The Bridgespan Group

Collaborating Towards Kindergarten Readiness at Scale

A Funder Group Case Study

By Katherine Kaufmann, Laura Brookhiser, and Bradley Seeman

Collaborating to accelerate social impact

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In mid-2016, two years after 12 leading funders had launched an ambitious early childhood development collaborative, the group still had not settled on any investments. The collaborative, formed at the invitation of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation (Packard Foundation) and the J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation (Pritzker Family Foundation), had adopted a straightforward goal: identify a few high-potential ideas to improve kindergarten readiness for all children and find collaborative ways to advance them. Noting the lack of progress, the group's principal convener, Meera Mani, director of the Children, Families, and Communities Program at the Packard Foundation, bluntly asked the group, "Should we stop meeting?"

Posing this question helped prompt the collaborative to alter course—and pick up speed.[1] Eighteen months later, two teams within the group had pooled $26 million to pursue co-investments in two areas: strengthening the early childhood workforce of teachers and other professional care givers, and changing the standard of care in pediatric well-child visits. The two teams have invested much more in these strategies than any of the individual members would have on their own. And the 12-member group, including some who have not invested in either the workforce or pediatric initiatives, continues to work to identify additional areas for collaboration.

It's still too soon to discern results from the group's investments. These are long-term initiatives, and meaningfully influencing kindergarten readiness and other early childhood outcomes takes time. But before memories of what happened over the first three-and-a-half years of this work fade, we decided to take stock and ask several questions. How did these funders come to agreement on two early childhood investments? What barriers did they overcome along the way? And what might other funders interested in philanthropic collaboration—regardless of their fields—learn from the experience of the early childhood collaborative?

What follows is not a how-to guide for creating a funder collaborative. A variety of resources already cover this subject (see "More on Funder Collaboratives"). Rather, it is an account of how one collaborative set a fixed goal and continuously evolved its methods

1 Current members of the collaborative, which has not adopted a formal name, include: Ballmer Group, Bezos Family Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Blue Meridian Partners, Buffett Early Childhood Fund, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Einhorn Family Charitable Trust, Foundation for Child Development, George Kaiser Family Foundation, Heising-Simons Foundation, Irving Harris Foundation, J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation, Stranahan Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and two anonymous donors.

to achieve it. In sharing the choices these funders made and the turning points they faced, we hope this case study helps other funders chart their own course to successful collaboration.

Setting the goal and gathering the right people

“I had no preconceived notions of success—that if we did it one particular way, we could make it work. The only nonnegotiable for me was having an impact on quality care for kids at scale. I didn’t want to be part of another set of incremental shifts.”

MEERA MANI, DIRECTOR, CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES PROGRAM, DAVID AND LUCILE PACKARD FOUNDATION

In July 2014, six early-childhood funders gathered at the invitation of the Packard Foundation and Pritzker Family Foundation for an all-day meeting at the Packard Foundation offices in Los Altos, California. Both wanted to identify several opportunities for collaborative philanthropy to achieve kindergarten readiness for all children, and to test the group’s willingness for working together to pursue those opportunities.

Collaboration among early childhood funders was not a new idea. Other formal and informal groups, such as the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative, Educare funders, supporters of the BUILD Initiative, and the First Five Years Fund, have worked for years to advance the field, often with significant success. The small group gathered in Los Altos was keen to avoid duplicating or supplanting existing efforts. It wanted to begin a new conversation about strategies with the greatest potential to make real progress on kindergarten readiness and co-investment approaches to advance those strategies.[2]

The group anchored on kindergarten readiness for two reasons. First, it is a milestone in development and a powerful predictor of success in school and life. When children enter kindergarten ready to learn, 82 percent master basic skills by age 11, compared to 45 percent for children who are not kindergarten ready. Second, kindergarten readiness is a comprehensive outcome, encompassing all essential areas of development that funders might focus on individually (e.g., cognitive development, physical health). As such, anchoring on kindergarten readiness helped both unify and focus the funders’ conversations.

