor academic programs and create stronger home-school connections and parent-teacher-student relationships.

These varied experiences—coupled with lack of information and Kindergarten transition plans—lead to inconsistent program and resource alignment from preschool to kindergarten. CPS students are not entering Kindergarten with the most appropriate academic and social emotional supports in place. Like their Preschool colleagues before them, Kindergarten teachers spend significant time at the beginning of each school year building relationships with parents and students, conducting formal and informal assessments, identifying student interests and learning styles, and developing and implementing interventions to support students' academic and social and emotional needs. Time could be more effectively devoted to instruction if teachers could begin the school year equipped with student background information. Consequentially, many children experience difficulty transitioning to kindergarten. A national survey of 3,595 kindergarten teachers found that they “considered just 50% of their students to have made a

successful transition to school.”¹⁵ Better programs and policies to enhance children's transition to school are required.

CAUSE

CPS is a large and diverse school system. Because of the current design of the Chicago Early Learning program, most preschool students do not attend their neighborhood school. At Blaine Elementary School nearly 70% of kindergarten students attend other pre-kindergarten programs. There is no formal process or infrastructure in place to allow for the sharing of critical student information between preschool programs and elementary schools. As a result, information regarding students' background, learning needs, formal and informal assessments, and MTSS interventions are not consistently shared with receiving schools. Additionally, there is limited data to create and no requirement for a school-level transition plan for kindergarten students and families.

SOLUTION

The solution to ensuring a meaningful transition plan for preschool-to-kindergarten students is two-fold:

1. Implement a Preschool Transition Form that would be completed by all teachers (CPS, Head Start, etc.) at the end of each school year. The electronic form would include background information about the student, including program demographics (i.e., class size, half day versus full day program, curriculum), family background, interests, learning styles, formal and informal assessment data, and MTSS intervention information. The form would be accessible to all receiving Kindergarten teachers to support the development of a transition plan to elementary school and would become part of the students' academic records. The form would also include the option to upload student work samples and artifacts from their preschool experience. The benefit of this component of the solution is that a standard practice would be implemented to disseminate information from preschool teachers to receiving kindergarten teachers (and beyond). This would ensure that consistent practices and supports are implemented at the start of kindergarten, leading to a more successful transition into elementary school.
2. Require CPS elementary schools to develop and to implement Kindergarten transition plans using a standardized template that can be locally modified to meet the needs of a school's academic program. Schools may decide to

¹⁵ Rimm-Kaufman, S.E., Pianta, R.C., & Cox, M.J. (2000). Teachers' judgments of problems in the transition to kindergarten. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 15(2), 147-166.

develop a Kindergarten Task Force responsible for the implementation of the transition plan. Transition plans would include opportunities for students, parents and teachers to connect prior to the start of school year, as well as ongoing events to support parent engagement and develop strong home-school connections. An ideal transition plan would replicate best practices implemented by Child Parent Centers (CPCs) with an emphasis on parent engagement and volunteerism, as well as educational supports. “The CPCs are a family centered program, focused on the needs of the students and their families to ensure their success in school and beyond. A hallmark of the CPC program is a collaborative team that includes the head teacher, parent resource teacher and the school community representative that aligns and coordinates services and education for students and their families. Additionally, the CPC program promotes aligned curriculum, intensive family supports and services, parent involvement and engagement, effective learning experiences, and a professional development system for teachers.”¹⁶ Teachers and parent volunteers would support programming and events including parent meetings, teacher-led workshops for parents, classroom volunteer opportunities and aligned professional development for staff. By including components of the CPC model at the kindergarten level, schools would develop strong parent engagement to support academic and social and emotional needs of students.

Early elementary school experiences are paramount to success, and access to critical student information is vital for a smooth transition from preschool to elementary school. “Research shows that children experience smoother transitions into elementary school when their schools and families are connected and early childhood education (ECE) and elementary practices cohere and align. In addition, kindergarten children whose teachers engage in specific practices intended to support a smooth transition...demonstrate improved outcomes including more positive social competencies and more positive academic achievement scores.”¹⁷ Effective early school experiences that provide stability and consistency are predictors of later academic success. Additionally, the relationships between kindergarten students and teachers predict academic and behavior outcomes through eighth grade, particularly for students who struggle behaviorally. Kindergarten family involvement is associated with more

¹⁶ (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://cps.edu/Schools/EarlyChildhood/Pages/Childparentcenter.aspx>

¹⁷ Bogard, K., & Takanishi, R. (2005). PK-3: An aligned and coordinated approach to education for children 3 to 8 years old. Social Policy Report, XIX, No. III. Washington: Society for Research in Child Development.

cooperative and socially engaged students, lower rates of high school dropout, higher achievement in language and math, and more positive peer interactions.¹⁸

OUTCOME

With these recommendations in place, teachers will begin each school year—Day 1—equipped with key information to support academic and social emotional success for their new students.

With an electronic form in place, teachers will be able to tailor academic programs and supports that are closely aligned to student needs and interests. This jump-starts the opportunity to provide academic supports and develop meaningful relationships between teachers and students. This provides more time to address transitional issues and to advance learning outcomes.

In addition to addressing specific student needs, transition plans provide enhanced opportunities for parents, teachers and students to engage in meaningful and family-specific efforts to ensure student success and strong home-school and community connections

¹⁸ Hamre, B.K., & Pianta, R.C. (2001). Early teacher-child relationships and the trajectory of children's school outcomes through eighth grade. *Child Development*, 72, 625-638.

EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH

TALINA CARTER BOWIE

Chicago Youth Centers

PROBLEM

One in 10 children has serious mental health problems that are severe enough to impair how they function at home, in school settings, or in the community.¹⁹ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports one in five children across the United States, suffers from a mental health disorder a given year. This equates more than 17 million young people who meet the criteria for disorders that affect their ability to learn, behave and express their emotions.²⁰ Many of these children are enrolled in Head Start programs across Chicago, and are often underserved in the area of mental health. There are gaps in access to services for children and families and even greater need for teacher supports.

Access to out-patient mental health services, treatment and supports for children are very scarce. Children are identified in need of services, and then referred to community agency providers or hospital settings. However, the identification and coordination of services to quality providers often fail. Furthermore, most community agencies do not have the capacity to provide services for children ages 3-5 years old. As a result, families travel across Chicago, seeking services for their children.

Families with limited resources and marginalized communities experience additional hurdles securing services. Fees associated with care in private practices are not affordable. Due to cultural taboos, families of color often experience denial when presented with the possibility that their child needs mental health services.

¹⁹ Stagman, S. & Cooper, J. (2012). *Children's Mental Health: What Every Policy Maker Should Know*. National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University.

²⁰ Goldberg, Emily. (2016). *The new focus on children's mental health*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archieve/2016/10/thenewfocusonmentalhealth/504227>

Families are often unfamiliar with how to navigate the referral process and what support they will receive from the system. When resources are not available, early care and education settings experience the following:

- High teacher turn-over
- High expulsion rates
- Poor quality early care experience for children and families
- Increased hospitalizations of very young children
- Increased involvement in DCFS and the foster care system

The impact of mental health access spills over to the preschool classroom experience. Teachers in many Head Start classrooms struggle to maintain classroom management, provide quality instructional support, and social and emotional support to the children. A teacher's ability to support social and emotional functioning in the classroom is subsequently essential to effective classroom practice. Research confirms that children's social and emotional functioning in early care settings is increasingly recognized as an indicator of school readiness.

Reports from mental health consultants working in Head Start or early childhood setting often express the greatest concern over classroom management. Teachers are assessed utilizing the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)²¹, to observe and evaluate classroom quality and teaching practices. This quality is measured by emotional support, classroom organization and instructional support. However, in classrooms with children who have experienced or been exposed to trauma and poverty among other life struggles, teachers spend the bulk of the day managing crisis, disruptive behavior and meltdowns. Supports and systems must be put in place for children, families and educators.

CAUSE

The current approach to service delivery for children ages 3-5 years old does not adequately meet the needs of the children and families enrolled in Head Start settings. The need is far greater than the resources available to families in underserved communities across Chicago. Head Start currently utilizes mental health consultants for delivery of services for children and families enrolled in programs and for assistance with generating referrals for additional treatment and resources. The Lead Education Agency, Chicago Public Schools, will only

²¹ Pianta, R., LaParo, K., & Harme, B. (2008). *Classroom Assessment Scoring System Pre-K Manual*. Paul Brooks Publishing, Baltimore, Maryland.

provide limited services for children displaying social emotional concerns. Additionally, the lack of clinicians to provide services to the pre-school age population in under-served communities contributes to the over-arching cause.

SOLUTION

Mental health services for children must be high quality, coordinated and provided in environments that are familiar to the children and/or accessible for the families. Children are already attending programs, it would be ideal to bring the services to the children. Currently, in early childhood settings mental health consultants offer limited services, however many of the problems may require more extensive treatment and services.

