



“Billion Dollar Bets” to Increase Early Childhood Development

Creating Economic Opportunity for
Every American

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

This document is part of a Bridgespan Group research project that focused on the question: *How could a philanthropist make the biggest improvement on social mobility with an investment of \$1 billion?* In answering this question, we have sought to understand “what matters most” for improving social mobility outcomes. To do this, we have drawn from extensive research conducted by leading scholars in the field. We have also outlined a range of tools to assist philanthropists seeking systemic and field-level changes that go well beyond scaling direct service interventions. Using the research and identified tools, we have created an illustrative set of “bets” that provide concrete roadmaps for high-leverage investments of \$1 billion with the potential for sustainable change at scale. (For the full report, please see [“Billion Dollar Bets” to Create Economic Opportunity for Every American.](#))

We identified a list of 15 high-potential bets through which philanthropists could have a significant impact on increasing upward mobility. In identifying these bets, we sought to elevate investments that are particularly timely, suited to the unique role of philanthropy, have the potential to create significantly outsized impact, and, as a package, could truly sum to \$1 billion. From this list, we have chosen to illustrate the following six investments. (For more information on how we selected the six bets, please see [“Overview of Research: ‘Billion Dollar Bets’ to Create Economic Opportunity for Every American.”](#)):

- Support holistic child development from birth through kindergarten
- Establish clear and viable pathways to careers
- Decrease rates of over-criminalization and over-incarceration
- Reduce unintended pregnancies
- Create place-based strategies to ensure access to opportunity across regions
- Build the capacity of social-service delivery agencies to continuously learn and improve

The concept paper below illustrates one of the six bets we have chosen to highlight.

Support holistic child development from birth through kindergarten

Concept: Create and scale a suite of tech-enabled tools that can be used by parents, informal caregivers, daycare center providers, and pre-K instructors to support the healthy development of children

Context

Nationwide, 5.8 million children, from birth to age five, are not on track to succeed when they begin kindergarten, as they lack the necessary cognitive skills, physical development, social and emotional development, language and emergent literacy, and/or learning mindsets required to succeed in a formal learning environment. Low-income children often enter kindergarten far behind their peers on more than one of these indicators, making it difficult for them to catch up and stay on track. In any given year, 1 million low-income five year olds are not fully ready when they arrive at kindergarten.¹

Experts now understand the considerable influence early development and school readiness plays in a child's progression in formal education and beyond. Children who enter kindergarten developmentally ready are significantly more likely to master basic skills by the third grade than those who are not school ready (82 percent versus 45 percent).² Performing at grade level by the third grade is an important indicator of continued success in school and makes it more likely that the child will go on to graduate from high school.

While socioeconomic status is the primary determinant of a child's kindergarten readiness, race and ethnicity compound a low-income child's disadvantage.³ The two groups facing the greatest disadvantages in math and reading are black students and Hispanic English Language Learners (ELLs). Additionally, differences in cultural perception can affect how parents and teachers view a child's social and emotional skills.⁴

Fortunately, we know a great deal about what it takes to ensure that a child is ready for kindergarten. Children from birth to age five should have positive, caring interactions and relationships with the adults in their lives in every

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- 1 J.B. Pritzker, Jeffrey L. Bradach, and Katherine Kaufmann, *Achieving Kindergarten Readiness for All Our Children: A Funder's Guide to Early Childhood Development from Birth to Five*, The Bridgespan Group (October 20, 2015).
 - 2 Isabel V. Sawhill, Scott Winship, and Kerry Searle Grannis, *Pathways to the Middle Class: Balancing Personal and Public Responsibilities*, Center on Children and Families at the Brookings Institution (September 20, 2012), 8.
 - 3 Emma García and Elaine Weiss, *Early Education Gaps by Social Class and Race Start U.S. Children Out on Unequal Footing: A Summary of the Major Findings in Inequalities at the Starting Gate*, Economic Policy Institute (June 17, 2015).
 - 4 Ibid.

setting—from home to community to school. This includes not only parents, but other caregivers, such as friends, family, and neighbors (FFN), as well as teachers (up to and including pre-K programs). Adults in all of these settings should know what an individual child needs, and have the skills and capacity to help that child fully develop. Adults also should work together across all settings to ensure a cohesive, shared approach to supporting that child.

Why Now?

