illinois action for children

CELEBRATING 55 YEARS

Community Parenting Support Saturation (CPSS) Framework

Contents

4 Acknowledgments
5 Introduction

6 Background

9 What is Community Parenting Support Saturation?
11 Theory of Change

13 Literature Review

15 Community Parenting Support Saturation Framework

29 Implementation of CPSS-Implementation Process

35 Monitoring and Controlling Phase

38 Closing Phase

51 Evaluation

55 Preliminary Findings
55 Community Highlights
60 Tier 2 Qualitative Findings
64 Final Report
73 Implementation Challenges

75 Appendix:
75 CPSS Objectives
76 Accomplishments From Communities
77 Phase and HCD Nov 2020-May 2021
80 Community Implementation Year 1: May 2021–April 2022
83 Community Implementation Year 2: May 2022–June 2023
86 Community Implementation Year 3: July 2023–Present

94 References

Acknowledgments

The contents of this framework have been prepared by Illinois Action for Children (IAFC) staff.

IAFC wishes to thank the following funders and stakeholders for their support in making this framework possible:

- Robert R. McCormick Foundation
- Anonymous Foundation
- Crown Family Philanthropies
- Steans Family Foundation
- Irving Harris Foundation
- CME Group Foundation
- Dunham Foundation
- Vivo Foundation
- The John and Kathleen Schreiber Foundation
- J.B. and M.B. Pritzker Family Foundation
- Illinois Children's Health Care Foundation
- External evaluator Chapin Hall
- IAFC staff and former staff involved:
  - Choua Vue
  - Bri Stormer
  - Alexander Bui
  - Grace Araya
  - Marquinta Thomas
  - Rarzail Jones
  - Shauna Ejeh
  - Brittain Ayres
  - Aziza Hummeid
- Advisory Committee Members
  - John Borrero, doctoral candidate, University of Illinois, Chicago
  - Yolanda Lawler, Steans Family Foundation
  - Nancy Plaskett, Executive Director, PIE ORG (Plan, Implement, Evaluate)
  - Crystal Redditt, Parent Leader
  - Dr. Dana Suskind, Founder and Co-Director of Thirty Million Words Center for Early Learning and Public Health; Professor of Surgery at the University of Chicago; Director of the Pediatric Cochlear Implant Program
- Greater Good Studios (Human-Center Design partner)
- Selection Committee
- Communities and Lead Anchor Agency
  - Aurora-SPARK Aurora with Fox Valley United Way
    - *Rosaisela Sida-Director of Early Childhood Initiatives*
  - Rockford-Alignment Rockford
    - *Emily Klonicki-Executive Director*
  - North Lawndale-Carole Robertson Center for Learning
    - *Sonja Knight-Chief Programs and Impact Officer*
  - Authors : Alexander Bui and Aziza Hummeid

Introduction

Imagine a community where empowerment is not just a concept but a reality. Community Parent Support Saturation (CPSS) is a framework that makes it a reality and transforms both community organizations and the communities they serve.

Community partners proudly own program initiatives, taking charge of funding and driving transformative services. Their ability to not just implement but adapt and pivot showcases remarkable responsiveness to the demonstrated needs of the community.

Parents and individuals who benefit from CPSS are not passive recipients but active advocates who strongly desire to deepen their involvement in early childhood initiatives. The CPSS framework isn't just an average approach; it's a catalyst for community-driven change, where ownership, adaptability, and a shared commitment to early childhood thrive.

The CPSS framework offers structure, facilitation, training, funding support, and data support to diverse communities in Illinois. It supercharges the efforts of existing early childhood education institutions and works with communities to lead the process using human-centered design so that all our children are ready for kindergarten.

Background

In Illinois, the jarring reality is that only 29% of our children enter kindergarten prepared.[1] We know that families and primary caregivers are central to supporting children's growth in helping them learn, grow, and stay healthy.

A small group of foundations joined forces to explore innovative ways to provide families with young children a wide range of support that would positively impact their child's growth and readiness for kindergarten. Their central question was: "Can we significantly increase the number and percentage of children who enter kindergarten fully prepared to thrive by effectively engaging and supporting primary caregivers in their parenting efforts?"

With this question in mind, they collaborated with Start Early, Family Focus, and Logan Square Neighborhood Association to investigate the feasibility of saturating a community with a diverse and comprehensive set of parenting supports. Through valuable input from families and focus groups, Start Early and its partners developed the Community Parenting Support Saturation (CPSS) concept.