There is already work being across Illinois to address the mental health service for children and families in early care settings. The "*Illinois Action Plan to Integrate Early Childhood Mental Health into Child-and-Family-Serving, Prenatal through Age Five (Action Plan)*"²², provides goals, objectives and actions steps designed to transform Illinois early childhood mental health services. To have greater success rates for children and families, I propose the following recommendation for the City of Chicago Head Start programs move forward with implementation of the goals of the *Action Plan*. The first goal, Program Access and Availability, addresses many of the aforementioned barriers and challenges impacting programs. This move would allow for a children and families to attain needed supports and services in the familiar setting and support daily lifestyles. The short and long term objectives and action steps outlined would eliminate many challenges faced by families, thus providing more services and direct connections to providers and resources. The plan would be aligned with the current Head Start Mental Health Scope of services which provides guidance of service delivery.

Again, service delivery would be ideal in early childhood settings when deemed appropriate. This plan is inclusive promotion, prevention/intervention and treatment, while building a consistent model that meets the needs of children and families.

In 2014, preschoolers were expelled at more than three times the rate of K-12 students, according to the Department of Education. Proposed legislation including Senate Bill 0237 and Senate Amendment 001 will put measures in place to reduce expulsions and provide training for teachers.²³ The New Head

²² <http://www.buildinitiative.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/IllinoisReport2016.pdf>

²³ Senate Bill 0237, Senate Amendment 001. www.ilga.gov

Start Performance Standards have included language that speaks to expulsion of children thus reinforcing the urgency of the problem. Expulsions are more likely to happen when mental health services in early care settings fail. Children, families and teachers in challenging situations will fare better when barriers are eliminated.

OUTCOME

Mental health is a key factor in a child's healthy development; children need to be healthy in order to learn, grow, and lead productive lives. It has been proven that early diagnosis and treatment is essential for life-long success. The need for greater access to children is alarmingly high and the current system is on overload. Coordinated and quality efforts are needed. Mental health services for children must be expanded and brought directly to children when deemed appropriate.

The *Action Plan*, when fully implemented, will result in more access and coordinated services for children and families. Teachers will be able provide high-quality instruction, which lead to better child outcomes and school readiness.

PROBLEM

There exists a gap in what is understood about neuroscience research including how toxic stress derails healthy brain development and putting those findings into practice. Illinois is in need of a prominent state-level structure to articulate a vision that will prioritize, champion, and align efforts to respond systemically to the needs of families impacted by trauma across all relevant state agencies. Despite multiple efforts across the state, currently there is no governmental system that communicates and coordinates the research to the larger community and support policies, practices and services that could have the broadest impact on those who need help the most.²⁴ The subject of this policy memo is how Illinois closes this gap by exercising systemic or comprehensive policy levers. These policy levers will offer a clear path to ensure that its programs and practices are informed by the research and trauma-informed programs. As well as ensuring that services are accessible to families, caregivers, communities, and service providers.

Should the gap between trauma research and practice continue, some Illinois citizens run the risk of diminished life opportunities²⁵ or losing out on achieving full health, social and economic well-being. There is a shared confidence among professionals invested in early childhood who believe that the foundation for positive change and achieving the best outcomes emerge when intervening earlier rather than later remediation.²⁶ James Heckman, 2000 Nobel Prize winner for economics, has grasped the enormity of the economic and social consequences of the long-term effects for not intervening early. However, he

²⁴Pinderhughes H, Davis R, Williams M. (2015). Adverse Community Experiences and Resilience: A Framework for Addressing and Preventing Community Trauma. Prevention Institute, Oakland CA.; Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS); Strengthening Families, Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP) Promoting Resiliency of Trauma Exposed Communities Together (PROTECT); and the Illinois ACEs Response Collaborative.

²⁵ Metzler, M., et al., Adverse childhood experiences and life opportunities: Shifting the narrative, Children and Youth Services Review (2016), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.10.021>

²⁶ Shonkoff, J. P. (2014). A healthy start before and after birth: Applying the biology of adversity to build the capabilities of caregivers. In K. McCartney, H. Yoshikawa, & L. B. Forcier (Eds.), *Improving the odds for America's children* (pp. 28–39). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

does state for children at risk there is an estimated high benefit-cost/ratio and rate of return of 6-10% per annum for intervening early.²⁷

We know that stable relationships and responsive experiences provide a strong foundation for young children. When children lack these experiences, and are exposed to violence, toxic stress, or other chronic challenges, they suffer and remain vulnerable to a range of health, learning, behavioral risks, and lower socioeconomic status across their life span. Traumatic experiences before age 18, but particularly under the age of eight, often cause stress that is toxic to the developing brain and body, derailing their optimal functioning. Research also shows that adults living with high ACE scores or risk factors are more likely to transmit ACEs to their children.²⁸ Illinois must ensure that advances in research are integrated into its public policies through a shared vision that promotes optimal development for all children and families.

CAUSE

Research primarily since the early 1990s has shown that psychological trauma can have detrimental effects on brain function that are not only lasting but may alter patterns of subsequent neurodevelopment, particularly in children, although developmental effects may be seen in adults as well²⁹. Toxic stress has the capacity to change the architecture of the developing brain and body and can affect both physical and mental health for a lifetime.³⁰ The Adverse Childhood Experiences study or ACEs — which include experiences of abuse, neglect, and serious household dysfunction before the age of 18—appear to have a significant impact on developing brains and bodies, contributing to serious health issues that can span a lifetime. Experts caution that without adequate family intervention and support, ACEs appear to be transmitted from one generation to the next (epigenetics). Science tells us that some children develop resilience, or the ability to overcome serious hardship,

²⁷ Heckman J., Knudsen E., Cameron J., Shonkoff, J., Economic, Neurobiological, and Behavioral Perspectives on Building America's Future Workforce. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. 2006; 103:10155-10162.

²⁸ Kwon, Diana. Poverty Disturbs Children's Brain Development and Academic Performance. (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/poverty-disturbs-children-s-brain-development-and-academic-performance/>

²⁹ Neuropsychology Review. Clinical perspectives on neurobiological effects of psychological trauma.2004 Jun;14(2):115-29.

³⁰ Center on the Developing Child (2007). The Impact of Early Adversity on Child Development (In Brief). Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu.

while others do not.³¹ However, consistent, supportive caregiving has the potential to prevent or mitigate the harmful effects of adverse experiences.

The single most common factor for children who develop resilience is at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult.³² Quality child care is an example of a potential relationship that offers protection and stimulating experiences that can buffer children from developmental disruption.³³

SOLUTION

The Children’s Cabinet³⁴ – established by Executive Order 3-2016, should serve as the structure or governance for implementing a clear, yet comprehensive approach whereby programs, communities, and families are able to make sense of and respond collaboratively to the very complex issues of trauma and help build resiliency. The Cabinet has the governance structure to promote long-term commitment, planning and support for state level systemic changes. This structure can create a framework for ensuring that access to brain research and trauma related information is embedded in our programs, practices and services.

As a participating agency in the Children’s Cabinet, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) serves on average more than 126,000 children per month across a variety of settings through its Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). And yet many of these children and families are served by multiple agencies and systems with very little information shared or the possibility of coordination of care across systems and agencies. IDHS can play a role in transforming the child care program by investing resources to embed trauma-informed instruction into its existing professional development system.

³¹ Perry, B. D. and Pollard, R. Homeostasis, stress, trauma, and adaptation: A neurodevelopmental view of childhood trauma. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America* 7[1], 33-51. 1998.

³² Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University (2015). *The Science of Resilience* (In Brief).

³³ Garcia, J.L., Heckman, J. J., Leaf, D. E., and Prados M. J.. The Lifecycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program (2016) Working Paper; Human Capital and Economic Opportunity Global Working Group

³⁴ **Executive Order 2016-03 Establishing the Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth.**

Formed to provide a cohesive strategy among our education and health and human services agencies in producing education outcomes that will improve the quality of education and well-being for the children of Illinois and lessen the administrative burden on our most vulnerable children and families.

A “small” yet powerful opportunity to address the knowledge gap can include requiring training for Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) supported child care providers. The new law strengthened the program’s dual role as a work support for families and supporting healthy child development. Public Law 113–186 requires health and safety orientation as well as annual training for all providers paid through the CCAP. Health and Safety is a necessary foundation for quality child care that supports early learning and development. Research shows that licensing and regulatory requirements for child care affect the quality of care and child development.³⁵ Illinois CCAP Health and Safety Standards are now embedded in program policies to ensure that all CCDF-funded child care settings benefit.

The Final Federal Regulations framework requires states and territories to implement child development as a best practice training topic by September 2018. The Illinois Children’s Cabinet and the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood have proposed including child development within the current Health and Safety Standards with imminent implementation. There is a opportunity to leverage this through program and policy levers and move Illinois forward with increasing the knowledge about ACEs and the impact of trauma. Implementing trauma training will build Illinois caregivers and the communities’ capacity to be equipped with skills to address the developmental needs of children and able to utilize trauma-informed strategies with all children in their care.