Each of the funders gathered in Los Altos was eager to propel large-scale change, while recognizing that they couldn’t do it alone. Since the first meeting, the collaborative’s membership, way of working, and investment strategies have changed, but kindergarten readiness has remained its North Star.

The two convening foundations worked hard to bring together the right group of funders for that first meeting. Mani had one or more conversations with everyone invited beforehand. Those attending the meeting had to represent foundations already committed to early childhood work and be senior enough to speak on their foundations’ behalf. Each also needed to be knowledgeable enough about the field to engage productively with others around new ideas and initiatives.

2 Coordinated funding means that funders retain individual control of their grantmaking in a particular area, but align funding across grantmakers so that it supports common objectives or initiatives. Co-investing means pooling funds, either in a separate entity or one of the partner funders.

In some respects, the group was heterogeneous—representing local, regional, and national funders. The defining and shared characteristic among all participants was their point of view about the importance of finding solutions together that they could not achieve alone and seeking broad impact. Working together meant either pooling funds or coordinating individual investments around specific strategies.

Curiosity also characterized the group. "I remember going into the first meeting with the hunger of wanting to learn more about each other's work," said Mike Burke, vice president of the Buffett Early Childhood Fund. The collaborative encouraged members to keep others in the field up to date about what the group was doing and to bring back ideas.

Excerpt from the EC Collaborative Principles of Engagement, November 2014:

"We are a group of philanthropies who share a commitment to advancing kindergarten readiness at scale for at-risk children from the prenatal period through age five by collaborating on a few 'big ideas.' While we each have a unique approach and orientation to the challenges and barriers facing our nation's youngest children, we are eager to collaborate with other like-minded funders who are dedicated to impact at scale."

As a first step to developing collaborative investments, the initial meeting in Los Altos focused on identifying and testing the group's enthusiasm for a set of 14 kindergarten readiness big ideas.[3] The ideas were the focal point—not how the funding might later fall into place.

In advance of the meeting, the conveners created a pre-read document that described the magnitude of the kindergarten readiness problem, the barriers to achieving kindergarten readiness at scale, and 14 investment ideas. The ideas included investments that some funders were already pursuing or intended to pursue, as well as investments that lay outside of each participating funder's strategy. The document helped focus the conversation on opportunities for impact without advocating for any one idea over another. It also helped to create a "neutral space" for the group to set aside their individual strategies and discuss the ideas that appeared most timely and promising to tackle together.

In its first meeting, the group identified several ideas of particular interest, clustered into three areas: professionalizing the early childhood workforce, equipping states to create high-quality early learning environments for three- and four-year-olds, and supporting parents through multiple channels. They spent the rest of their time together beginning to sketch out high-level components of philanthropic investment in each area. By the meeting's end, the group had found some common ground, was enthusiastic about working together in new ways, and unanimously voiced the desire to continue the conversation. However, the path from identifying promising ideas to investing together turned out to be a longer journey than participants might have imagined.

3 Each idea addressed one or more of the barriers that impede positive caregiving at scale. These ideas operated across the early childhood system. Some were focused on direct support for children, parents, or educators (for example, accelerating efforts to help mothers affected by depression and substance abuse). Others focused on addressing one or more of the cross-cutting challenges that, if addressed, could advance other ideas (for example, supporting states in conducting universal kindergarten readiness assessments). See *Achieving Kindergarten Readiness for All Our Children: A Funder's Guide to Early Childhood Development from Birth to Five* for a later report based substantially on this initial set of ideas.

Learning together, building trust, recommitting to the goal

Over the next year-and-a-half, into mid-2016, the early childhood collaborative met several times, hosted by different members—such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in Seattle and the Buffett Early Childhood Fund in Omaha. Group membership expanded over time, with the collaborative inviting new members who shared its initial vision. This approach, while critical to the group's progress, challenged the conveners' ability to establish and maintain trust among the group members. Inviting new members on a regular basis required the conveners to continually work on building relationships.

Working groups developed the agendas with the support of The Bridgespan Group, (see a sample agenda in the Appendix), and each meeting explored one of the three ideas that the group had identified in Los Altos. Occasionally, the group would also invite outside experts to join the discussion. The meetings' goals were to foster a shared understanding of work already underway and identify opportunities for collaborative investment.