There is gathering momentum for change in the field of early childhood development among funders, practitioners, researchers, and parents. New research definitively shows that the foundation for life success begins in a child's earliest years. From conception through age five, a child develops faster than at any later stage of life,⁵ and almost 90 percent of physical brain development occurs in the first three years of life alone.⁶ Children's cognitive development is significantly influenced by life experiences,⁷ particularly their interactions with adults. These interactions also affect social and emotional skill development, which we now know is just as important as cognitive development.⁸ Additionally, a growing body of work demonstrates that early childhood investments, particularly for low-income children, yield significant returns as measured by a variety of factors, including education, health, productivity, and other outcomes.⁹

The early childhood development community has largely embraced new research linking early childhood indicators to success later in life. This research has given practitioners a better understanding of what barriers impede healthy development, and what programs or solutions work or, at least, show promise. This knowledge, combined with new developments in digital technology and the current push for universal pre-K and effective developmental screenings, has created a unique opportunity. Not only is there room to capitalize on what the field knows, there is now unprecedented opportunity to scale what's working and reach far more low-income children.

5 Jack P. Shonkoff and Deborah A. Phillips, eds., *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*, (Washington, DC: National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, National Academy Press, 2000), 386.

6 Child Welfare Information Gateway, *Understanding the Effects of Maltreatment on Brain Development* (November 2009), 3.

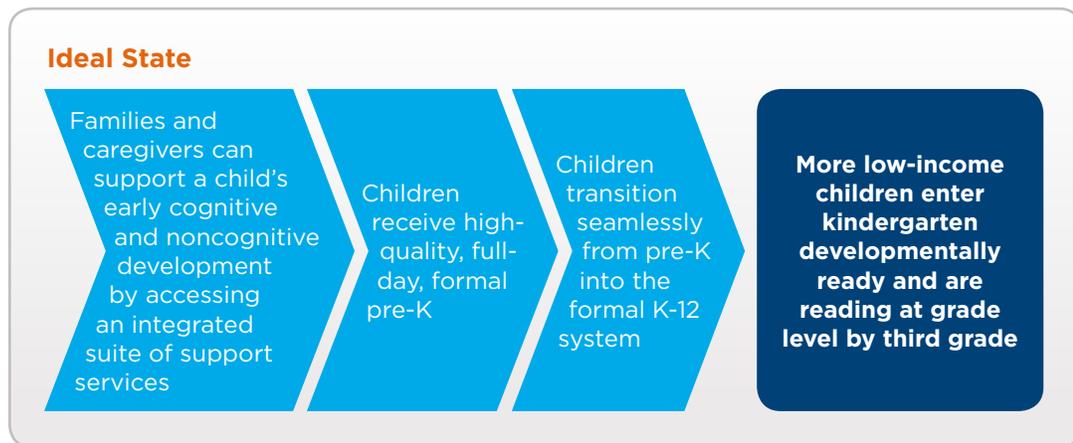
7 Jennifer Guerra, "Five Things to Know About Early Childhood Development," *State of Opportunity*, November 14, 2012.

8 National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, *Children's Emotional Development Is Built into the Architecture of Their Brains: Working Paper No. 2* (2004).

9 James J. Heckman, "The Case for Investing in Disadvantaged Young Children," *Big Ideas for Children: Investing in Our Nation's Future* (Washington, DC: First Focus, 2009).

Ideal and Current State

We envision a world in which all US children, particularly those who are most at risk, have access to high-quality developmental experiences during early childhood. These experiences will substantially increase the likelihood that they will enter kindergarten developmentally ready and achieve grade-level reading by the third grade. To achieve this vision, all early adult-child relationships (parents, FFN, daycare centers, and pre-K instructors) should foster holistic child development.



Families and caregivers support children's early cognitive and noncognitive development by accessing an integrated suite of support services

While an extensive body of evidence points to the critical importance of early childhood development, many low-income families lack access to the right set of supports and interventions to assess whether their children are on track to hit developmental milestones; they also lack access to the set of accompanying interventions necessary to support children who may be off track.

A key step is to identify, as early as possible, the supports children and families need. While many low-income mothers and families access some support during pregnancy, it is important that health and developmental screenings continue beyond pregnancy, and that those assessments are linked to services, including pre- and postnatal healthcare, parental education and supports, and programs addressing the cognitive, mental health, and behavioral needs of children and caretakers. Ideally, screenings would be conducted at a single point of contact, who meets families where they are. This approach uses assessments to truly understand the needs of families within a culturally appropriate and language-sensitive context, and then connects them with the *right* supports and services at the *right* dosage levels.