Renowned Op-ed Columnist David Brooks spoke at an event encompassing early childhood and challenged the audience to spread the ethos of early childhood and attachment into the world. He emphasized that little alone can be accomplished without creating a structural commitment so that “when love fails or *the excitement wanes* – the philosophy survives.” The Children’s Cabinet creates an incredible opportunity to prioritize sustainable trauma-informed policies, programs, and service delivery. One of the Cabinet priorities is to focus on workforce development. This project can provide state-wide reach and guarantee shared goals across leadership, agencies, and programs to ensure the workforce embraces trauma-informed culture and practices that changes how they approach their work.

There have been previous successful efforts in Illinois’ that demonstrate our ability to serve the most vulnerable.³⁶ The success of these previous efforts

³⁵ (Adams, G., Tout, K., Zaslow, M., Early care and education for children in low income families: Patterns of use, quality, and potential policy implications, Urban Institute, 2007).

³⁶ Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration (2012); Illinois Department of Public Health, Office of Women’s Health and Family Services Trauma

gives hope and can serve as an incentive to expand our vision beyond tertiary approaches and embrace this important work of building resiliency through collaboration, coordination and alignment across multiple, interconnected structural systems. Illinois can also look to the collective efforts by other states that have adopted expanded frameworks to address the impact of trauma and ACEs beyond the most acute.³⁷

OUTCOME

The new status quo creates a workplace culture that ensures that those that need services most are drawn to us, and receive responsive care that lessens their need for us. We approach our work through a trauma-informed lens, integrate an understanding of the circumstances that bring families to us and apply the four tenets of trauma-informed practice: Realization, Recognition, Responding and Resisting Re-traumatization. Staff experiences a shift in their approach and challenge themselves to resist asking “what’s wrong with this person or that child?”, and are more open and receptive to ask “what has this parent or child been through?” An agency with a trauma-informed workforce across all sectors ensures that every person that works within the organization, no matter what their position will ask, “What can I do to help?” The agency collects the data to inform policies, track progress, measure success and demonstrate how collectively they are making a difference. The new status quo will exemplify that every person who works within an agency experiences empathy and compassion that is informed by brain science and uses it to serve Illinois families and children.

Informed Training Implementation (2016); Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services Section 1115 Waiver Submission to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (2016)

³⁷ Washington State Essentials of Childhood Annual Report – August 2015.; Essentials for Childhood Initiative: Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships and Environments (n.d.). Retrieved May 16, 2016, from <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/Pages/ChildMaltreatmentPrevention.aspx>; Minnesota Communities Caring for Children.

EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE

REBECCA LINDSAY-RYAN

Big Shoulders Fund

PROBLEM

The quality and accessibility of community-based preschool programs has been an essential cornerstone of early childhood policy in the City of Chicago and State of Illinois. Unfortunately, the ability of these programs to meet the community needs is challenged by the lack of highly-qualified and credentialed personnel who have both capacity and desire to work in high-need communities.

While research asserts that establishing high standards for quality is critical to effective early childhood programs, access to these programs demands a robust, supported, and sustainable workforce committed to working in a variety of settings, including those serving low-income and linguistically diverse communities.

Recently, Illinois launched a detailed rating system focused on continuous improvement as a measure to monitor and increase the quality of early childhood programs throughout the state. In addition, state funded early childhood education programs, including *Preschool for All*, require high standards for personnel qualifications and curriculum to ensure the level of quality identified in research. While top-down credentialing and accountability advances the quality of programs, they can only remain accessible if parallel supports at the local and community level are established to build provider capacity.

While groundbreaking studies like Abecedarian and Perry Preschool highlight factors that contribute to a high-quality program, they also recommend community-based early childhood programs to be located as close to families as possible. While there have been efforts to make training accessible, there continues to be barriers to developing a strong and sustainable workforce pipeline, especially in high-need communities.

CAUSE

TURNOVER AND LACK OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

While statewide initiatives continue to work on issues of workforce development and pipeline, community-based early childhood providers continue to struggle to attract and retain qualified personnel. In particular, Catholic parochial schools that serve low-income communities in Chicago, have struggled to recruit and retain an adequate number of teachers with Early Childhood Professional Teaching Licensure (previously known as Type 04 certification)—a requirement for securing *Preschool for All* funding. Equally challenging is attracting and retaining teachers with sufficient cultural competence and linguistic skills. According to a recent survey by the Illinois Department of Human Services, turnover continues to be a persistent challenge for childcare programs:

Two-year turnover rate (individual position level) by position: FY 05-FY 15

Position	FY 2005	FY 2007	FY 2009	FY 2011	FY 2013	FY 2015
Administrative Director	15%	12%	14%	12%	10%	16%
Director/Teacher	23%	19%	18%	20%	16%	23%
Early Childhood Teacher	32%	28%	28%	25%	26%	27%
Early Childhood Assistant	53%	41%	39%	36%	33%	34%
School-Age Worker	31%	37%	36%	30%	28%	25%
School-Age Assistant	18%	24%	44%	38%	34%	33%

The reasons for leaving as noted by directors continue to focus primarily on dissatisfaction with pay, though many also leave due to other challenges including: scheduling, personal reasons, and access to professional development.

Specifically, turnover continues to be a challenge for Catholic schools serving primarily students with limited resources. With little resources for recruitment, induction, and lower salary scales, the task of building a strong workforce pipeline is substantial and exacerbated by challenges across all sectors to attract and retain teachers with early childhood licensure. However, there is a clear need to retain high standards to ensure quality preschool programs for all children. To meet the goals of *Preschool for All*, families should be able to locate and access quality programs within their own communities and fit the needs of their family (i.e. schedule, location, affordability, parent involvement).

SOLUTION

To build the capacity of community-based organizations and networks, such as the Catholic schools serving high-need communities, providers must work closely with local and state-wide networks and teacher preparation programs to increase the number of credentialed preschool professionals in the workforce through sustainable bridges and pathways. By harnessing the potential of local networks, Illinois can continue to lead the way for locally run, high-quality, and accessible preschool programs for all children, especially those facing the challenges of poverty, violence, and limited opportunities.

Allowing teachers to earn early childhood endorsements while working can translate to tangible support and incentives. In particular, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) should consider a rule change that would provide a bridge to early childhood endorsement for teachers holding valid professional educator licenses in Illinois without the early childhood endorsement. By working collaboratively with the Big Shoulders Fund, Archdiocese of Chicago, and local universities, ISBE can provide the opportunity for teachers with elementary licensure (formerly Type 03) to teach in *Preschool for All* funded classrooms requiring early childhood licensure for a time-defined period while earning their early childhood endorsement.

ISBE and the City of Chicago would have to allow for this provisional licensure to be earned and still qualify for public funding. This alternative path would provide a double-incentive for the individual to meet credentialing requirements, but also for the early childhood program to support the development of their professional staff to meet quality requirements. This solution creates a critical bridge for community-based and parochial preschool programs to remain invested in achieving the standards of a quality program. Intentionally leveraging community-based strategies to support the development of invested individuals facilitates long-term stability and quality programs for early childhood students.

OUTCOME

Philanthropic and public sectors working collaboratively to build a robust system of support for community-based early childhood programs contribute to developing a stronger pipeline by incentivizing pathways within high-need communities. Building upon cohort models, Illinois and City of Chicago can increase the number of qualified preschool teachers and other qualified childcare workers with the necessary cultural and linguistic skills to serve all students. In the end, the research is clear. “High-quality early childhood development programs can deliver an annual return of 13 percent per child on upfront costs through better outcomes in education, health, employment and social behavior in

the decades that follow,” according to a new study by Nobel-winning economist James Heckman and researchers at the University of Chicago and University of Southern California.

In particular, the 63 Catholic elementary schools in Chicago that primarily educate students with limited resources would be able to maintain high expectations and develop professionals with appropriate preparation and licensure. This rule change can be part of the solution to ensuring quality community-based early childhood classrooms remain accessible to all children. A sustainable workforce requires flexible and meaningful supports to encourage excellence and equitable access.

PROBLEM

Federal, state, and city investments have created more spots for preschool children in public schools and centers in Chicago; however, year after year schools and child care providers struggle to find certified lead teachers to educate and care for these children. The challenge has become even greater recently with the Illinois State Board of Education mandate that requires additional endorsements to ensure that lead preschool teachers can meet the linguistic needs of children.

