

Teaching and Learning Early Learner Initiatives Update 2021

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Purpose:

- Expand understanding of our birth to five initiatives
- Review the critical importance of early learning
- Share how our programs are being evaluated for efficiency, effectiveness, and equity



Early Childhood Research

From the day a child is born, we only have 2,000 days until they begin Kindergarten.

85% of brain development occurs before the ages of 5.

-America's Edge. Rand Cooperation and the National Institute for Early Education Research, 2018.

Kids in high quality early learning programs are 25% more likely to graduate from high school, four times more likely to complete a bachelor's degree, and earn up to 25% more in wages as an adult.

-The Lifecycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program, heckmanequation.org

In U-46, 15% of students were ready for Kindergarten, as indicated in the KIDS results from fall 2019.

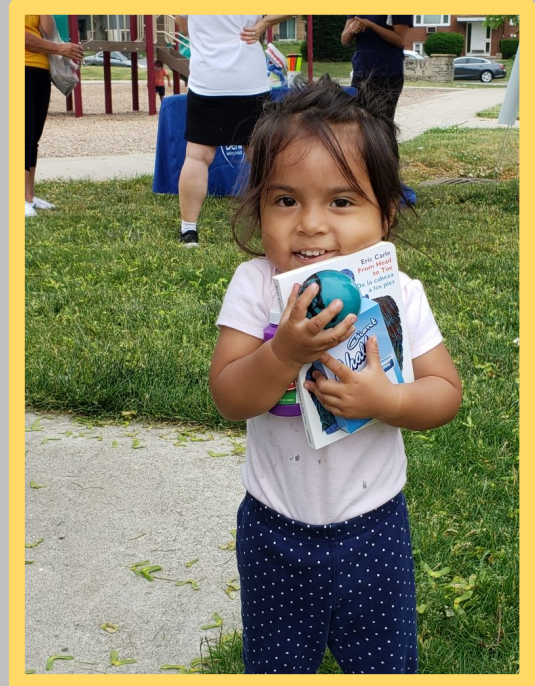
-ISBE KIDS Tech Portal



Federal and State Child Find mandates require screening for children birth to five to identify children at-risk of future academic failure or that qualify for special education services.

How do we “find” our kids:

- Parents contact district for screening (website)
- Internal efforts to identify households with early learners
- Elgin Partnership for Early Learning (EPEL)
Alignment Collaborative for Education (ACE)
Community Outreach and Partnerships
Sharing the common message of “Give Me 5!”



EPEL (Elgin Partnership for Early Learning)

Learning on the Go

- Language in the Laundromats (3 local laundromats)
- Neighborhood Early Learning Summer Pop Up's (8 Sites)
- Read While You Wait (over 40 Sites)
Book Baskets in Community Settings
- Getting Ready for Kindergarten Calendar
(11,000 calendars distributed to 50 locations)

Elgin Community Slot Gap Planning

Director Round Table: Collaborate with Family Child Care Providers and Child Day Care Facility Directors



Preschool Screening

- Children and families participate in screening throughout the year.
- Screening includes: developmental check up, language assessment, health history, parent interview, vision/hearing screening, and online registration.
- Staff determines if child meets qualifications outlined by ISBE and IDEA.
- Child is enrolled in the program or placed on the waiting list.



2021 Early Learner Initiatives At a Glance

| Parents As Teachers | Early Childhood Special Education | Preschool For All | Preschool for All Expansion | Kindergarten |
|-----------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 114 enrolled 150 Slots | Currently enrolled: 256 Transitioned from EI: 231 (typically 325) | 931 enrolled 1179 Slots | 145 enrolled 200 Slots | 2,316 enrolled |
| The Early Education Station | Illinois Park Independence Horizon | Hilltop Huff Illinois Park Independence Ontarioville Sycamore Trail Timber Trails | Horizon More at Four | All 40 Elementary Schools |

*With in U-46, there are 18,744 children ages 0-5 in the community, two out of three children in U-46 do not have access to early childhood programming. (Risk and Reach Report, Erikson Institute, 2019)