While there are multiple programs and services that aim to support young children and their families, they are often of poor quality, not well-integrated, or underfunded. High-quality interventions that span the spectrum of supports

needed by low-income children and their families are often limited in scope or prohibitively expensive, and thus difficult to sustain or scale. Significant philanthropic funding has helped develop high-quality programs but has not yet been able to create low-cost options or redirect public funding in support of these programs over the long term.¹⁰

Children (particularly those in low-income families) access high-quality, full-day, formal pre-K

For years, practitioners have sought to expand the pre-K options offered across the country, and current public systems do reach a large number of children (including low-income children). But these efforts will fall short if there isn't a corresponding push to ensure that children are receiving *high-quality, full-day* pre-K. Only programs of this caliber have achieved the level of outcomes that significantly impact life trajectories, such as those scored by The Abecedarian Project¹¹ and The Perry Preschool Project.¹²

Children transition seamlessly from pre-K into K-12

In an ideal world, the transition from pre-K into the formal K-12 system would be seamless. This would first require an assessment of a child's kindergarten readiness, including an understanding of strengths and gaps in cognitive and noncognitive skills. The pre-K program would then forward the assessment to the child's K-12 school, and into the hands of a kindergarten teacher equipped to support the child's developmental needs.

Why Philanthropy?

Within the field of early childhood, philanthropists can play many roles in supporting significant improvement in social mobility. Our Bridgespan Group colleagues outlined a number of these opportunities in their recent report, *Achieving Kindergarten Readiness for All Our Children*. While not all the ideas would require \$1 billion, a few surfaced from our research as potential areas for such a large investment. These include piloting place-based programs that offer a fully integrated suite of services; supporting low-income children in a few states to receive high-quality, full-day pre-K; and backing advocacy initiatives to ensure sustainable funding for both pre-K and health and developmental assessments.

We believe the breadth of potential investments show that the field is ripe for philanthropy, which has the unique ability to provide the necessary upfront, high-risk capital, which is off limits to most government funders. In addition,

10 Pritzker et al., *Achieving Kindergarten Readiness for All Our Children*.

11 Frances A Campbell et al., "Adult Outcomes as a Function of an Early Childhood Educational Program: An Abecedarian Project Follow-Up," *Developmental Psychology*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (July 2012).

12 Lawrence J. Schweinhart et al., *Lifetime Effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40* (Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press, 2005).

ongoing investments are needed for new programs in research and development. They encompass randomized controlled trials (RCTs) to test and validate new interventions, along with continuing research to evaluate any interaction effects between programs. These will require patient capital and funders with longer-term views towards improving child outcomes. Philanthropy also can serve as a neutral third party to bring together stakeholder groups from the public and private sectors in order to build collaboration in a fragmented field.

The Investments¹³

One path a philanthropist might follow is spurring innovation, particularly through improving research and technology. This is a highly leveraged approach, with low cost per child and the potential to reach all of the adults who can help support a child's early development. (Please see the [Appendix](#) for further thoughts on the three other potential paths identified for a \$1 billion investment.)

The two major components of a philanthropic investment in technology-focused research and innovation are to:

- Support greater understanding of how to effectively link diagnostics of early childhood development with the right suite of programs, services, and interventions
- Seed the market for tech-enabled tools that can increase the effectiveness of adult-child interactions in informal as well as formal settings (e.g., parenting skills tutorials, information for FFN care, and social- and emotional-development curricular supports for daycare providers)

These technology-focused investments would support more effective adult-child interactions across all ages and care settings. They would complement numerous other philanthropic investments necessary to achieve kindergarten readiness for children nationwide.

¹³ To get to the set of investments detailed below, we reviewed numerous research and policy briefs from The Center on Children & Families (Brookings Institution), the Behavioral Insights and Parenting Lab (University of Chicago), the Economic Policy Institute, the Ounce of Prevention Fund, the Center on the Developing Child (Harvard University), the University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research, and CASEL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. We also conducted numerous interviews and collaborative working sessions with researchers and practitioners working in early childhood development. Included among these individuals are Pamela Cantor, founder, president and CEO, Turnaround for Children; Amy Fine, associate director and senior fellow, Center for the Study of Social Policy; Patrick McNamara, president and CEO, Community Partners; Lisa Williams-Taylor, CEO, Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County; as well as several internal Bridgespan experts.