Furthermore, “retaining teachers is the greatest challenge facing schools today.”³⁸ This statement is supported by staggering statistics that show almost 50 percent of new teachers leave the profession within five years, 33 percent within the first three years, and 14 percent by the end of their first year.³⁹ The challenge is even greater in schools serving students with limited resources and from diverse backgrounds—typical settings where TFA places novice teachers. These settings increase annual teacher attrition to 21 percent compared to 14 percent of teachers in low-poverty schools.⁴⁰ Moreover, when controlling for just early childhood care staff in addition to early childhood teachers, the average annual turnover rate of early care and education (ECE) staff in the U.S. is 30 percent.⁴¹

In the U.S., where public preschool programs are designed to serve children most in need, high rates of teacher turnover is bad for children and the programs they attend. Teacher turnover and program quality have a cyclical effect on one another: lower quality programs struggle to retain teachers and higher teacher retention is often one of the indicators of quality programs. For children, frequent turnover of early childhood teachers has been shown in some studies to prevent

³⁸ “Retaining and Developing High Quality New Teachers,” Alliance for Excellent Education (2004) <http://chalkboardproject.org/sites/default/files/ment-15.pdf>

³⁹ Basha Krasnoff, “Teacher Recruitment, Induction, and Retention,” (Education Northwest, 2014)

⁴⁰ Morgaen L. Donaldson and Susan Moore Johnson, “TFA Teachers: How Long Do They Teach? Why Do They Leave?” (Education Week, 2011).

⁴¹ Noriko Porter, “High Turnover Among Early Childhood Educators in the United States,” http://www.childresearch.net/projects/ecec/2012_04.html, (August 17, 2012)

the secure attachment of children to teachers and other adverse effects on children's social emotional and language development.⁴²

Teach For America (TFA) is one program that aims to support this talent pipeline. TFA is a national teacher corps that recruits, trains, and places undergraduates and professionals with demonstrated leadership ability in low-resource urban and rural schools to effect change through teaching for two years. TFA is often criticized for the short commitment of two years and high rate of TFA teacher attrition. However, the full mission and purpose of TFA is often missing or confused in public discourse. TFA's mission is to "enlist, develop, and mobilize as many as possible of our nation's most promising future leaders to grow and strengthen the movement for educational equity and excellence."⁴³

While TFA believes that teachers are leaders and encourages members to voluntarily continue teaching beyond two years, TFA has never been about creating career teachers. Rather, the program has a two-pronged approach: 1) to provide students a strong education immediately by placing and supporting highly qualified teachers in low-resource schools and to nurture the leadership and conviction for educational equity in these teacher-leaders during their experience and 2) to continue to nurture, develop, and connect alumni members in identifying and being successful in the path they choose to impact educational inequity for the long haul. Although TFA's mission is not to create career teachers, the issue of teacher retention is a well-known problem and it is important for TFA and others to understand and be accountable for the role TFA plays in this problem in the field.

CAUSE

While data on how long and in what conditions TFA teachers remain in the profession is widely unavailable, there are a few data points that suggest this group follows similar national trends. Donaldson and Johnson (2007) surveyed all members of the 2000, 2001, and 2002 TFA cohorts with a sample size of 2,029 individuals to better understand how many stay in teaching and why they leave. They found that 60.5 percent of teachers continue as public school teachers beyond their two-year commitment, 43.6 percent stay in their initial school placement beyond two years, and by their fifth year 14.8 percent continued to teach in their same low-income schools where they were originally placed.⁴⁴ Data on the TFA-Chicago/Northwest Indiana region mirrors the national

⁴² Noriko Porter, "High Turnover Among Early Childhood Educators in the United States,"

⁴³ Teach For America, www.teachforamerica.org

⁴⁴ Morgaen L. Donaldson and Susan Moore Johnson, "TFA Teachers: How Long Do They Teach? Why Do They Leave?"

trend of highest turnover being in ECE. In this region, early childhood teachers' average time spent in role is 2.1 years and average time spent in teaching is 3.1 years compared to the regional average of 4 years in role and 4.7 years in teaching.

Clean and accurate data on what TFA ECE members go on to do as alumni, and thus to what extent they are living out TFA's mission is not available; however, the data showing less average time in role and in teaching point to a clear loss of leadership. Teachers are critically important leaders that can work toward educational equity in their classrooms, schools, communities, and that often also influence larger circles through advocacy and other work. Additionally, school leadership, mid-level school leadership, and other roles in education often require more than two or three years of classroom teacher experience, meaning that most TFA's ECE teachers are likely not becoming leaders in the ECE field. This is an unfortunate missed opportunity, especially since lack of strong school leadership is a major factor contributing to why teachers leave their school placements and the field.⁴⁵

High turnover in the field of early care and education is largely ascribed to low compensation. In 2011 the U.S. Department of Labor reported the median wage of childcare workers and teachers to be between \$7.90 and \$9.53 per hour, making them among the most poorly paid professionals in the country. Even in areas where ECE teachers make more money and are highly trained (most TFA ECE teachers in Chicago make at least \$40,000/year and earn a Master's degree in their two-year commitment), there is evidence to suggest that the association between compensation and turnover is higher in professionals with higher levels of training.⁴⁶ These individuals are leaving the classroom or the field and moving into other sectors that will compensate them better for their talents and skills, keeping the revolving door of ECE teachers and leaders in motion.

Beyond compensation Porter and others have cited work environment and personal characteristics contributing to why ECE teachers (and all teachers) decide to leave or remain in the field. In the absence of improved compensation policy at the national, state, and local level we should pay close attention to these additional factors in developing innovative solutions.

Porter found in the ECE workforce that second to compensation, teachers cited inadequate administrative support, low perceived value of work, lack of community with colleagues, and lack of opportunity for advancement as the top

⁴⁵ Basha Krasnoff, "Teacher Recruitment, Induction, and Retention,"

⁴⁶ Noriko Porter, "High Turnover Among Early Childhood Educators in the United States"

school-based factors leading to their departure.⁴⁷ The same trends exist in Donaldson and Johnson’s research. They found that the second highest reason TFA teachers reported leaving was school-based factors totaling 18 percent of turnover attributed to poor administrative leadership (9.83%), lack of collaboration (2.11%), inadequate discipline (2.98%), or general dissatisfaction with their job description or responsibilities (2.84%). This was 7.5% higher than choosing to leave to pursue graduate school opportunities in another field (a widely-circulated narrative about why TFA teachers leave after two years). For those who remained in teaching, working conditions were central to deciding to leave their original placement.⁴⁸

Additionally, Krasnoff highlights an important understanding of the disservice to students when school culture and leadership are negative stating, “In schools where there is a climate that sets high expectations for student learning, combined with the belief that all students can learn, beginning teachers express loyalty to and intention to stay in a school because the mission, vision, and values of the school culture match their own. However, there is also compelling evidence that socializing new teachers into an ineffective school promulgates ineffective practices and produces internal conflicts for new teachers.”⁴⁹

SOLUTION

While more data is needed to better understand TFA’s role in teacher turnover and for the organization to be able to strongly counter criticisms with evidence, TFA’s ECE teacher retention is problematic for the organization’s mission of developing leaders and teacher-leaders, for children, and for the field of ECE. TFA has an opportunity to be innovative in developing a solution that will be better for children, better position TFA to meet its mission, and better meet the needs of the ECE field.

In a time where there is such high demand for ECE teachers TFA can be innovative and slow down the revolving door of ECE teachers that limits the leadership potential of TFA’s ECE members. Policy changes in two areas can turn the tide: recruitment and school placement partnerships.

⁴⁷ Noriko Porter, “High Turnover Among Early Childhood Educators in the United States”

⁴⁸ Morgaen L. Donaldson and Susan Moore Johnson, [“The price of misassignment: The role of teaching assignments in Teach For America teachers’ exit from low-income schools and the teaching profession”](#)

⁴⁹ Basha Krasnoff, “Teacher Recruitment, Induction, and Retention”

1. **Change recruitment policy and practices to obtain candidates with prior experiences and intentions that will make them more likely to feel successful with their students and thus remain as teachers and leaders in the field for longer.**
 - a. **Build regional capacity for recruitment of “homegrown” ECE corps members** where recruitment is targeted at early childhood professionals already in the workforce who have bachelor’s degrees and may be looking for pathways to certification or higher education to remain or advance in their current positions. Past studies suggest that ECE teachers who have more experience working in the field are more likely to remain in the field.⁵⁰
 - b. **Create, define, and implement a national recruitment strategy for ECE corps members in the undergraduate population** that targets ECE, education, child development, social work, psychology and other undergraduate majors that would provide important background knowledge and skill sets for ECE teachers and leaders in the field.
 - c. **Partner with other organizations to better understand workforce needs and adjust strategies and programs accordingly.** Organizations that compile education and workforce data such as the Illinois Network of Childcare Resource & Referral Agencies (INCRRA) and Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), as well as programs with extensive experience educating early childhood workers who have substantial home and personal responsibilities such as City Colleges and University Illinois Chicago will be critical to learn from.
 - d. **Conduct internal research to better understand why TFA ECE teachers choose to leave or remain in teaching.**

RATIONALE:

Donaldson and Johnson found two key factors that led TFA teachers to remain in teaching longer: intention to teach long-term and background experiences in education. Those surveyed who had displayed an early commitment to teaching long-term (self-reported intention, majored or minored in education, or took education courses) stayed in teaching considerably longer than those who did not possess this disposition and cited life change reasons when they left (having children, etc.) more often than poor working conditions which was more highly

⁵⁰ Noriko Porter, “High Turnover Among Early Childhood Educators in the United States”

cited by those with short-term intentions.⁵¹ Additionally, in her research brief, “Teacher Recruitment, Induction, and Retention” Krasnoff states that new teachers who have had training in specific aspects of teaching (e.g. learning theory, child psychology, etc.) and experienced practice and feedback in teaching leave the profession at half the rate that others who do not.⁵² While traditionally trained teachers who have likely taken these courses and had these experiences are not as likely to join TFA, there is still a considerable population of people who have minored in education, taken multiple education courses, or have once/are currently holding jobs as teacher assistants or are working in schools and that population should be tapped into.