For example, the November 2015 meeting in Omaha focused on equipping states to create high-quality early-learning environments for all three- and four-year-olds. In preparation for the meeting, the Bridgespan team produced a map of each funder's investments in this area. At the beginning of the session, each funder briefly described what made them most optimistic about the potential for progress on high-quality early learning opportunities and one challenge they would most like to see this group tackle. Then, in both full group and breakout sessions, participants discussed the opportunities they were most excited about, brainstormed what success would look like, and defined next steps to make progress on the opportunity before the next convening in February 2016.

Members found real value in the opportunity to learn together. "We all have a point of view, but we don't have enough of a solid base for what solutions work best. That's what I love about this process of learning together," said one funder. Another added: "We've learned a ton from the group meetings and from individual contacts with individual participants." A third observed: "We valued the sophistication and the experience that the foundations were already bringing. And yet they were also saying 'we need to do more.'"

Learning together also helped to break down a common barrier to collaboration: single-minded commitment to a particular strategy. Each funder brought to the table their own individual strategies and priorities, their own approach to impact and levers for change, and their own ways of working. "You've got to figure out a way to honor those individual foundation strategies while also building out a collaborative mission," said Rebecca Gomez, education program officer for the Heising-Simons Foundation. Together, participants learned about areas outside their foundations' strategies and explored how other funders' work might connect to their own (for example, the link between development of the early childhood workforce and one funder's focus on pre-K). And they looked at important areas that supported their own work but which they could not tackle meaningfully on their own.

The many hours funders spent together also helped them to build the trust essential for effective collaboration.

Yet, by 2016, despite engaging meetings, participation by a growing number of funders, and identification of several priorities, the conveners began to worry that the group might not achieve collaborative action. There were no investment proposals on the table. "We had gotten to a place where we either needed to drill down on these priorities—or we were done," explained Mani. And so, she asked the group: "Should we stop meeting?"

"Her willingness to just ask out loud 'should we stop meeting?' was really powerful," said Chuck Harris, managing director and chief operating officer of Blue Meridian Partners. "She called the question." Within two days, through a series of follow-up phone conversations, more than 80 percent of the people in the group said that they wanted to move forward but shift tactics. From now on, the group would focus exclusively on developing specific investment concepts, and they would not meet again until they had concrete proposals to consider. Other collaboratives may not face that kind of live-or-die moment. But most will likely want to ask themselves along the way if they are really on track toward their goal—and change course, or get back on course, if need be.

Identifying the champions, co-creating the investment

The decision to focus on specific investment concepts meant that someone had to create drafts for the group to work with. Two funders agreed to do this. Ira Hillman, who leads the Parenting and Childhood portfolio at the Einhorn Family Charitable Trust (EFCT), signed on to lead a workgroup on supporting parents through pediatric well-child visits. Jacqueline Jones (president and CEO) and Sara Vecchiotti (vice president, Research and Program Innovation) of the Foundation for Child Development (FCD) did the same for workforce issues. Both funders had joined the collaborative in 2016 and were knowledgeable about the specific areas they were taking on for the collaborative. They also were willing to spend the time to put a draft investment concept on paper, and eager to solicit and incorporate a wide range of feedback from other funders. Importantly, both of the foundations they represented were planning to make their own investments in one of the areas, yet neither believed that their investment alone would create impact at scale. The group came to call them champions.

> *"Someone has to step up. You can get together and have a meeting. But if you want it to go beyond the meeting and become an initiative, someone has to lead. Six followers don't move anything."*
>
> IRA HILLMAN, LEAD, PARENTING AND CHILDHOOD PORTFOLIO, EINHORN FAMILY CHARITABLE TRUST

The dynamic of the group changed when the champions stepped up. "We suddenly realized that [FCD's] thinking was way ahead on the workforce issue," said Jessie Rasmussen, president of the Buffett Early Childhood Fund. "I remember thinking, let's jump on their bandwagon. That's part of what makes these things work—the ability to say, 'you're the lead on this.'"