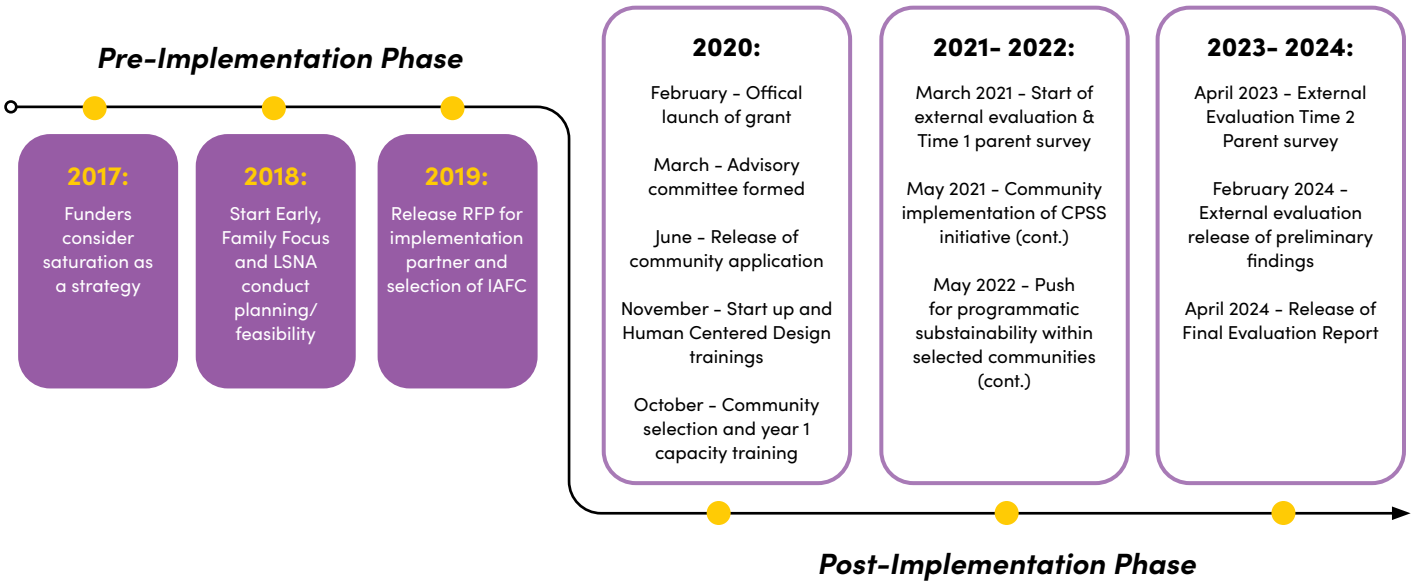
CPSS is an innovative framework that involves entire communities in strengthening the parent/caregiver-child relationship to promote kindergarten readiness. It empowers parents/caregivers by providing valuable knowledge, enhancing their skills, and reinforcing their beliefs and strengths. This empowerment enables parents to cultivate a nurturing environment, fostering their child's overall development for a successful transition to kindergarten. The framework consists of 8 components: a Backbone organization, a Tiered Model Approach, a Human-Centered Design, Project Lead Meetings, an Advisory Committee Sounding Board, an Integrated Referral System, a Data Collection System, and Marketing.

CPSS's overall goal and outcome is to ensure that families are embraced and supported as the most important influences in their children's early learning and that every child starts kindergarten thriving, ready to learn, and excited about school.

Illinois Action for Children (IAFC), armed with over fifty years of experience in successfully engaging with families and expertise in community systems development, was chosen as the lead implementation partner for CPSS. In this pivotal role, IAFC provided oversight and strategic direction for CPSS. IAFC utilized its expertise in community systems development to enhance the community's ability to deliver parenting interventions and services to all families with young children.

After a rigorous competitive RFP process led by IAFC, three communities were selected to pilot this groundbreaking framework in Illinois: Rockford (led by Alignment Rockford), Aurora (led by SPARK Early Childhood Collaboration), and the North Lawndale community of Chicago (led by the Carole Robertson Center for Learning).

[1] ISBE's 2019 KIDS Report: 29% of Illinois Children Developmentally Ready for Kindergarten



Throughout this multi-year initiative, IAFC was involved in providing a diverse range of training and technical assistance to communities. These efforts included:

- Advancing human-centered design (HCD) which places individuals' needs and experiences at the forefront of project development.
- Utilizing data to inform and shape the development of programs, ensuring they are effective and tailored to the specific needs of each community.
- Engaging families at the local level and empowering parents to have a voice in decision-making processes.
- Incorporating a racial equity approach, recognizing and addressing community systemic disparities.
- Strengthening community partnerships, early learning collaborations, and fostering the cultivation of local resources.