Support greater understanding of how to effectively link diagnostics of early childhood development with the right suite of programs, services, and interventions to make a difference

Investment #1: Fund research to develop a tool to map health and developmental assessment results to programs and services

As described above, health and developmental assessments are essential to understanding the needs of families and children. The results of these assessments should then link families to the right services, offered at the right time and in the right dosages. Despite the existence of validated assessments, there is no validated or research-supported tool for identifying which programs are best suited to address different assessment results—both in terms of specific programs as well as dosage. Deep research is required to map assessment results to best-in-class, evidence-based programs and identify any gaps in the services or programs. The resulting tool would be published for local communities to use and adapt. The associated research also would be shared to support broad understanding of the best interventions and to inform additional program design and implementation.

Investment #2: Fund research to evaluate the field of kindergarten-readiness assessments

Assessments also play a role later in a child's life. They can be a critical tool for ensuring that children transition smoothly from pre-K to the formal K-12 system. Kindergarten teachers should understand the capabilities of the children entering their classrooms. However, they typically lack information about the abilities and needs of new students. Despite the fact that kindergarten readiness assessments are used across many states, there is no clarity on which assessments truly indicate a child's readiness for kindergarten. Working with other funders¹⁴ who seek to address this gap, philanthropists could fund deep research to determine which assessments are most predictive of success. While the field is unlikely to select just one assessment, validating a short list would be ideal for the pre-K centers using them, and especially for the K-12 systems receiving their graduates.

Philanthropy can fund research to identify the best assessment tools that include the full set of critical kindergarten readiness indicators, including cognitive skills development, physical development, social and emotional development, and others. The findings, and a set of recommended assessment tools, would be published for the field.

¹⁴ At the time of publishing, the Kenneth Rainin Foundation is funding research on which domains are most predictive of success in kindergarten. Additional investments in this area could build on these investments and the research findings.

Seed the market for tech-enabled tools that can increase the effectiveness of adult-child interactions in informal and formal settings

Positive adult-child relationships and engagement promote a child's development and help ensure her school readiness. Often, caregivers (from parents to FFN to pre-K teachers) do not have the knowledge, skills, or capacity to engage with children in this way. This is especially true for the caregivers of low-income children, who may have limited access to the tools and techniques that would support their interactions with the children for whom they provide care.

Teaching these skills to adult caregivers, and ensuring their regular use, may require significant behavioral change, which can be challenging in any context. Current research shows that caregivers can change behaviors through intensive training by such high-touch, multiyear interventions as [Nurse-Family Partnership](#) and [Triple P](#). While these high-intensity programs will likely always be needed by certain portions of the population, reaching the number of families and caregivers required to truly impact social mobility in the United States will require further development and testing of equally effective but less-intensive, lower-cost options.

Early research has shown the potential of lower-touch interventions that can support caregivers and achieve positive outcomes for children. Typically tech-enabled, these programs have many advantages and can be distributed inexpensively. However, while low-cost and highly scalable, open questions remain about their depth and the sustainability of their impact. Such interventions include [Text4Baby](#), [Ready4K](#), [Abriendo Puertas](#), [Mind in the Making](#), [LENA](#), and [UPSTART](#).

The overall goal is to create, evaluate, and scale a suite of tech-enabled tools that can be used by parents, informal caregivers, daycare center providers, and pre-K instructors to support the healthy development of children.

Investment #3: Fund research to evaluate the field of early childhood tech-enabled tools

A portion of this bet could fund a research organization to conduct a landscape analysis of all early childhood tech-enabled tools to understand:

- What tools exist
- Which tools are linked to positive outcomes, and the strength of evidence demonstrating those outcomes
- What gaps exist (by age, context, and other variables)

This research would then be published as a report of the best tools available, as well as an assessment of what tools need to be strengthened, validated, or created.

Investment #4: Scale existing, evidence-based organizations that offer low-cost, tech-enabled tools to support early adult-child interactions

Once the research above is completed, those tools identified as effective or promising will likely need funding in one or both of the following ways:

- To support RCTs that further demonstrate their effectiveness and impact on children, and understand which profiles of families and children each tool is most effective in reaching
- To scale the tools to reach many more caregivers, and thus many more children

Investment #5: Support venture capital investments to develop tailored tools for low-income and diverse families

- Philanthropists could offer Series A-style funding to support promising new tech products that could fill gaps in the landscape of childhood development tools. Such a fund could nurture many organizations and products (approximately 30),¹⁵ knowing that not all will be successful. To increase viability, such investments should focus on venture capital funds already working in the education-technology space.
- Those new products proven to achieve outcomes for children could then be piloted in several communities to determine their best use across contexts and ages. In addition, a portion of this money could be set aside to fund start-up incubators in this area.

