

United Way Born Learning Mobilization Plan

A plan to ensure: Children are cared for and have fun as they become prepared for school

Addressing the achievement gap in Dane County starts long before children enter school. Identifying and addressing issues early, during the most important and formative time of a child's cognitive development, give our children the opportunity to start school ready to learn. **Children are Born Learning.** We can't afford to wait.

Aspirational goal: 80% of our 4-year olds will be at age-expected development and ready to begin school by 2020.

Read. Play. Talk. Learn. Across all socio-economic lines, many parents do not realize that learning starts at birth, that children's brains are rapidly developing to build the foundation for future learning, and that children are learning all the time, even during routine day-to-day activities.

The most formative years in a child's development are from birth to age five, when they are building a foundation for health and successful future learning. Young children's brains are quickly developing connections and creating a foundation of skills to help them throughout their lives. If children start behind, particularly in the first three years, or experience delays, **they may never have the opportunity to catch up.**

Investing in a child's early education and development benefits our children's futures and our community as a whole. Early intervention lowers the cost of later investment. Studies show \$4-\$17 returns for every dollar invested in early childhood programs.

BORN LEARNING COMMUNITY VISION FOR DANE COUNTY



The Born Learning Delegation, a group of 40 community leaders, created this framework to emphasize that the child and parent are the focus of a child's development.

Children of color are less likely to be “ready for kindergarten”. In Dane County, disparities exist in children’s readiness for success in school. In the 2013-2014 school year, only 60% of children in the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) scored “ready for kindergarten” on the MMSD’s Kindergarten Screener. This number is lowest for African American children (38%), Hispanic children (29%), Asian children (55%), and two or more races (67%).

Approximately 1,900 low-income children under five in Dane County are cared for by family, friends or neighbors, not in any type of accredited child care. These caregivers can benefit from information on brain development and their roles as a child’s first teacher.

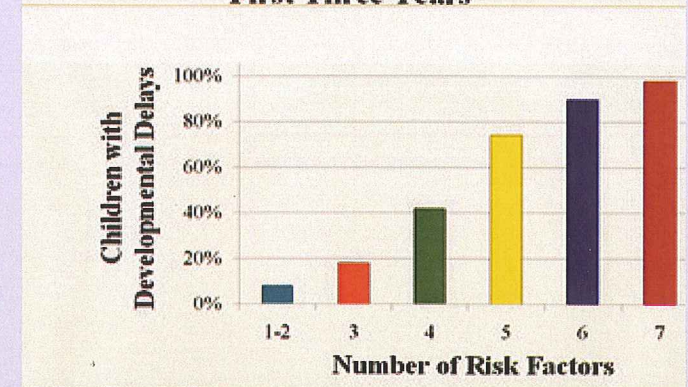
Children with multiple risk factors show greater developmental delays. Risk factors include low family income, low parental education, single parenthood, and teen parenthood. Disparities in child outcomes are present as early as nine months and grow larger by 24 months across cognitive, social, behavioral and health outcomes. Chronic stress, such as that from extreme poverty, abuse or neglect, can be “toxic” to developing brains.

30 Million Word Gap: Talking with children has a dramatic impact on their language acquisition. Experts say that children from literacy rich language environments may hear 30 million more words than other children by the time they enter school. (Hart, B. & Risely, T.R. (1995).

Kindergarten readiness is more than knowing letters and numbers.

Although all children develop in their own unique way, experts agree that the following are indicators of kindergarten readiness.

Significant Adversity Impairs Development in the First Three Years



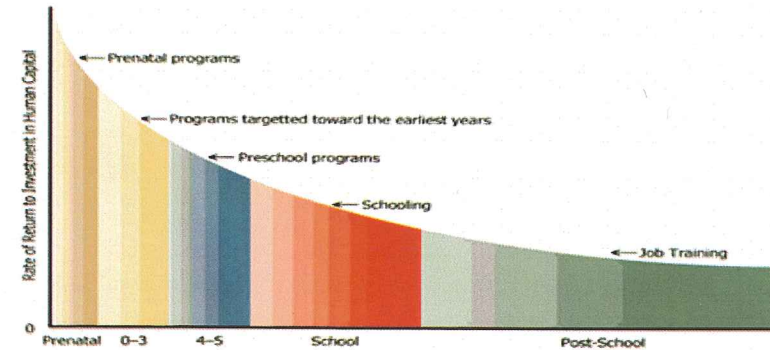
Physical well-being and motor development	physical abilities, gross and fine motor skills
Social and emotional development	ability to interact with others and capacity for self-control, interpret and express feelings
Approaches to learning	uses skills and knowledge, enthusiasm, curiosity, persistence on tasks
Language development	communication and developing literacy
Cognition and general knowledge	thinking and problem-solving and knowledge of objects and the way the world works

Both genes and experience shape children’s brains. Supporting, caring and responsive relationships are central to lifelong health and learning, support brain development and buffer the effects of stress and other risk factors.