IAFC contracted an external evaluator, Chapin Hall, to independently evaluate the program's implementation of a saturated approach in each community and the potential outcomes for parents and children. The evaluation assessed community-level outcomes regarding improved service quality, provider knowledge, communication, and collaboration among network participants. Additionally, it measured family outcomes that would result in children being ready for kindergarten. Overall, it aimed to provide a deeper understanding of the program's short—and medium-term effects on communities and recommendations for future communities.

This document serves as a framework and key insights derived from CPSS. It specifically focuses on the grant's impact and its implications for future collaborations. As such, it can be utilized as a valuable reference and guiding framework to enhance collaborative efforts and maximize their effectiveness.

Improving Access and Equity

The Community Parenting Support Saturation (CPSS) framework aims to provide community support using a racial equity approach while centering the community in its design and implementation through incorporating an HCD. Programs need to acknowledge and actively address racism and bias in the current systems for early childhood strategies to be equitable and improve access for all members of the community. To do so, " early intervention organizations and programs should delineate strategies that are inclusive of taking a systems approach in which multiple systems consider changes that might be needed to build equitable systems."[2]

Utilizing a Racial Equity Approach

The Community Statewide Support (CS3) project under Illinois Action for Children defines racial equity as both an outcome and process:

- As an outcome: We achieve racial equity when race no longer determines how one fares in society, when everyone has what they need to thrive, no matter where they live.
- As a process: We apply racial equity when those most impacted by structural racial inequity are meaningfully involved in creating and implementing the institutional policies and practices that impact their lives.[3]

To act towards long-term equity, programs should first identify and acknowledge how community systems reinforce racial inequity via public policy, institutional practices, and other norms. The CPSS framework recognizes the systematic disparities that exist within the community. It places community needs at the center of the program design and implementation, empowering parents as active agents in the research and decision-making process. The framework prioritizes community collaborations, partnerships, and cultivates local resources.

Increasing Access Through Saturation

Saturation aims to provide a range of interventions that collectively address the different levels of parenting needs. CPSS collaborates with the community to identify which evidence-based interventions fit their needs. The program then saturates the community by providing Tier 1 universal strategies, Tier 2 short-term parenting programs, and Tier 3 intensive approaches, like home visiting. Once fully implemented, the community is armed with comprehensive interventions targeting the highest areas of need determined by the community. The intermediary organization or coalition facilitates wider access through marketing and managing the different tier supports. The intended result is a community with a breadth of access to early childhood interventions emphasizing parenting support, increasing the likelihood of readiness for kindergarten among children.

---

[2]Boone Blanchard, Sheresa, Jennifer Ryan Newton, Katherine W. Didericksen, Michael Daniels, and Kia Glosson. "Confronting racism and bias within early intervention: The responsibility of systems and individuals to influence change and advance equity." *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education* 41, no. 1 (2021): p.9

[3]"Centering Racial Equity" *Partner Plan Act* online, 2024. https://www.partnerplanact.org/ppa/centering-racial-equity/

What is Community Parenting Support Saturation?

Community Parenting Support Saturation (CPSS) is an innovative framework that seeks to provide a wide range of parenting support and initiatives for participating communities to positively impact the educational success of young children and enhance children's readiness for kindergarten. The program aims to "saturate" each community with evidence-based parenting interventions using a human-centered design and a racial equity approach. These interventions are expected to change parenting practices and child outcomes, strengthening local systems, strategies, and interventions that support parents in raising their children. CPSS strives to ensure that families are embraced and supported as the most influential factors in their children's early learning and that every child starts kindergarten thriving, ready to learn, and excited about school.

What we mean by ***saturation*** is an array of interventions that collectively address multiple parenting needs and are available to all parents of young children (ages birth to 5) in a community. The interventions include Tier 1 (universal strategies), Tier 2 (short-term parenting programs), and Tier 3 (intensive approaches such as home visiting). By addressing multiple levels of parenting needs and concerns, the program aims to provide comprehensive assistance to families.

To implement the CPSS framework, it is recommended that communities have an existing community collaboration to lead their implementation to programmatic success. Communities must demonstrate an ability to effectively engage diverse community stakeholders to implement CPSS strategies.

This intermediary organization is a facilitator, coordinating the program's various components and ensuring its smooth operation. The intermediary organization has a project lead (usually a team member of the intermediary organization) that actively involves the entire community in enhancing the parent/caregiver-child relationship and promoting kindergarten readiness. This project lead has strong community-building skills and is a known community leader.