Donaldson and Johnson’s analysis also showed that teachers tended to stay longer in teaching when they had corps teaching assignments that matched their education background. For example, the average teaching time for math teachers with a major in math was 4.08 years compared to the average of 2.51 years for math teachers without a math major.⁵³ With this example we can assume that the recruitment and matriculation of candidates with an early childhood education or development background and placement in early childhood teaching positions would likely result in those teachers staying in their placement role and/or field of ECE longer.

2. Given the monumental role school placements have on teachers’ satisfaction with TFA, mindsets about the solvability of educational inequity, and effectiveness with students, all influencing their tenure as leaders in the field and commitment to the mission of TFA, **school partner policies must support placing teachers in schools where they can be successful.**
 - a. **Create a new vision and strategy for school placement partnering that is centered on teacher success and retention and that moves from receiving requests for teachers to actively recruiting school partners who are implementing practices that lead to retention of new teachers,** where ECE Corps Members are likely to have greater success with students, satisfaction with TFA, and tenure in the field necessary for becoming impactful leaders or

⁵¹ Morgaen L. Donaldson and Susan Moore Johnson, [“The price of misassignment: The role of teaching assignments in Teach For America teachers’ exit from low-income schools and the teaching profession](#)

⁵² Basha Krasnoff, “Teacher Recruitment, Induction, and Retention”

⁵³ Morgaen L. Donaldson and Susan Moore Johnson, [“The price of misassignment: The role of teaching assignments in Teach For America teachers’ exit from low-income schools and the teaching profession](#)

teacher-leaders. Further research and learning from organizations like New Horizons Educational Consulting and Learning Resources who develop School Environment Profiles for assessment of school climate and community-based preschools with high staff-rated organizational climate will be important to gather in this process.

- b. **Shift conversations with current and potential school partners** consistently and frequently emphasizing the belief that every TFA teacher has the potential to become a veteran teacher at their school; shifting the partner mindset of expecting them to leave after two years and instead expecting the partner to have a deep commitment to developing teachers and actively trying to keep them for the long haul.
- c. **Find or develop a tool that will allow TFA to evaluate the health of our current and future school partners.** This tool should include input from all members of the partnership: TFA teachers, school administration, TFA partnerships managers, and TFA coaches working with the school and should measure communication, factors related to school culture, student outcomes, and other factors related to teacher retention. Information gathered from the tool should be used in developing new policy and strategy for terms of school partnership. Evaluations should be done annually as part of, and prior to, partnership renewal and should be tracked in a manner that is easy to pull data over time so that we may more accurately see the relationship between school placement, student achievement, and TFA teacher achievement in the short and long-term.
- d. **Look closely at the retention of teachers of color when looking at school partner data.** In their article, “We cannot simply hire our way to a more diverse teacher workforce” Hansen and Quintero show that the racial diversity of student population is and will continue to grow at a much faster rate than the racial diversity of the teacher population, projecting little difference between ratio of teachers who share the same racial identity as students in 2016 and 2060. Given this analysis and TFA’s efforts to recruit an increasingly more diverse corps of teachers we must ensure that teaching conditions support the retention of teachers of color.⁵⁴
- e. **Provide or partner with other organizations to provide support to school partners seeking to improve school culture and**

⁵⁴ Michael Hansen and Diana Quintero, “We Cannot Simply Hire our Way to a More Diverse Workforce,” (Brookings Institution, 2016).

- conditions** (e.g. educating school partners on research shared here and connecting them with additional resources like New Horizons).
- f. **Where relevant, apply learnings and work from the TFA School Leadership program** to support school placement partners and school partnership policy.

RATIONALE:

“Effective teachers want to work in environments that support and appreciate them. They are sustained and nourished by other good teachers who become their trusted colleagues, coaches, and mentors and who share a commitment to creating a good learning environment for their students. Effective leaders attract effective teachers and together they create a great learning environment where their teaching and learning can flourish”⁵⁵ In her brief, Krasnoff lays out the five factors teachers consistently give for remaining in their classrooms and schools: 1) time to collaborate with colleagues 2) job-embedded professional development planned collaboratively and immediately applicable 3) sense of autonomy in their classrooms and participation in decision-making at a higher level 4) time with supportive educational leaders and leadership opportunities 5) opportunities to provide input regarding student learning outcomes.⁵⁶ While TFA can and does provide some of these experiences to teachers, they are only a supplement and will not make up for the absence of them in the places where teachers spend eight or more hours a day.

OUTCOME

The new status quo is a win-win-win for Teach For America, students and families, and the larger ECE field. By recruiting from the already existing ECE workforce and serving them as a certification and leadership development pipeline, TFA ECE classrooms will be led by more experienced teacher-leaders who will be more likely to remain leaders in the work and who will also be more likely to share racial, socioeconomic, and linguistic backgrounds with students.

Creating a targeted ECE recruitment strategy to use in the undergraduate population will allow TFA to enlist new teachers and leaders in the field with a higher chance that they will remain in the work for the long haul. Additionally, by changing school partnership policies that are in TFA’s control, TFA will better nurture its members, increasing their sustainability and potential for impact inside and outside of the classroom. All in all, TFA will stop being dinged for the

⁵⁵Linda Darling-Hammond, “Recruiting and Retaining Teachers: What Matters Most and What Can Government Do?” (The Forum for Education and Democracy, 2007)

⁵⁶ Basha Krasnoff, “Teacher Recruitment, Induction, and Retention”

revolving door of ECE teachers and be credited with developing an innovative solution to a major problem in the organization and the field.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT, SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP

MARQUINTA THOMAS

Illinois Action for Children

PROBLEM

Authentic parent voice and parent engagement in Illinois state-level early childhood policy and decision-making is critical. Currently, there is only one parent chair in the entirety of the Illinois Early Learning Council and there is no permanent structure in place to engage parents in policy and decision-making. However, The Family and Community Engagement Ad-hoc Subcommittee is working to develop key recommendations for the Early Learning Council on how to engage parents in policy. Currently, the Subcommittee recognizes that families should be “empowered to not only engage in discussions and decision making, but also actively take part in implementing action.”⁵⁷

Research has shown that parent engagement is a critical component of educational success of students, empowerment of parents, and provides parents with the necessary tools to ensure future educational success of the child.⁵⁸ Parents are their child’s first teachers and their voices should be heard and involved in the development of the policies and procedures that will affect their future. Emphasis is placed on parents’ engagement at school level, particularly being engaged in the day-to-day learning activities of their child. Parents with children in early childhood education programs must have the opportunity to

⁵⁷ Anderson, F. (2016, October 19). Phone Interview.

⁵⁸ Douglass, A. (2011). Improving family engagement: The organizational context and its influence on partnering with parents in formal child care settings. *Early Childhood Research and Practice*, 13(2). Retrieved from <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v13n2/douglass.html>.

Halgunseth, L.C. & Peterson, S. (2009). Family engagement diverse families and early childhood education programs [Integrated Literature Review]. *National Association for the Education of Young Children*. Retrieved from <https://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/research/FamEngage.pdf>.

become authentically involved at every level of decision-making for their children and families, including influencing state policies that affect their families.⁵⁹

CAUSE

Parent engagement is an integral part of early childhood education and is an indicator of future engagement and student success. According to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), a child with involved parents show a better rate of attendance, motivation, self-esteem, social skills, and a myriad of personal success.⁶⁰ ISBE has developed a research-based family engagement framework, providing guidelines for schools and districts to engage parents at the local level.⁶¹ Additionally, Head Start identifies family engagement through the Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework which highlights the necessity of building parents as leaders and advocates in their schools and community through Parent Policy Councils and other facets of engagement.⁶²

However, these frameworks emphasize family and parent engagement at the school and local levels. There is no current guidance, framework or precedence for parent engagement in policy decisions at the state level. While there is parent representation on the Illinois Interagency Council on Early Intervention,⁶³ parents in the State of Illinois do not have formal representation in any state councils or committees that influence early childhood policy.

SOLUTION

Authentic parent engagement requires parents to have a seat at the table. The Family and Community Engagement Subcommittee provides the opportunity for parents to have input on family engagement methods that should be utilized by the Early Learning Council. The Subcommittee is a form of family engagement and is a platform for parents who have navigated the system to have their voices

⁵⁹ National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement for the Office of Head Start. (2013). *Understanding family engagement outcomes: Research to practice series*. Retrieved from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/advocates-pfcea-rtp.pdf>.