Our Plan

- Encourage play (physical and mental) as a catalyst to learning,
- Change the community conversation about early childhood to reflect the importance of the first five years on the developing brain and future success,
- Help the community connect the dots between the relationship between early childhood and all other key issues such as the academic achievement gap, graduation, employment, and health,
- Develop cultural competence as a key part of successful early childhood practices where it is lacking and celebrate where it is done well, and
- Help the community play their role to offer environments that support early learning and give parents and caregivers the information they need to provide the appropriate stimulating environment for their child.

19: Returns to a Unit Dollar Invested



Source: Heckman (2008)

Our Strategies:

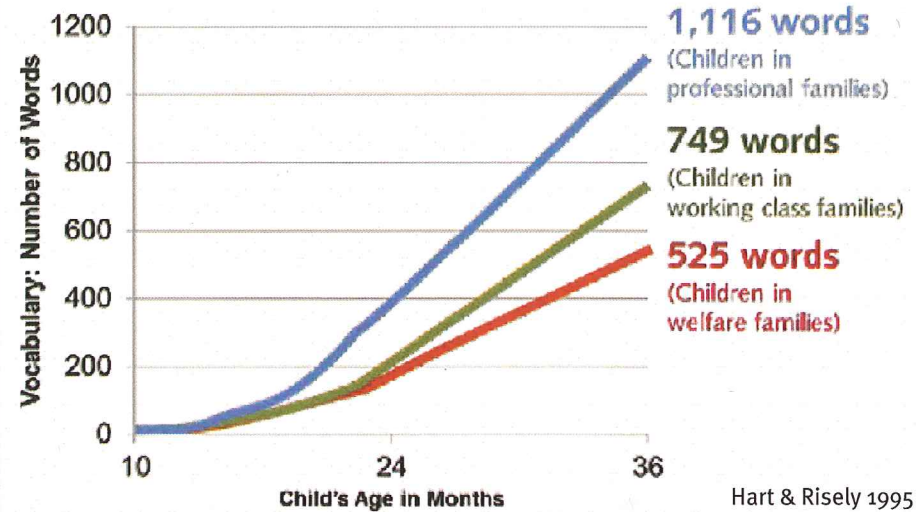
1. Parents are engaged, informed and supported in how to be their child's first teacher to help their children be developmentally ready for school.
2. Holistic family supports are focused on 13 specific geographic areas.
3. Children are screened for developmental delays and families are provided appropriate supports for children who show potential delays.
4. A community of practice is created to support practitioners, case managers, and resource centers for those serving families with children under age five.
5. Healthcare professionals are knowledgeable of community supports and can easily link parents to such supports.

List of Focus Areas & Data

Focus Areas in Dane County

1. Leopold
2. Sun Prairie
3. Verona
4. North Side of Madison
5. Hammersley/Theresa Terrace
6. South and Southeast Madison (includes Owl Creek)
7. Allied
8. Balsam/ Russett
9. Darbo
10. Southwest Madison
11. Middleton/Cross Plains
12. Stoughton
13. Marshall

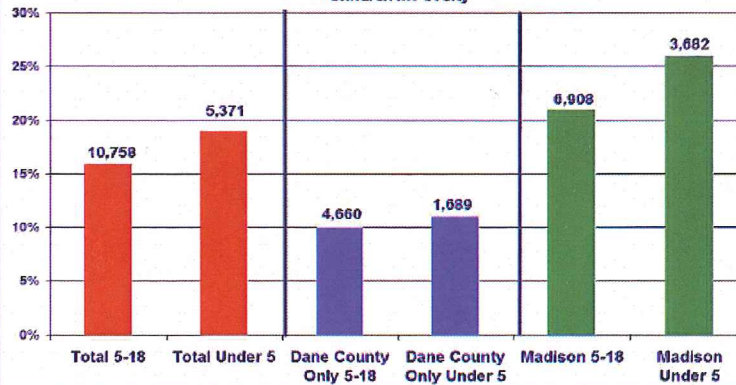
The Achievement Gap Starts Early



~ 30,000 children under 5 in all of Dane County, 19% live in poverty; 26% of children under 5 in Madison live in poverty.



Children in Poverty



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010)

Low-income children have greater percentage of results below the cutoff for typical development.