Communities will receive the necessary tools, technical assistance supports, funding, and resources from IAFC to effectively implement evidence-based interventions, better preparing them to support parents and caregivers in nurturing and developing their children.

Community outcomes include:

- Enhancing communities' ability to implement evidence-based interventions informed by research.
- Empowering parents by fostering their knowledge, skills, beliefs, and strengths.
- Maximizing children's growth and facilitating their learning.
- Community capacity building.
- Strengthening collaborations.
- Parent's desire for involvement, EMPOWERING parents!
- The community is responsive to parents' needs.
- A tiered model approach to connect families to initiatives.

Theory of Change

The theory of change for CPSS centers on several key inputs designed to bring about a transformative impact on the community's approach to early learning and parenting.

Project Collaboration and Partnerships:

- If collaborative efforts are established involving the community's collective knowledge, energy, and power, then community dynamics will shift towards valuing children and families.
- Active community involvement and collaboration will create a foundation for positive change.
- Community narrative and values shift to prioritize and support parenting.

Capacity Building and Relationship-Based Approaches:

- If capacity building is prioritized and collaboration is emphasized among community organizations, then community leaders and stakeholders will become influential in promoting children's early learning.
- Focusing on relationships and leadership will ensure a conducive environment for community-led change.
- Empowered community leaders and stakeholders will actively influence children's early learning, creating a community-wide commitment.

Research-Based Strategies and Reciprocal Relationships:

- If research-based strategies are employed and reciprocal relationships are built among community organizations, then structured community coalitions will emerge, contributing to thriving families.
- Evidence-based approaches and strong community relationships will enhance the effectiveness of interventions.

Financial Resources and Strengths-Based Coalition Culture:

- If financial resources are allocated adequately and a strengths-based coalition culture is cultivated, then organizations in the community will share investment in early learning.
- Adequate resources and a positive coalition culture will foster a collaborative commitment to early learning.
- Organizations will collaborate, sharing power in planning and evaluating early learning services.

Reflective Practice and Human-Centered Design:

- If reflective practices and human-centered design processes are implemented among community organizations, then training, professional development, and community awareness building will lead to positive parent outcomes.
- Reflective practices and human-centered design will ensure that interventions are responsive to the needs of parents and the community.
- This will create positive parent outcomes, including enhanced capacity, confidence, social capital, and informed decision-making.

Project Collaboration and Partnerships	Capacity Building and Relationship Based Approaches	Research-Based Strategies and Reciprocal Relationships	Financial Resources and Strengths-Based Coalition Culture	Reflective Practice and Human-Centered Design
If collaborative efforts are established, involving the collective knowledge, energy, and power of the community, then community dynamics will shift towards valuing children and families. Active community involvement and collaboration will create a foundation for positive change. Community narrative and values shift to prioritze and support parenting.	If capacity building is prioritized and relationships are emphasized, then community leaders and stakeholders will become influential in promoting children's early learning. A focus on relationships and leadership will ensure a conducive environment for comunity-led change. Empowered community leaders and stakeholders will actively influence children's early learning, creating a community-wide committment.	If research-based strategies are employed, and reciprocal relationships are built, then structured community coalitions will emerge, contributing to thriving kndergartens. Evidence-based approaches and strong community relationships will enhance the effectiveness of interventions.	If financial resources are allocated adequately and a strengths-based coalition culture is cultivated, then organizations in the community will share investment in early learning. Adequate resources and a positive coalition culture will foster a collaborative committment to early learning. Organizatins will collaborate, sharing power in planning and evaluating early learning services.	If reflective practices and human-centered design processes are implemented, then training, professional development, and awareness building will lead to positive parent outcomes. Reflective practices and human-centered design will ensure that interventions are responsive to the needs of parents and the community. This will then create positive parent outcomes, including enhanced capacity, confidence, social capital, and informed decision-making.