Investment #6: Support evaluation and refinement of tech-enabled tools

Investments in building an academic center focused on evaluating these tech-enabled tools as they are developed and scaled would help spur development. This center could be located at a leading university and would require professional researchers and graduate students. Funding would cover the annual costs of the center for 10 years, and primary costs would fund personnel. Funding could also cover the center conducting approximately five RCTs per year.¹⁶

Sustainability Over Time

Both research investments (#1 and #2) are designed to fill a gap in the field, and will not need ongoing support after their findings are adopted by caregivers.

However, for the tech investments (#3 through #6), there is every expectation that these efforts would be sustainable, even at a large scale, and have the potential to create long-term cost savings for governments. Successful interventions for parents and informal caregivers also have the potential to be continued with government funding at the city, state, or federal level.

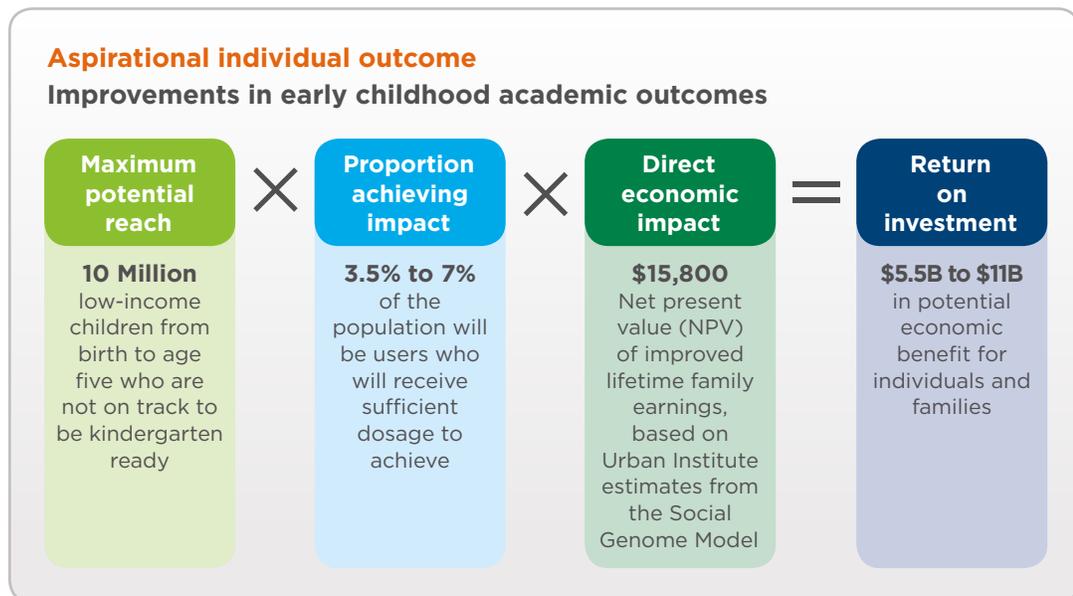
¹⁵ We arrived at approximately 30 organizations and products by benchmarking other Series A edtech investments to determine an average investment.

¹⁶ To arrive at approximately five randomized controlled trials (RCTs) per year, we looked for RCT cost benchmarks, and then determined how many could be done per year, over a 10-year horizon, given the other investments. could do per year, over a 10-year horizon, given the other investments.

Projected Impact

The projected direct impact of this bet is increased earnings in adulthood for children, who will enter kindergarten testing higher on basic cognitive skills. Evidence shows that high-quality tech-enabled tools, if used correctly, can improve a student's cognitive skills, and thus academic performance, by 0.21 standard deviations on average. The [Social Genome Model](#) has calculated that if a kindergartener improves her basic cognitive level by this amount, she will see an increase in lifetime family income of \$15,800.