With champions at the helm, the work of developing and nailing down the investment strategy proceeded in stages:

Forming smaller groups focused on investment areas: Hillman, Jones, and Vecchiotti led groups made up of collaborative members willing to consider investing in either the workforce or pediatrics areas, or both. Creating these smaller groups was a key step. "The full collaborative had 12 to 15 members at any one meeting, but it wasn't really a discussion," explained Hillman. "It was everyone saying their piece. To drive to action, you need a small enough group." The composition of the smaller groups evolved after they formed. The pediatrics group now has five funders and the workforce group eight. A few funders did not join either group, largely because the emerging investment focus of the initiatives represented too great a departure from their individual strategies and grantmaking approach.

Reaching consensus on the desired outcomes and investments: The groups started by consulting researchers and practitioners in their respective areas to ensure that the initiative strategy was firmly grounded in the practical realities of pediatric practice and the early childhood workforce. Along the way, they also shared information with each other. Both groups drew on what they learned to agree on a set of child, family, and system outcomes to which they would hold themselves accountable. Based on these outcomes, both groups identified possible investment ideas and then narrowed the list to the one or two that the champion would develop into a detailed investment proposal.

What's in an investment proposal?

The workforce and pediatrics groups both used the same template in developing their draft proposals:

1. **Need:** What is the gap in kindergarten readiness among low-income children that this idea addresses?
2. **Opportunity:** What is the promising solution to address this need? What is the "point of arrival"?
3. **Approach:** What is the series of investments that philanthropy can make now and over the next 10 years that will help us reach the desired point of arrival?
4. **Funding:** What is the magnitude of funding required short term and long term?
5. **Risks:** What are key operational, financial, reputational, or other risks involved? What are potential mitigating strategies or considerations?

Developing and refining an investment proposal: The champions presented the draft investment proposals to their respective groups and field experts for feedback. Refining the proposals was both iterative and intensive, involving multiple workgroup meetings and individual conversations. Several members of the groups used the word "co-creation" to describe the process. "The last thing I thought would be effective would be to come in with our vision and say this is what we want you to adopt," said FCD's Jones. "I would much rather folks rip the draft proposal to shreds. Sometimes getting deep into something, and tearing it apart, and then bringing it back together is the best approach."

Indeed, both the champions and other members of the smaller groups have said how important this feedback was to developing their own thinking. Though the small-group members had all seen and provided feedback on the draft proposal, EFCT's Hillman recalled that, "When I pitched the proposal to the full group, it was harder than any trustee meeting I've ever been to. There were more than a dozen funders who brought different investor perspectives, and they each asked tough questions." The champions designed the proposals to scale beyond what any individual funder would support alone. “The [collaborative’s framing] really set this up as something that is supposed to break through,” said FCD’s Vecchiotti. “We were trying to do something on a large scale and not thinking so much about the current constraints.”

Once the early childhood collaborative approved the investment proposals in concept, the working groups spent months going into more detail on their priorities and identifying potential grantees. They also developed written agreements and set up decision-making, governance, and financial management processes.

And while the process of co-creation continues today, the role of the champions has changed. “I think at this point, we were very clear that FCD is no longer the champion. This group doesn’t need a champion, this group is the champion,” Jones said.

Developing the leadership and staffing for collaboration and co-investment

Typically, participants in a funder collaborative struggle to squeeze the group’s work into an already crowded schedule. All the more reason why a serious collaboration needs leadership and staffing to support it. The early childhood collaborative benefitted at every stage from both. The Packard Foundation and the Pritzker Family Foundation, the conveners, played an essential role from the beginning, and the collaborative members lauded the value Packard Foundation’s Meera Mani added as principal convener. She invited the initial group and helped lead the effort to bring in new members, often at the suggestion of others. Mani kept in frequent touch with collaborative members, so that being part of the group was more than just going to meetings (what she called the “nurturing time between meetings”).

Mani also kept the group focused on its goal while exercising what several participants called a “light-touch” style. Participants felt that meetings provided a neutral space for the group to decide how it would reach that goal. “There was no sense of being pressured,” said Meeghan Prunty, managing director of Blue Meridian Partners. “All points of view were welcomed. At the same time you felt like Meera was strategically thinking about what made sense to drive the process to the next step.”