CPSS LOGIC MODEL

Inputs	Strategies	Ultimate Outcomes	Mid-Term And Long-Term Outcomes	Ultimate Outcome
Project Partners Parents and Families Research Base Financial Resources	Collaborative Relationship-based Research-based Reciprocal and Strengths-Based Coalition Culture Reflective Practice	1. Project Startup and Capacity Building 2. Lead Agency Leadership 3. Anchor Organization Leadership and Structure Community Coalitions on Behalf of 4. Early Learning 5. Early Learning Navigators 6. Human-Centered Design and StageGate Processes 7. Training and Professional Development 8. Awareness Building and Communication 9. Tired Interventions 10. Policy	Community Outcomes: • The collective knowledge, energy and power of the community are channeled toward children and families • Children and families are valued in formal and informal settings across the community • The community supports a narrative that promotes businesses and places where families of young children gather (like laundromats and hair salons), to view themselves as having a role in supporting parenting on behalf of early learning • Parents of young children, community leaders and other stakeholders collaborate in community change • A community coalition assumes responsibility for community saturation Social Service Outcomes: • Organizations and agencies in the community share an investment in early learning • More and better collaborations exist between and among organizations and agencies in the community • Community organizations and parents share collective power for planning and evaluating early learning and parenting services and supports Parent Outcomes: • Parents are better able to support their young children's social-emotional development and early learning (enhanced parenting capacity and capability) • Parents and young children share enjoyment in learning • Parents of young children are more confident about their parenting • Parents of young children have more social capital and mutually supportive connections to other parents • Parents of young children experience themselves and are experience by others as being informed decision makers • Parents of young children who choose to be change agents and advocates are confident in their leadership and skills	"Parents are embraced and supported as the most important influences in their children's early learning and every child starts kindergarten thriving, ready to learn, and excited about school."

Literature Review

Community Saturation Through Multi-Tiered Interventions

Community saturation approaches attempt to widen the breadth of program coverage by interacting with multiple information pathways of intended audiences. Within a multi-tiered approach, stakeholders engage with program initiatives at increasing intensity.[4] Tier 1 interventions are universal, aiming to reach a large subset of the target population to identify the necessary intensity of intervention based on their response.[5]

The existing literature on multi-tiered intervention strategies has shown effective program outcomes within the Early Childhood Education (ECE) sector. Stanton-Chapman et al. evaluated multi-tiered intervention strategies to promote positive behavioral outcomes among preschool children.[6] They found that around 20% of children were not responsive to Tier 1 support alone, identifying a need for more intensive Tier 2 or 3 interventions. Such interventions included intentional strategies aimed at actively promoting social and emotional well-being through theme-based activities and initiating interactions among classmates.[7] Their study showed nine out of ten children who participated in Tier 2 and 3 supports showed a significant "increase in social skills and decrease of problem behavior as rated by their teachers." [8] Similarly, Greenwood et al. discussed the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework, whose Tier 1 universal intervention involves classroom screenings throughout the school year to identify student needs and the necessary referral for the appropriate intensity of intervention.[9]

Shepley and Grisham-Brown discuss the influx of tiered intervention models targeting the education of preschool and K-12-aged children.[10]These strategies look very different, where early education programs need more uniform standards and curricula for grade school programs. There have been challenges in implementing this model within the early education sector. For instance, most "research-based interventions evaluated in grade schools" do not apply in early childhood settings, such as reading comprehension.[11] Many challenges of tiered interventions in early childhood settings relate to centering the child as the target beneficiary. The CPSS framework targets caregivers through providing evidence-based initiatives.

[4]Stanton-Chapman, Tina L., Virginia L. Walker, Mary D. Voorhees, and Martha E. Snell. "The Evaluation of a Three-Tier Model of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports for Preschoolers in Head Start." Remedial and Special Education 37, no. 6 (August 2, 2016): 333–44.
[5]Greenwood, Charles R., Tracy Bradfield, Ruth Kaminski, Maura Linas, Judith J. Carta, and Donna Nylander. "The response to intervention (RTI) approach in early childhood." Focus on Exceptional Children 43, no. 9 (2011): 1-22.
[6]Stanton-Chapman, et al.
[7]Stanton-Chapman, et al.
[8]Stanton-Chapman et al., 339
[9]Greenwood et al.
[10]Shepley, Collin, and Jennifer Grisham-Brown. "Multi-tiered systems of support for preschool-aged children: A review and meta-analysis." Early Childhood Research Quarterly 47 (2019): 296-308.
[11]Shepley and Grisham-Brown

Caregivers As Target Beneficiaries For Early Childhood Education Interventions

Parental influence during a child's early years impacts long-term social-emotional development. Self-regulation is an essential psychological competency that includes the capacity to control one's emotions, actions, and interpersonal interactions.[12] While child self-regulation is affected by multiple factors, evidence strongly suggests a connection between "specific parent-child interactions" and development.[13] In a study on a group parenting program aimed at "developing supportive, emotionally responsive parenting," pre and post-data were collected from 218 parents.[14] The results showed a significant difference in competency regarding parents' handling of their children's emotions compared to the control group.[15] "For many parents, it was the first time they had been able to empathize and connect with their children around emotions."[16]