This bet assumes that over five years, the suite of technology-enabled tools will reach the primary caregivers of 10 million children who are not on track to be kindergarten ready. While that is a sizeable population, the bet assumes that only a small subset of these children (3.5 percent to 7 percent) will achieve the 0.21 standard deviation improvement in academic outcomes by kindergarten. (This subset was estimated based on our assumption of relative rates of intensive users for similar mobile platforms.) If the investment plays out according to our forecast, **approximately 350,000 to 700,000 more children would enter kindergarten ready to learn, leading to a cumulative increase in lifetime earnings of \$5.5 billion to \$11 billion.**



Risks Involved

Both research investments come with the risk of low adoption rates among caregivers and practitioners, and their success depends on wide field adoption and support. This means that the tools and recommendations should be designed for maximum field buy-in, otherwise adoption may not happen.

The tech investments come with a hazard common to all innovation—the risk that the new products will not achieve projected outcomes. Even the existing programs (including those that are evidence based) are nascent, and there is inherent risk as to whether these products will scale or achieve their outcomes at scale. Even with products found to be effective, there still remains the risk of low adoption. Successful scaling will require uptake by caregivers of all kinds to achieve impact, and many (especially FFN) are notoriously hard to reach.

Breakout of Costs by Investment Area

In order to determine the likely cost of the investments outlined above, we researched the cost of applicable benchmark programs and investments. We then multiplied the cost of the benchmarks to represent the scale at which the above recommendations are presented. For this paper, the benchmark programs that were considered were Ready4K, LAUSD iPad pilot, [Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy](#), and [If You Can Company](#), along with research published by Rand titled *The Cost of School-Based Educational Technology Programs*, and primary research conducted by Bridgespan staff.

Pathway	Investment Area	Estimated Cost
Spur innovation	Support venture capital investments in development of tailored tools for low-income and diverse families	\$200,000,000
Hone and grow	Scale existing, evidence-based organizations that offer low-cost, tech-enabled tools to support early adult-child interactions	\$750,000,000
	Pilot the use of these tech-enabled tools in several communities	\$23,000,000
Invest in field infrastructure	Support evaluation and refinement of tech-enabled tools	\$25,000,000
	Fund research to develop a tool to map health and developmental assessment results to programs and services	\$1,400,000
	Fund research to evaluate the field of early childcare tech-enabled tools	\$300,000
	Fund research to evaluate the field of kindergarten readiness assessments	\$300,000
TOTAL		\$1,000,000,000

Appendix: Alternative Investment Approaches

As mentioned, a wide range of funding opportunities is outlined in our report *Achieving Kindergarten Readiness for All Our Children*. For this research, Bridgespan sought out particularly timely packages of \$1 billion investments that were surfaced repeatedly in our interviews with leading industry experts. Three packages of investments emerged from this process, collectively corresponding to opportunities 3 through 5 and 8 through 10 in the report.

Invest deeply in a select set of communities to provide families with a holistic, fully integrated suite of services

The first alternative path to ensuring that all children are supported in their development is to adopt and implement an integrated suite of services within a few specific regions or communities.

As noted, a key step in ensuring that children and families receive the supports they need is identifying those needs early and often, via health and developmental screenings. While many low-income mothers and families are accessing some support during pregnancy, it is important that:

- Screenings continue beyond pregnancy
- Results of assessments are linked to services—including pre- and postnatal healthcare, parental education and supports, and programs addressing the cognitive, mental health, and behavioral needs of children and caretakers
- Screenings are be conducted by a single point of contact, who meets families where they are and uses the assessments to truly understand families' needs and then connects them with the *right* supports and services at the *right* dosages

Since many families will have multiple needs that cannot be addressed by a single program, simply offering them a list of programs, all operating independently without coordination, will prove insufficient. Ensuring that these programs work together will require that multiple organizations and agencies share information and that a system is set up to analyze family results over time in order to refine and improve the services offered.

As one example, Palm Beach County is working to overcome these challenges by pioneering this type of place-based work; they support hospital liaisons who work to understand the specific needs of individual families, administer developmental screenings for children and assessments of maternal health, and then connect families with the services matched to their needs and cultural context. They also have made great strides in collecting and analyzing data across the families they serve, with an eye towards improving outcomes.

A deep, place-based investment could be made within a few communities to support greater access to integrated services, similar to the work of Palm Beach County. This type of investment would be a significant undertaking, requiring a

long-term commitment and a funder with the ability to provide not only financial support, but a strategic view and the relationship building required to coordinate many individuals, organizations, and agencies. Such an investment would likely require most, if not all, of \$1 billion to develop and implement, but it would have significant direct impact on children and families within the communities targeted. It also would seek to achieve scale by serving as a proof of concept for other geographies to replicate.