Staffing and support can come from several sources: volunteers, paid staff, and consultants. Bridgespan staff supported the early childhood collaborative from its inception by working with the conveners and members to develop agendas, background materials, and investment ideas, and by coordinating the actual meetings. Bridgespan also staffed the pediatrics working group in its first year of work, helping to develop the investment proposal and launch the initiative’s first grants. “[Bridgespan] really engaged in some shuttle diplomacy and were able to serve as a third-party broker,” noted Hillman. “They had candid one-on-one conversations [with collaborative members] that they could reflect back to us.” The pediatrics group now has a paid staff member to provide support. The workforce group initially relied on its champion, FCD, to provide support staff. The consulting firm Arabella Advisors now performs that function. “Essentially they are the project manager," said Vecchiotti. "There's a lot of work that needs to be done in terms of background analysis, agenda-setting, and the logistics of setting up and then facilitating the meetings. One individual foundation really cannot take all of that on because we have our own work in addition to the collaborative."

* * *

By mid-2018, the collaborative was devoting most of its time and energy to the workforce and pediatrics groups. It had agreed to continue meeting—both to advance the two existing investments and launch new collaborative investment initiatives.

Concluding thoughts—responding to the field

As noted at the beginning, this write-up is not a guide to creating a funder collaborative; it's an account of how one collaborative navigated working together to achieve its goals.

Lessons we learned from this collaborative

- **Assembling the "right people" takes time:** Assembling the right people happened over time. This collaborative used interest in impact at scale, relevant expertise, and decision-making authority as key criteria when identifying members (both organizations and individuals). As the group crystallized its specific areas of focus, the broadening membership brought energy and leadership, which helped drive progress.
- **A compelling goal brought people together:** The group coalesced around a shared goal (kindergarten readiness at scale). At every stage, the conveners helped the group hold itself accountable to that goal.
- **Learning together created a strong foundation for partnership:** While learning together was not an explicit goal of the collaborative, members found it to be an essential and valuable aspect of the collaboration. It kept funders engaged, built trust, and proved essential to identifying how they could ultimately invest together.
- **Identifying and supporting champions translated talk into action:** The champions had expertise in the two areas of focus, were willing to put in the time and effort to develop the investment proposals, and were eager to receive feedback—understanding that feedback would ultimately lead to a better proposal. This produced investment strategies bigger and better than they could design or drive alone.
- **Collaborating effectively required a serious investment of time and resources:** While this capacity can take different forms (the funder's time, a consultant's time, or even hiring a new staff person), the work required to support collaboration should not be underestimated.
- **Context informed the approach to the solution:** The collaborative took somewhat different approaches in each of its two areas of work (i.e., workforce and pediatrics), based on what was happening in the field. The group sought to add to (rather than duplicate) existing efforts and address the unmet needs members observed.

Still, looking back at the group's journey, it's worth asking: how is the story of this one collaborative like or unlike those of others?

Many of the essential steps that the early childhood collaborative took mirror those of other effective funder collaboratives: setting a goal, gathering (and continuing to gather) the right people, learning together, and building the infrastructure appropriate to its way of working. And while not all collaboratives will have to confront a decision to continue or disband, most will likely want to ask themselves now and again if they are on track toward reaching their goals—and if not, how to make the needed course correction.

The role played by the collaborative's champions proved key to its progress. Few collaboratives form workgroups that co-create investment options. As one member with wide experience of other funder collaboratives noted, "Often with cofunding, an entity comes to multiple funders with a business plan, rather than funders coming together and creating their own plan. But here, people came together to wrestle with these issues."

In this instance, the working groups formed to pursue bodies of work that existing organizations had not yet tackled. They saw the need for new investment and used co-creation to arrive at the right set of investments they could get behind.

While similar in many ways, the two working groups chose different strategies to pursue their goals. The pediatrics group is going narrow and deep by investing in a single approach: scaling evidence-based practice through pediatric well-child visits to help parents support the social and emotional development of their young children. In contrast, the workforce group is investing in multiple tools—standards, compensation, and federal and state policy.