February - May 2021

Director Transition Assessment

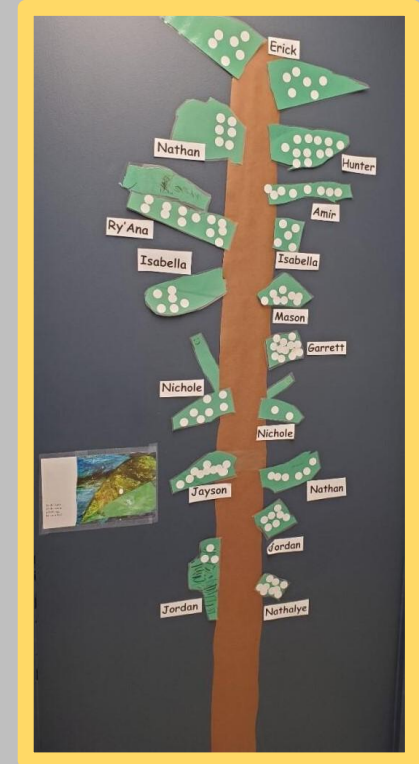
37 Focus Groups Conducted

- Preschool Building and Program Administrators
- Elementary Principals
- Special Education Administrators
- Kindergarten and Preschool Teachers
- Preschool Itinerant Teachers
- Preschool Paraprofessionals
- Birth to Three Parent Educators
- Parent and Community Educators and Outreach Support Staff

87 Participants

Groups were asked three questions:

1. What is working well in our early learners department?
2. Where are the opportunities for growth in our department?
3. What can I do, as the director, to support your work?



February-May 2021

Director Transition Assessment Findings

Strengths

- Play-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum
- Appropriate assessment practices for early learners
- High quality, dedicated and collaborative teaching staff
- Administrators are supportive, accessible, and know our students

Growth Opportunities

- Entry processes, procedures, record keeping, and systems need to be improved and aligned
- Need to unify the department; working in silos
- Department has lacked consistency, structure, and communication
- Need for vertical articulation and alignment from birth to elementary school
- Classrooms need to be updated with furniture and curricular materials

Support Needed from Director

- Consistent and clear communication and expectations
- Targeted professional development opportunities at every level of the department
- Be visible and visit



February-May 2021

Director Transition Actions

Centralized Screening Management System Initiated

Summer Preschool Registration and Screening Process Developed and Implemented

Increasing Communication and Program Unity Through Weekly Director's Notes

Leverage Funds to:

- support summer community outreach and education efforts;
- update preschool playgrounds, classroom furniture, and curricular materials; and,
- distribute Kindergarten readiness backpacks to all preschool students to promote summer learning.

Preschool

U-46 early childhood programs offer a continuum of educational services to meet the individual needs of children. Early learning, developmentally appropriate experiences support children's social, academic and physical development helping to prepare them for a successful kindergarten experience.

Preschool Screening

U-46 offers a screening service free for all 3- to 4-year-old children in the district. The screening is a brief test of a child's development that can determine if a child is progressing as expected for his/her age. In order to determine eligibility for our preschool program, families must participate in screening.

All screenings are offered in English and Spanish. If you are interested in a preschool placement, please complete the **TWO STEPS** to request the appointment. Please be aware that this is not a guarantee that your child will be accepted and enrolled in preschool.

Request for Preschool Screening Ages 3 to 4
Solicitud para una Evaluación de Preescolar Edad 3 a 4

U-46 ACADEMIC SUCCESS FOR ALL

STEP 1: Fill out the following form by clicking the link below:
Request for Preschool Screening Ages 3 to 4

STEP 2: Complete Online Registration Application:
Please click on [Current Family](#) or [New Family](#) to complete your



**National PK-3 Center,
University of Denver
Dr. Kristie Kuarez**



Goals of Outside Evaluation

1. Examine how the district is organized to support high-quality early learner efforts (PK-3)
2. Variability of implementation efforts across district

Assessment Activities

- ✓ Develop “District PK-3 Audit Tool” to examine district-level variables related to early learning/early grades (complete)
- Gather background information about U-46’s existing Early Learner efforts
(In progress)
- Conduct focus groups to engage central office leaders, elementary principals to use PK-3 Audit Tool
(Fall 2021)
- Prepare final report, reflections, and recommendations
(Winter 2021)

District PK-3 Audit Tool

- Mission and Strategic Plan with Measurable PK-3 Goals
- Central Office Organization and Culture
- Decision-making Practices Supported by Aligned Data
- Investments in Professional Learning
- External Relations and Cross-Sector Strategies
- Access to Programming



“If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.”

-Henry Ford