Focus on ensuring that low-income children in a few states receive high quality, full-day pre-K

A second path involves a focus on pre-K, and explicitly on improving the quality of pre-K offered nationwide. Efforts have been underway for many years to expand pre-K options offered across the country, and current public systems reach a large number of children (including low-income children). Despite tremendous momentum towards universal pre-K, these efforts will fall short if there is not a corresponding level of effort to ensure that children are accessing *high-quality full-day* pre-K. Only high-quality options have achieved the level of outcomes desired – the kind that significantly impact the life trajectories of the children served, like those achieved by The Abecedarian Project and The Perry Preschool Project.

A critical ingredient in ensuring that a pre-K program is high quality is the teacher: Positive teacher-child interactions focused on learning are essential in achieving positive outcomes for children.¹⁷ However, there are not enough qualified practitioners entering the industry, and those who do are not always receiving the professional development or tools required to improve their practice and support holistic child development. In terms of the talent pipeline, little is known about effective methods of increasing the number of professionals entering the early childhood education industry. Investments could be made in innovating new approaches for building and sustaining a talent pipeline, providing adequate compensation, and developing quality training programs for this workforce.

Additionally, many states are taking a market-based approach to improving early education, by adopting or developing a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). These systems rate early childhood programs and disseminate those ratings to inform decisions on enrollment (by parents) and investment (by policy makers). Ideally, they create local markets for quality improvement, which in turn should lead to better school readiness for children. Over half of all US states already have a QRIS, making this an important tool in improving early childhood education. However, existing systems do not actually rate programs according to child outcomes. In order to ensure that pre-K programs prepare children for kindergarten, ratings should be tied to child outcomes. Investment should be made

¹⁷ Jim Minervino, “Lessons from Research and the Classroom: Implementing High-Quality Pre-K that Makes a Difference for Young Children,” Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (September 2014).

in the research and technical assistance required to help existing programs update their ratings assessments to tie directly with child outcomes and codify what is required for those states developing a QRIS in the future. Budget permitting, funds could also be set aside to support quality improvements at pre-K centers.

Fund advocacy initiatives designed to ensure sustainable funding streams for both pre-K and health and developmental assessments

A third path focuses on the advocacy required to further support the first two potential approaches described above.

As outlined in the first (place-based) approach, supporting families starts with health and developmental screenings. Validated assessment tools to determine a child's needs do exist (e.g., [Survey of Wellbeing of Young Children, Ages and Stages Questionnaires®](#)), and have been employed in a variety of contexts. A critical step in making these screenings universal is the development of sustainable public (e.g., Medicaid) and private (e.g., insurance coverage) funding pathways that support ongoing operating expenses, including the costs of the assessment as well as the staff required to conduct them. Developing these funding pathways will require building a case for changing the reimbursement practices of these entities and then advocating strongly for that change.

Separately, as outlined in the second approach (quality pre-K), ensuring that children receive full-day, high-quality pre-K is essential to their development. While there are investments to be made around ensuring that the pre-K offered is in fact high-quality, there will still be a need to advocate for more dollars directed at offering pre-K seats. Current combined per-capita public spending at the state and federal levels on education for six to 18 year olds is nearly four times as high as spending on children from birth to five.¹⁸ As a result, early childhood education budgets are not sufficient to offer the number of high-quality full-day pre-K seats needed, particularly for low-income families. Additionally, limited funding contributes to the field's lack of strong talent pipelines and the ongoing training and development required to retain practitioners and improve their practice. A philanthropist would be well-suited to fund and lead advocacy efforts aimed at convincing policy makers to increase the levels of state funding directed at early childhood—and specifically towards increasing the number of full-day seats available to low-income children and families.

Advocacy efforts for both areas should target government decision makers, primarily at the state level, while also supporting local community advocates. (Many communities are turning to local sources of funds, by raising new property

18 Sara Edelstein, Julia Isaacs, Heather Hahn, and Katherine Toran, "How Do Public Investments in Children Vary with Age? A Kid's Share Analysis of Expenditures in 2008 and 2011 by Age Group," The Urban Institute (October 2012), 11-12.

taxes at the county level.) While short-term advocacy efforts may not require the full \$1 billion, such funding could be required to sustain advocacy over a long period of time.

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