⁶⁰ Illinois State Board of Education (producer). (2015). Fact Sheet: Family Engagement. Retrieved from <https://www.isbe.net/family-engagement/html/framework.htm>.

⁶¹ <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/fe-guide.pdf>

⁶² National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement for the Office of Head Start. (2013). *Understanding family engagement outcomes: Research to practice series*. Retrieved from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/advocates-pfcea-rtp.pdf>.

⁶³ <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=37737>

heard. Additionally, the Subcommittee can engage parents in a multi-tiered approach to ensure that a variety of parent voices are heard. This approach can involve on-line forums and surveys, canvassing, engagement with local community collaboratives, etc.

Authentic parent voice should also be present in the Executive Committee of the Early Learning Council. Seats should be designated for parents (with children age birth – 5 who have children enrolled in state funded programs) nominated by the Family and Community Engagement Committee. The Executive Committee represents the collective work of the Early Learning Council for the Governor's Office. It is imperative that parents are adequately represented through authentic participation on this committee with their thoughts and ideas heard, input respected, and genuinely integrated into final decisions regarding early childhood policy recommendations to the Governor's Office.

Parents who are participants in the Subcommittee and Executive Committee would benefit from a robust Parent Leadership Training Curriculum that focuses on early childhood policies and practices; public policy and advocacy; the Early Learning Council's history and purpose; state and federal laws; funding streams; early learning curriculums and budgeting and other important tenets of policy and decision-making.⁶⁴ Funding must be allocated for training parents as participants in policy level decision-making.

Lastly, a position in the Governor's office should be created for staffing the Family and Community Engagement Subcommittee, coordinating trainings for parents and committee members, ensuring authentic parent engagement, and that parents are change agents rather than occupying token seats at the table.

Authentic parent engagement occurs when parents are involved at the front-end of decision-making as partners in the process. Their voices are heard, their suggestions are a part of the process and their involvement is not limited to recipients of services.⁶⁵ Families are viewed as partners and change agents. Michigan State University's ABLe Change Framework highlights that families viewed as partners and change agents are empowered (partners) and powerful (change agents). Families who are "partners" share input that is used by others

⁶⁴ Parent leadership training example: National Parent Leadership Institute Curriculum. <http://www.nationalpli.org/pdf/PLTI-Curriculum.pdf>. Full website: <http://www.nationalpli.org/>;

⁶⁵ Lopez, M.E. & Kreider, H. (2003) Beyond Input: Achieving Authentic Participation in School Reform. *The Evaluation Exchange* 9(2), 1-5. Retrieved from <http://www.hfrp.org/evaluation/the-evaluation-exchange/issue-archive/evaluating-education-reform/beyond-input-achieving-authentic-participation-in-school-reform>.

to make decisions which creates a sense of value, thus improving service effectiveness. Families who are “change agents” are engaged as creators of community change through various levels of engaging other families, collecting data, co-designing solutions and influencing policies and systems changes. Change agents are influential in implementation of solutions, strategies and/or policy, and gather and analyze data on effectiveness.⁶⁶

OUTCOME

Multiple examples of parents organizing, educating themselves and influencing policy change and implementation as both partners and change agents currently exist and are developing across the nation.⁶⁷ These organizations build parents as policy influencers by educating them on policy, legislation, implementation and advocacy. Parents who are knowledgeable and influence policy change, effectively “demand accountability before, during and after a positive change in policy and is what sets the stage for long-term accountability, proper implementation and sustained carry through.”⁶⁸ Additionally, research has shown that providing parents with focused cohorts based on family leadership gained a better understanding of how state and local government work, had a greater sense of empowerment in acting on community issues and power and had an increase in leadership roles in civic activity⁶⁹.

Illinois parents as informed advocates will facilitate authentic representation in state level policy and decision-making. As the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant in Illinois has come to an end, opportunities for parents and community organizations to effectively influence policy change become limited. Offering parents the access to gain knowledge about state government and policy will build parents as leaders and advocates in their community. Ensuring knowledgeable parents the opportunity to have an influential Subcommittee in

⁶⁶ Foster-Fishman, P.G. & Watson, E.R. (2016). Promoting Systems Change Using the ABL Change Framework Participant Handbook. Michigan State University.

⁶⁷ Peyton, K. & Breen, A. (2009). *Parent Engagement that Builds Leadership and Power*. Chicago, IL: Community Organizing and Family Issues; Coalition for Educational Justice. <http://www.nyccej.org/>

⁶⁸ Sanchez, A. & White, R. (2011). *Parent Organizing as a Strategy for Sustainable Policy Change*. Making the Link: A Publication of Grantmakers for Children, Youth & Families. Retrieved from http://web.cof.org/2013Annual/docs/AC13_SessionMaterials_CoalitionBuilding-Collab_Making-the-Link_Sanchez.pdf

⁶⁹ Frankel, S., Kressley, K.G. & Henderson, A.T. (2014). *National parent leadership training institute evaluation, 2012-2013*. RMC Research Corporation. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalpli.org/pdf/NPLTI-Final-Report-with-Appendices.pdf>.

the Early Learning Council and seats in the Executive Committee will mobilize parents as partners and change agents in education. The byproduct of their involvement ensures that services and policies are tailored to fit the needs of the community by those who utilize the services and who the implemented policies will affect long-term.

PROBLEM

Scheduling practices in Illinois do not provide sufficient notice for working families⁷⁰ to be able to: a) acquire a second job to help make ends meet; b) enroll in school to further their education; and c) keep consistent quality child care. Working families unable to improve their circumstances remain trapped in poverty, and therefore are unable to make the best decisions for their children to set the trajectory for becoming productive and contributing members of society.⁷¹

Unfair scheduling practices continue the cycle of poverty for working class families by not allowing them to advance their education and make additional income. In nearly 80 percent of working families with children age eight or younger, parents have no post-secondary degree.⁷² The majority of today's well-paying jobs call for some level of higher education.⁷³ As parents continue to be trapped in the endless circle of trying to make ends meet and are not able to improve their situations, children suffer the most.

Parents in working families are more likely to have low educational attainment and to suffer from depression, domestic violence, and chronic health conditions than the general population.⁷⁴ Poverty appears to have the greatest consequences for the youngest children, a finding that may relate to the period of rapid brain development in the first three years of life.⁷⁵ A family's success and financial stability is linked to a child's long-term success and wellbeing. A child that is raised in poverty is more like to become an adult in poverty as well, with a lower chance of acquiring a high school degree, or remain consistently employed.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ Working family is defined as a family with incomes less than 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold. This is \$48,500 in 2016.

⁷¹ <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-CreatingOpportunityforFamilies-2014.pdf> Retrieved Jan 5, 2017

⁷² Population Reference Bureau's analysis of the 2012 American Community Service data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

⁷³ https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/02_economic_mobility_sawhill_ch1.pdf Retrieved January 4, 2017

⁷⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/hus14.pdf> Retrieved January 4, 2016

⁷⁵ D. Schwartz and A.H. Gorman, "Community Violence Exposure and Children's Academic Functioning," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 95 no. 1 (2003); 163-173.

⁷⁶ <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-CreatingOpportunityforFamilies-2014.pdf> Retrieved Jan 5, 2017

CAUSE

There is almost no legislation that addresses the scheduling needs of working families in Chicago, Illinois, or nationally.⁷⁷ Currently, HB 3554 was passed in Illinois as an amendment to the “Illinois Wage Payment and Collection Act.” It became a Public Act on August 12, 2016.⁷⁸ This legislation requires that all employers provide their employees with two weeks’ notice of their schedule.

SOLUTION

While HB 3554 is a step in the right direction, it doesn’t go far enough in addressing the needs of working families. Chicago has an opportunity to take this legislation further in a more comprehensive manner, as the logical next step after raising the minimum wage⁷⁹ and ensuring earned sick-time⁸⁰ to all workers.

Implementing the “Right to Request”

The “right to request” would allow employees to request specific shifts or state which hours they would not be able to work without fear of retaliation for making the request. Being able to request their schedules would allow individuals to make familial accommodations and plans for other employment or education initiatives. Given that education is instrumental to families being able to improve their financial situations, this flexibility becomes crucial.⁸¹ However, “right to request” does not go far enough because it does not require the employer to grant the request. Due to this clause, it does not create an additional burden on the business. This clause is similar to the Americans with Disabilities Act⁸² that allows for workplace accommodations while relieving the burden of the employers.