While this account has focused on what happened inside the collaborative, at every stage the group has needed to be outwardly focused as well. The members are grappling with the challenge of building support for their strategies among the larger group of donors, policymakers, implementing agencies, and others whose participation will be critical in turning two ambitious co-investment strategies into real impact.

More on funder collaboratives (a short reading list)

For profiles of different types of funder collaboration, see:

Seldon, Willa, and Judy Huang. "*Lessons in Funder Collaboration: What the Packard Foundation Has Learned about Working with Other Funders.*" The David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the The Bridgespan Group, 2014.

For insights into the benefits of collaboration and key success factors, see:

- Bartczak, Lori. "Building Collaboration from the Inside Out." Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, Oct. 2015.
- Gibson, Cynthia and Anne Mackinnon. "Funder Collaboratives: Why and How Funder Works Together." Grantcraft, Jan. 2010.
- Hamilton, Ralph. "Moving Ideas and Money: Issues and Opportunities in Funder Funding Collaboration." Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, Issues in Philanthropy and Community Change, Feb. 2002.

For understanding how collaborations evolve, see:

- Porter, William, Kelly James, Robert Medina, and Barbara Chow. "Funder Collaborations — Flourish or Flounder?" The Foundation Review 9, no. 4, (2017).

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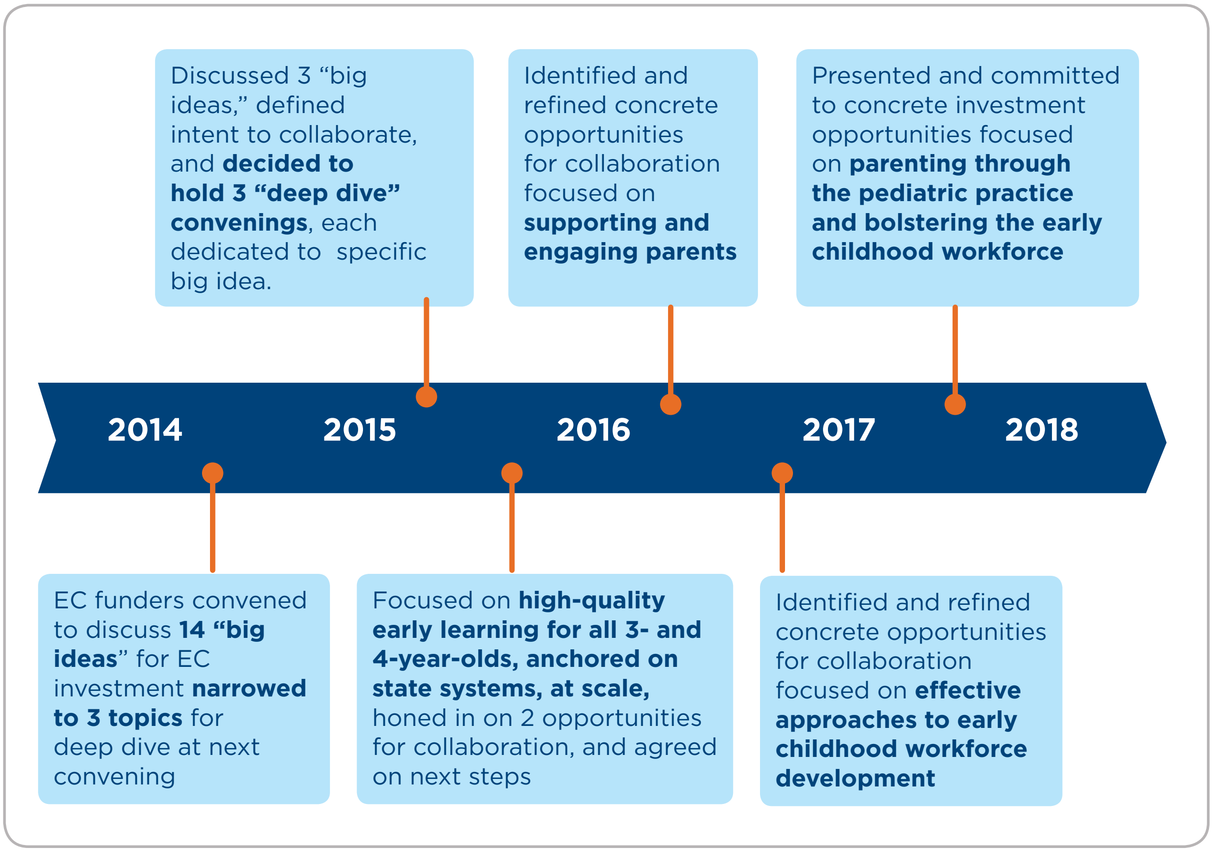
Appendix