The positive effects of parent- and family-centered ECE programs extend to significant improvements in young children's cognitive, physical, and behavioral development. Gao et al. systematically reviewed parent- and family-centered ECE programs to identify effective strategies and existing gaps.[17] Among their results, determinants of success for parent programs include a needs-based approach to program length or intensity, family inclusivity focusing on fathers, cultural adaptation through including community and parent voices, and grounded theoretical frameworks or theories of change.[18] Evidence of improved child outcomes encompasses physical health, cognitive development, socio-emotional development, and behavioral development across the reviewed parent programs.[19]

Conclusion

Community Parenting Support Saturation (CPSS) utilizes multi-tiered intervention strategies to widen its breadth of program coverage and educational resources. By doing so, CPSS follows a need-based approach through community-led implementation and thus allows for cultural adaptation. Parents are the direct beneficiaries of CPSS, which provides them with opportunities to further their knowledge, professional development, and intervention in their children's education. The following section discusses the framework underlying CPSS in detail, from program design to implementation.

---

[12]Pandey, Anuja, Daniel Hale, Shikta Das, Anne-Lise Goddings, Sarah-Jayne Blakemore, and Russell M. Viner. "Effectiveness of universal self-regulation–based interventions in children and adolescents: A systematic review and meta-analysis." JAMA pediatrics 172, no. 6 (2018): 566-57

[13]Morawska, Alina, Cassandra K. Dittman, and Julie C. Rusby. "Promoting self-regulation in young children: The role of parenting interventions." Clinical child and family psychology review 22 (2019): 43-51.

[14]Havighurst, Sophie S., Katherine R. Wilson, Ann E. Harley, and Margot R. Prior. "Tuning in to kids: an emotion-focused parenting program—initial findings from a community trial." Journal of community psychology 37, no. 8 (2009):1012.

[15]Havighurst et al.

[16]Havighurst et al., 1019

[17]Gao, Jie, Clare Brooks, Yuwei Xu, and Eleanor Kitto. "What Makes an Effective Early Childhood Parenting Program: a Systematic Review of Reviews and Meta analyses." (2020).

[18]Gao et al.

[19]Gao et al.

Community Parenting Support Saturation Framework

There are eight components to our CPSS Framework.

C ommunity
P arenting
S upport
S aturation

Tiered Model Apprach	Advisory Committee Sounding Board	Backbone Organization	Marketing
Human-Centered Design	Project Lead Meetings	Integrated Referral System	Data Collection System

All these components make up the comprehensive framework for CPSS:

- Backbone Organization
- Tiered Model Approach
- Human-Centered Design
- Project Lead Meetings
- Advisory Committee Sounding Board
- Integrated Referral System
- Data Collection System
- Marketing

Backbone Organization

An intermediary organization or coalition oversees the CPSS Framework to ensure effective implementation in any community. This intermediary organization acts as a facilitator, coordinating the program's various components and ensuring its smooth operation. The intermediary organization actively involves the entire community in enhancing the parent/caregiver-child relationship and promoting kindergarten readiness. Communities will receive the necessary tools, technical assistance supports, funding, and resources from IAFC to effectively implement evidence-based interventions, better preparing them to support parents and caregivers in nurturing and developing their children.

The backbone organization will have a clear project lead overseeing the CPSS framework. A project lead plays a pivotal role in ensuring the program achieves its objectives, stays on track, and effectively serves the community as the beneficiary.

The following outlines why a project lead is essential:

- **Direction and Vision:** A project lead provides clear direction and vision for implementing the CPSS Framework. They set goals, define strategies, and ensure alignment with the overarching mission of improving parent/caregiver-child relationships and promoting kindergarten readiness.
- **Coordination and Collaboration:** Coordination is vital with multiple components and stakeholders involved. A project lead facilitates collaboration between various parties, ensuring seamless communication and alignment of efforts.
- **Accountability:** Having a project lead ensures accountability. They are responsible for monitoring progress, identifying challenges, and implementing corrective actions to keep the project on course.
- **Resource Management:** Effective utilization of resources, including funding, tools, and technical assistance, requires strategic planning and oversight. A project lead ensures that resources are allocated efficiently and effectively.
- **Community Engagement:** The project lead is crucial in engaging the community, building trust, and fostering partnerships. They ensure the community's needs and perspectives are considered in the implementation process.