Expanding Notice to Three Months

The limitation with only requiring employers to notify employees of their schedules two weeks in advance is that it limits longer-term plans such as additional education. Typically, semesters span four consecutive months and if an employee has a schedule that can fluctuate every four months, then it interferes with schooling. Schools have set schedules and prerequisite courses

⁷⁷

<https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/mayor/Press%20Room/Press%20Releases/2016/April/Working-Families-Task-Force-Final-Report.pdf> Retrieved January 6, 2017

⁷⁸

<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=3554&GAID=13&GA=99&DocTypeID=HB&LeqID=89743&SessionID=88> Retrieved January 4, 2017

⁷⁹ https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/bacp/supp_info/minimumwage.html Retrieved January 6, 2017

⁸⁰ <http://sicktimechicago.org/> Retrieved January 6, 2017

⁸¹ See footnote 7

⁸² <https://www.ada.gov/pubs/adastatute08.htm> Retrieved January 6, 2017

that students must take to graduate and need to be able to plan for. Without this accommodation, students may not be able to take the courses needed for their college degree. Businesses may have an issue providing four month notice though, because staffing capacity may fluctuate as well as demand, so this can potentially have a negative effect on the business.

Employers granting scheduling requests

This would further extend the benefit of “right to request” by placing accountability on the employer and ensuring that employees can properly plan for their families. By adding the clause that requests be granted unless there is undue hardship placed on the employer, this limits the hardship placed on the employer, similar to Family Medical Leave Act⁸³ and the American with Disabilities Act.⁸⁴

The climate nationally is moving in favor of fair scheduling practices.⁸⁵ With San Francisco, CA making significant gains in legislation, other cities and states are following suit.⁸⁶ San Francisco is boasting anecdotal success from businesses including happier employees and gained productivity.⁸⁷ However, these findings are being bolstered by the research. Fair scheduling practices have found:⁸⁸

- When hourly workers have workplace flexibility, productivity increases and absenteeism decreases.
- Accommodating employees’ scheduling needs significantly reduces turnover.
- Flexibility promotes employee engagement and reduces operation costs.

OUTCOME

If the City of Chicago passes the recommendations above, they would be able to ensure that working families are able to make the best decisions that contribute to the financial stability of their families. Families would be able to go to school to acquire a postsecondary degree, obtain additional or better employment, and ultimately be able to better provide for their children. This results in breaking the cycle of poverty that plagues many families today. Additionally, these

⁸³ <https://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/> Retrieved January 6, 2017

⁸⁴ See footnote 13

⁸⁵ <https://populardemocracy.org/news-and-publications/15s-wake-fair-scheduling-gains-momentum>
Retrieved January 6, 2017

⁸⁶ <https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/mayor/Press%20Room/Press%20Releases/2016/April/Working-Families-Task-Force-Final-Report.pdf> Retrieved January 6, 2017

⁸⁷ <http://betterwbb.org/fair-scheduling-supporters/> Retrieved January 6, 2017

⁸⁸ <http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication-1/Job-Schedules-that-Work-for-Businesses.pdf> Retrieved January 6, 2017

recommendations help to meet the existing goals for the state that are listed below:

- The State of Illinois has a goal of to increase the proportion of adults in Illinois with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60% of the adult population by the year 2025.⁸⁹
- Decrease poverty to 2009 levels, a reduction of 9.4 percent by 2020.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Illinois State Board of Education. Board Meeting Packet. Page 4. Retrieved from: <http://www.isbe.net/board/meetings/2016/jan/packet.pdf>

⁹⁰ <http://dcedc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/State-of-Illinois-Economic-Development-Plan.pdf>

LUCY GOMEZ-FELICIANO

Logan Square Neighborhood Association

PROBLEM

The primary function of publicly funded home visitation programs is to build parents' confidence while facilitating a strong bond with their children. The secondary component of home visiting is "Group Socialization" for parents and children to engage with other families in a community setting. Home visiting is characterized as an effective method of delivering family social support and child development services.

The most popular Illinois program curriculum, Parents as Teachers (PAT), and the Office of Head Start both outline specific expectations and outcomes related to facilitating social connections between families and communities. However, no evaluation is required to monitor outcomes of group socialization activities. As a result, there appears to be no accountability for assessing/evaluating "Group Meetings" or "Group Socializations" and a missed opportunity.

Additionally, there are no non-EBHV (evidence based home visitation) curricula recognized as promising practices that could be incorporated within the group socialization component to support parents' well-being by connecting with other parents to reduce social isolation. Essentially, Home Visiting Educators are expected to develop/design their own group activities and the PAT Foundational Training Guide provides limited guidance and resources.

The Illinois Department of Human Services and the Home Visiting Task Force contracted Chapin Hall to conduct a statewide needs assessment in 2010⁹¹, Participant characteristics included:

- 93% of the parents are "**Socially Isolated**"
- 63% **do not speak English**
- 60% are **undocumented immigrants**.

This survey confirms findings of practioners in the home visitation field who agree that parent participants experience some level of mental health issues and that: a) there are limited services available, b) there is a lack of participation in mental health services when available due to stigma and/or, c) there is a shortage of bilingual mental health professionals. "Moreover, receiving social support and

⁹¹ "Implementing Home Based Interventions: Assessment of Current Need and Capacity", page 47, table 6

connections to reduce parental stress ultimately helps alleviate toxic stress reactions that can undermine the baby's development."⁹²

CAUSE

The effectiveness of group socialization is unknown due to the lack of accountability for understanding how this component contributes to program goals including alleviating social isolation. It is unclear why group socialization has not been evaluated, nor why home visiting educators have limited guidance and resources for group socialization/meetings.

SOLUTION

The Illinois Early Learning Council: Home Visiting Task Force should recommend a state investment to evaluate group socialization/meetings to better understand the effectiveness of current practice. Furthermore, the Illinois Early Learning Council: Home Visiting Task Force should recognize and recommend the integration of "Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors" (AP), the nation's first evidence-based training program designed by and for Latino parents of children ages five and under as a promising practice within group socialization. While the curriculum is geared towards Latino and immigrant parents, it can be adapted and useful for any racial/ethnic group.

AP was launched in 2007 to address the "opportunity gap." The mission of Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors is to support parents as leaders of their families and as their child's first and most influential teacher in a home that is their child's first school. AP uses a two-generation approach that builds parent leadership skills and knowledge to promote family wellbeing and positive outcomes for children.

The Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors Program creates a safe space for parents to be among other parents, develop their social capital, and reduce their social isolation. Isolation is known to contribute to mental illness. Parents who have a supportive social network are less stressed and are more effective parents.

A 2012 UC Berkeley study found that parents made significant gains in their knowledge about early childhood development, language and literacy, school preparation, and confidence in parenting and advocacy skills. In 2014, Child Trends released the report of a random control study of AP. The results confirm that participating parents demonstrated significant growth in parenting practices that promote school readiness. This curriculum received the 2012 Champions for

⁹² Center for Education and Human Services, SRI International. (2012). *Home Visiting Programs and Their Impact on Young Children's School Readiness*.

Children Award, 2014 White House Cesar E. Chavez Champion of Change Award, 2015 James Irvine Leadership Award among others.

The state of Illinois has submitted an application to fund, Two-Generation Policy and Practices: Parents and Children Thriving Together (PACTT). PACTT would enable Illinois to scale the advancement of the exciting two generation work such as Abriendo Puertas to not only meet group socialization goals, but also to combat social isolation and mental health for parents of young children in home visiting programs.

OUTCOME

Through evaluating group socialization in home visiting programs Illinois can learn how best to offer isolated parents an opportunity to build their social networks and feel connected to the world. By lifting Abriendo Puertas as a promising practice, home visiting educators will have access to an evidence-based curriculum providing them with tools and resources to support the well-being of parents that is culturally and linguistically appropriate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Participating Organizations



WHERE POSSIBILITY LIVES



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SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Support



IRVING HARRIS
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The Early Childhood Leadership Academy at Erikson Institute gratefully acknowledges the support and generosity of The Irving B. Harris Foundation for its support of the Barbara Bowman Leadership Fellows program.



BARBARA BOWMAN

We are honored to have the program named after one of Erikson Institute's founders, Barbara Taylor Bowman. Barbara's legacy as an education activist, policy adviser, and early childhood practitioner matches the characteristics of the fellows this program aims to attract. Furthermore, her dedication to ensuring that diversity and equity are mutually reinforcing provides the framework that supports the entire program experience.

Erikson Institute

This effort draws from Erikson's mission-driven work to ensure a future in which all children have equitable opportunities to realize their full potential through leadership and policy influence. Special thanks to President and CEO, Geoffrey A. Nagle for his continuous commitment to the program.

LEAD COACHES

Bios

MICHAEL B. ABEL

Director of Research and Evaluation, McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership, National Louis University

Dr. Abel designs and implements original research studies regarding administrative practice in early childhood programs. His research interests include adult learning cohorts, the administrator's influence on program quality and organizational climate, instructional leadership, the career trajectory of quality rating assessors, and leading family engagement initiatives. In addition to his work at the McCormick Center, he has experience as a researcher and instructor at the University of Missouri–Kansas City, operations manager and adjunct instructor at Metropolitan Community College, and directed a child care center and a private K - 8 academy. Dr. Abel's previous research has focused on state early childhood systems development, teacher preparation, support for highly vulnerable children and families, neighborhood schools, and family engagement in education. His education includes an Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Educational Leadership Policy and Foundations, an M.A. in Educational Administration, and an M.A. in Early Childhood Education. He served in a number of capacities with the National Association for the Education of Young Children including Missouri President, accreditation peer reviewer of 2-year college programs, and the NAEYC Affiliate Council Executive Committee.