Meeting timeline



Principles of Engagement – Drafted November 2014

Who we are

We are a group of philanthropies who share a commitment to advancing kindergarten readiness at scale for at-risk children from the prenatal period through age five by collaborating on a few "big ideas." While we each have a unique approach and orientation to the challenges and barriers facing our nation's youngest children, we are eager to collaborate with other like-minded funders who are dedicated to impact at scale.

What we believe

We believe that we can make a differentiated contribution to our field, and ultimately to the lives of very young children. We will accomplish this through a shared focus on developing scalable approaches to improve kindergarten readiness that build upon the existing evidence base and body of effective interventions. We are struck by the paradox that our field has developed a deep body of knowledge on "what works" but will need to take this work in new directions in order to achieve impact at scale.

Our goal

Our immediate path forward is twofold: advance the development of scalable, evidence-based solutions and aggressively scale proven applications already in place. Ultimately, we aim to affect practice; we view policy change as a means to the end of scaling proven solutions nationwide, rather than an end in and of itself [*edited May 2015*].

Areas of focus

We have intentionally launched our collaboration with a focus on three distinct areas, each with a direct correlation to positive outcomes in early childhood:

- Head Start and Early Head Start quality
- Teacher quality and effective approaches to workforce development
- Pathways for improving parent practices

We acknowledge that other promising pathways exist to achieving impact at scale, and that we may choose to shift our focus over time.

How we will work together

At a minimum, we intend to share our knowledge about our work in each of these three areas to propel our individual work forward. In addition, we expect that we will work both alone and in dyads or triads to develop and advance fundable and/or actionable initiatives related to these "big ideas." Perhaps some of us will make a shared investment in advancing teacher quality, or agree to a common set of goals and metrics that will allow us to elevate effective pathways to parents.

We intend to convene on a semi-annual basis and will rotate hosting, agenda development, and logistical responsibilities accordingly. Our convenings will be reserved for sharing progress on our emerging initiatives against the big ideas in order to gather input and counsel. When appropriate, select expertise and perspectives from other fields will also be included to help inform our efforts. As a starting point, our simple agenda will be to update each other on the work we are doing within these three areas and to surface initial ideas for collaboration.

We anticipate, but do not require, funding partnerships and other forms of coinvestment among members to result from our collaboration.

We also believe that applying a time limit of three to five years to this effort will encourage us to capitalize on near-term, high-potential opportunities.

Lastly, we recognize that participating philanthropies may experience shifts in leadership or strategy over the length of this collaborative. In the spirit of advancing our goals in early childhood, we will welcome new members and new representatives to the group as needed.

How are we different?

This collaborative is narrower in scope than its peers, focusing exclusively on scalable solutions within three of the most promising ideas in early childhood. We are committed to exploring our roles as private funders in an effort to catalyze impact at scale via evidence-based, applied solutions. Policy implications and advocacy will inherently follow.