What a strong project lead looks like:

- **Leadership Skills:** A strong project lead possesses strong leadership qualities, including vision, decisiveness, and the ability to inspire and motivate team members.
- **Communication Skills:** Effective communication is essential for a project lead to convey ideas clearly, listen actively, and foster open dialogue among stakeholders.
- **Problem-Solving Abilities:** Challenges are inevitable in any project. A strong project lead is adept at identifying issues, analyzing root causes, and implementing effective solutions.
- **Organizational Skills:** With multiple tasks, timelines, and responsibilities, organizational skills are crucial. A strong project lead can prioritize effectively, manage time efficiently, and keep the project on schedule.
- **Adaptability:** Flexibility and adaptability are essential, especially when faced with unexpected changes or obstacles. A strong project lead can adapt to new situations, adjust strategies as needed, and keep the project moving forward.

Below are the characteristics needed for a community to adopt this framework:

- **Cultural Competence:** Understanding and respecting the cultural diversity within the community is essential. The project lead should be sensitive to cultural nuances, values, and beliefs, ensuring that the CPSS Framework is inclusive and relevant to all community members.

- **Empathy and Compassion:** Building strong relationships with parents, caregivers, and children requires empathy and compassion. The project lead should empathize with families and caregivers' challenges and demonstrate understanding and support.

- **Collaborative Mindset:** Collaboration is key to the success of the CPSS Framework. The project lead should foster a collaborative environment, working closely with community partners, stakeholders, and service providers to achieve common goals.

- **Commitment to Equity:** Promoting equity and addressing disparities within the community should be a priority. The project lead should advocate for equitable access to resources, services, and opportunities, ensuring all families have the support they need to thrive.

- **Community Engagement:** Engaging the community in decision-making and encouraging active participation is vital. The project lead should be accessible, approachable, and responsive to community needs and feedback.

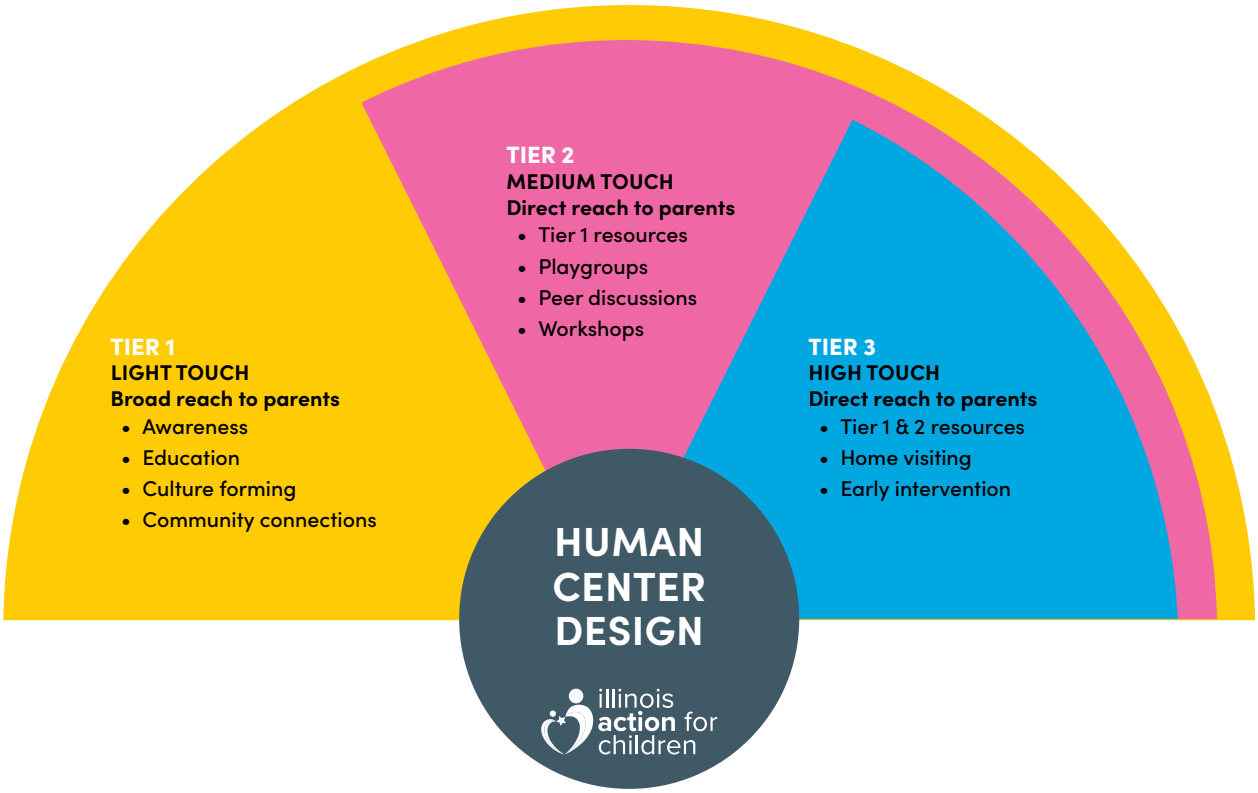
A clear project lead is essential for successfully implementing the CPSS Framework, ensuring direction, coordination, accountability, and effective resource management. A strong project lead possesses leadership qualities, communication skills, problem-solving abilities, organizational skills, and adaptability. Additionally, cultural competence, empathy, collaboration, a commitment to equity, and active community engagement are crucial characteristics needed to serve the community and effectively achieve the program's objectives.