KAREN BERMAN

Assistant Director, Illinois Policy Team, Ounce of Prevention Fund

Karen helps lead the early childhood systems building and advocacy work in Illinois. Karen brings her background in special education advocacy to her Illinois, Chicago, and national efforts, with a focus on supporting inclusion across all early childhood environments. Karen is appointed by the Governor to serve on both the Illinois Early Learning Council and the Illinois Interagency Council on Early Intervention. Prior to joining the Ounce, Karen worked at the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights where she represented children and families on education, disability, and juvenile justice issues. Karen has a B.A. in

Elementary Education from University of Michigan and a J.D. from Northwestern University.

PAT CHAMBERLAIN

Consultant

Pat works as a consultant with school districts and agencies on issues related to optimizing the educational opportunities for young culturally and linguistically diverse children and their families. She received her B.S. from University of Illinois - Champaign in Spanish and a M.S. in Bilingual Education at Northern Illinois University. She has worked in a variety of capacities since 1975 including as a bilingual teacher, a professional development specialist, a bilingual special education supervisor, a director of Early Learners program, and in Higher Education at Erikson Institute in Chicago, University of Illinois and National Louis University. Her most recent project has been working with the Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood as the Director of the Award for Excellence Project for Linguistically and Culturally Responsive practices. She also has served on various state level policy advisory groups.

PAULA CORRIGAN-HALPERN

Vice President of Public Policy and Strategic Initiatives, Children's Home + Aid.

Paula has 20 years of experience of leading statewide advocacy efforts and building public support for innovative practices and policies that improve the health, education, and well-being of children and families. Before joining Children's Home + Aid in 2013, Paula was the Policy Advocacy Director at Voices for Illinois Children where she worked closely with staff, partner organizations, and community leaders to create effective policy solutions. She has worked on advancing support for early care and education, including home visiting and state-funded preschool, family economic security issues and K-12 education. She led the communications efforts for the education, human development, and workforce program at American Institutes for Research. Paula directed the state policy agenda for Metropolitan Family Services and has worked as a journalist early in her career. Ms. Corrigan-Halpern has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Northwestern University and a master's degree from the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago.

IRETA GASNER

Assistant Director, Illinois Policy Team, Ounce of Prevention Fund.

In this role, Ireta provides leadership in the Ounce's legislative advocacy in Illinois and with the Illinois congressional delegation, as well as its outreach work

to early childhood stakeholders and advocates around the state. Before coming to the Ounce, Ireta provided direct services and administered programs for high-risk children and families for 14 years. She has been active in state and federal lobbying efforts with the National Association of Social Workers and RESULTS. Ireta received her Master's degree in Social Work from the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois-Chicago.

DAN HARRIS

Executive Director, Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA)

Dan Harris has over twenty years of experience administering social service programs in Illinois, New Mexico and Wisconsin. His programmatic responsibilities have included leadership roles in a range of programs serving children, families and communities, including child care subsidy, state-funded pre-kindergarten, home visiting and youth development. As Executive Director of INCCRRA, he leads an organization of 90 staff responsible for an array of services supporting high-quality early care and education throughout the state. He holds an M.A. in Public Policy from the University of Chicago.

MADelyn JAMES

Early Childhood Project Manager, VOICES for Illinois Children

Ms. James is a passionate advocate for ensuring all children from birth to age 8 and their families have the necessary supports to achieve a strong foundation for future success. Ms. James' responsibility at Voices is to build an approach that advocates for supports that benefit the "whole child." Her first career was in business, where she honed negotiation, team building, management, budgeting, and strategic planning skills. Prior to joining Voices, Ms. James served in various capacities as a direct service provider, a Head Start and state preschool teacher, an Illinois STARNET trainer and project director, a supervisor of home visiting and center-based programs, director of the National Lekotek affiliates and early childhood training, a National Association for the Education of Young Children fellow, an adjunct faculty member with Chicago City Colleges, and as consultant and member of local, state, and national early childhood collaboratives. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Bradley University and a master's degree in early childhood education from Dominican University in River Forest, Ill. She has two adult children and recently became a grandmother for the first time to a beautiful baby named Illyana.

CATHERINE MAIN

Senior Lecturer and Program Coordinator, College of Education, University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), Visiting scholar, Early Investments Initiative, Institute of Government and Public Affairs (IGPA), University of Illinois

Cathy earned a BS degree in Finance and Economics from Marquette University in 1987 and a M.Ed. degree in Instructional Leadership from UIC in 1992. She has more 25 years of work on behalf of young children and their families in the state of Illinois. Her work at the UIC College of Education has included innovative and responsive program development and coordination in Early Childhood Education. Main designed and developed a Blended Early Childhood/Early Childhood Special Education program and an Early Childhood Alternative Licensure program. Both programs were the first of their kind approved by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and both reflect a focused, much needed, response to specific demands for early childhood teachers in Chicago. Currently she is also the principal investigator (PI) the McCormick Foundation on an Early Childhood Workforce grant where she co-leads the Illinois team on the Innovation to Incubation (i2I) project with the National Academy Medicine (NAM) and the co-PI on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) Group Foundation grant, Math Access for Teachers and Home Care Providers. She regularly presents her work at national conferences and as an invited speaker at local conferences. She also serves on several advisory groups and boards including the Illinois Early Learning Council Program Standards and Quality Committee, the Chicago Community College Child Development & Human Services Program Advisory Board, and is a member of the Illinois Articulation Initiative Early Childhood panel. She is co-chair of the Illinois Higher Education Learning and Professional Development Work Group, President of the Illinois Association for Early Childhood Teacher Educators (ILAECTE) and a member of the board for Chicago Youth Centers.

NANCY “SESSY” NYMAN

Vice President, Policy and Strategic Partnerships, Illinois Action for Children

As the Vice President of Policy and Strategic Partnerships, Sessy Nyman directs state and federal legislative strategy and coalition building for Illinois Action for Children. Her leadership and advocacy efforts have contributed to an increase of state resources invested in early care and education by more than \$160 million. In addition to negotiating legislative outcomes and spearheading administrative advocacy to state agencies, Nyman manages statewide campaigns for policy change and increases in fiscal expenditures; creates partnerships with community organizations, parents and faith-based initiatives; and develops grassroots organizing activities and strategies. She has a long-standing

professional history in advocating for vulnerable populations, including her work as the Director of the Violence Prevention Project for the Alliance for Logan Square Organizations. Nyman earned her Master's degree in Cultural Geography from The University of Massachusetts – Amherst and holds a Bachelor's degree in Government and International Relations from The University of South Carolina. She resides in Chicago with her husband and daughter.

KATHY STOHR

Deputy Director, Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development

Kathy oversees the implementation of three federal grants, including Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge. Previously, Kathy directed community systems development projects at Illinois Action for Children, facilitating the development of broad-based collaborations and strategic partnerships in communities of high need to build local capacity for early childhood care and education. Ms. Stohr has worked in the field of early childhood policy and advocacy since 1995. Her roles have included resource and program development for the Collaboration for Early Childhood (Oak Park), conducting community assessments for the Illinois Migrant Head Start Project, and managing the Early Learning Illinois campaign for universal preschool. Ms. Stohr holds a Master of Public Policy degree from Georgetown University and has three incredible daughters who know their mother works to make sure that all children have what they have—early learning environments that support healthy development.

AMY ZIMMERMAN

Director, Chicago Medical-Legal Partnership for Children

As the program's longtime director, Amy brought the Chicago Medical-Legal Partnership for Children (CMLPC) to the Legal Council for Health Justice in 2014, providing free legal assistance to families with children challenged by disability, chronic disease, and acute illness. One of the first medical-legal partnerships in the nation, this "legal care" program brings together doctors, lawyers, and social workers to tackle social and economic difficulties that negatively impact child health and development. Over her years of practice, Amy has spearheaded legislative initiatives and helped to implement groundbreaking health policies. Highlights include: the Illinois Children's Product Safety Act on recall requirements, the Illinois School Code on charter school healthy and safety, classroom access and home and hospital instruction, and the Early Intervention Services System Act on council and service delivery improvements. Amy is member of numerous advisory boards and committees and is an appointed member of the Early Intervention Interagency Advisory Council and the Mayor's

Taskforce on Literacy. She also serves on the board of the Illinois Infant Health Association. Previously, Amy served as the Children's Policy Advisor to Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, as assistant director of the Children's Health and Education Project at the Chicago Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and as a neighborhood and project attorney at LAF. She has received numerous awards, including honors from the Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition and the Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI). In April 2013, CMLPC received the National Outstanding Medical Legal Partnership Award. Amy was recently selected to the inaugural class of the Children's Health Leadership Network. She earned her J.D. from Northwestern University Law School.

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