Select sample of meeting agendas

Funder Meeting #1: Initial Gathering

Meeting Goals	• **Identify a number of big ideas** that could move the needle exponentially in early childhood • Talk about **new ways this funder group can collaborate** on these big ideas • Walk away with a **sense of ownership and clear next steps** for a few compelling ideas/opportunities

Timing	Session Description
1:00-1:20	**Kickoff and what success looks like** • Welcome attendees and provide context/objectives for the day • Set the tone of "thinking big" and working together
1:20-2:45	**Evaluating and down-selecting to a set of ideas** Big ideas gallery: • Each idea has its own poster-size write-up with a factoid that brings each idea to life; participants circle room reviewing ideas and adding their own onto blank posters • Individuals who are particularly excited about an idea share what they find compelling about it with the larger group Big ideas voting: • Each participant has three stickies which they can use for voting (and can distribute across ideas as they see fit)
2:45-4:40	**Flesh out the big ideas** Small groups (one per prioritized idea) to discuss: • The vision–In five years, what is in place or happening that isn't currently? • Achieving the vision–What role could this funder group play? What would we be doing differently? What specific activities would this involve doing as a group? Are there important partners that need to be engaged now? Share out with broader group via six-minute presentations with 10 minutes of Q&A
4:40-5:00	**Discuss next steps for this group** • Ask group to share their hopes for what happens next with each big idea • Align on next steps and additional funders that should be engaged

Funder Meeting #4: Deep Dive on Parenting

Meeting Goals	• **Deep dive** into understanding current efforts and challenges to **support and engage parents** • Use that experience to identify **potential opportunities for collaboration**

Timing	Session Description
2:00-2:30	**Welcome and objectives**
2:30-3:30	Exercise: **Grounding in our work** • Individuals use panels to illustrate their organization's investments in the area of supporting and engaging parents • Share out in three small groups
3:30-5:30	**Problems of Practice** • Work together with your group to formulate two problems of practice that you are currently grappling with as you invest in efforts to better support and engage parents • Share out with full group and identify how others have handled this and what possible solutions might be
9:00-11:15	Break out groups—Part 1: **Diagnosis** • Select topics to delve into more deeply • Explore what is already being done on assigned issue today and identify current roadblocks/challenges
11:30-2:30 (including lunch)	Break out groups—Part 2: **Potential opportunities for joint action** • Group discussion on experiences with funder collaboration and reflection on lessons learned • Work together to define what concretely this group could do together for the assigned issue • Share out with broader group
3:00-4:00	Break out groups—Part 3: **Getting concrete** • Use feedback from full group to refine approach and develop an action plan between now and next meeting
4:00-4:45	**Next steps** • Confirm next steps for each group; preview next "deep dive" topic

Funder Meeting #6: Investment Proposal Presentations

Meeting Goals	
	• **Discuss two "big bet" investment proposals**—Parenting and Early Childhood Workforce Development • For each "big bet" continue to **refine the idea and confirm the investment intention** of a core group of founders

Timing	Session Description
5:30	**Welcome dinner and policy discussion** • Guest Speakers: Two policy experts in the fields of healthcare and early childhood workforce
8:00-9:00	**Breakfast and introduction**
9:00-11:30	**Discussion of Parenting through Pediatrics bet** • Discuss specific topics and questions surfaced during the development of this opportunity • Confirm the investment intention of a core group of funders, as well as the level of interest among others • Determine the path forward to confirm funding commitments
12:00-2:30	**Discussion of Early Childhood Workforce Development bets** • Discuss and solicit feedback on the two proposed bets • Confirm the investment intention of funders in the working group, as well as level of interest among others • Understand interested funders' institutional funding decision timeframes
2:30-4:00	**How this group might continue to work together going forward**

THE BRIDGESPAN GROUP

BOSTON 2 Copley Place, 7th Floor, Suite 3700B, Boston, MA 02116 USA. Tel: +1 617 572 2833
NEW YORK 112 West 34th St., Ste. 1510, New York, NY 10120 USA. Tel: +1 646 562 8900
SAN FRANCISCO 88 Kearny St., Ste. 200, San Francisco, CA 94108 USA. Tel: +1 415 627 4500
MUMBAI Bridgespan India Private Limited (registered address), 9th Floor, Platina, G Block, Plot C 59, Bandra Kurla Complex, Mumbai, 400051, India. Tel: +91 022 6628 9624

www.bridgespan.org

contact@bridgespan.org
contactindia@bridgespan.org