Tiered Model Approach

The CPSS Framework employs a three-tiered model approach to saturate a community with parenting interventions.

- **Tier 1:** Focuses on universal strategies applicable to all parents, offering one-time touchpoints like learning kits or repeated interactions such as signing up for a text messaging service with parenting tips.
- **Tier 2:** Involves time-limited activities like evidence-based parenting classes and support tailored to families and young children's specific needs and concerns.
- **Tier 3:** This tier encompasses intensive and ongoing support, including home visiting, early childhood care, and education for families requiring personalized assistance.

While not introducing new Tier 3 supports, the framework CPSS strategically leverages Tiers 1 and 2 to boost enrollment in Tier 3, establishing additional bridges and avenues to existing community supports. Through the implementation of evidence-based interventions and the empowerment of parents, the framework strives to optimize children's potential, ensuring their readiness for the challenges of kindergarten.



Human-Centered Design (HCD)

Human-centered design (HCD) plays a pivotal role in the CPSS framework, serving as a guiding principle for implementing the three-tiered model approach within a community.

HCD is an approach to problem-solving that centers the voices of those impacted directly by an issue in the design and development of solutions. It brings together diverse stakeholders to develop solutions and solve problems collectively with empathy, equity, and connection principles. Using an HCD, CPSS engages in understanding root issues, gaining insights, and subsequent co-creation informed directly by the experiences of individuals from the community.

Phases of HCD:

- **Framing:** Defining questions to answer and people to engage.
- **Research:** Learning from people about their needs and values.
- **Synthesis:** Finding patterns of behavior and areas of opportunity.
- **Concepting:** Creating a high volume of new ideas.
- **Prototyping:** Making tangible mock-ups and gathering feedback.

FRAMING
Defining questions to answer and people to engage

RESEARCH
Learning from people about their needs and values

SYNTHESIS
Finding patterns and areas of opportunity

CONCEPTING
Creating a high volume of new ideas

PROTOTYPING
Making tangible mock-ups and gathering feedback

At its core, HCD ensures the successful deployment of community saturation strategies and the active involvement and ownership of the community throughout the process, which are essential elements for sustainable outcomes. It is equally important to keep flexibility and "empathy, responsiveness, and change" at the center when pushing for transformation within the systems engaged or impacted by this work.[20] HCD incorporates families from the early stages and maintains their engagement throughout the process, cultivating community buy-in and solidifying support for CPSS programs.

Project Lead Meetings

Project Lead meetings are essential to the CPSS framework because they create a dynamic, collaborative, and adaptive ecosystem where leaders can learn from each other, track progress, build relationships, and collectively overcome challenges, ultimately contributing to the project's success and sustainability.

Establishing bi-monthly meetings for project leads is recommended to facilitate cross-community and peer-to-peer learning conversations. These meetings provide opportunities for Project Leads to share insights, communicate progress toward project implementation, and build relationships. Each meeting focuses on discussion topics of interest to communities.

[20]Blanchard et al. p. 6

Here are several reasons why these meetings are crucial for the success of CPSS:

Cross-Community Learning

The nature of the Community Parenting Support Saturation work involves diverse communities working towards a common goal. Project Lead meetings facilitate cross-community learning, enabling leaders to share insights and learn from each other's experiences. This cross-pollination of ideas contributes to a more comprehensive and adaptable approach to parenting support.

Peer-to-Peer Knowledge Exchange

The meetings foster a peer-to-peer knowledge exchange environment by bringing project leads together. Leaders can discuss their challenges, successes, and strategies, providing valuable insights that might not be apparent without collaborative forums. This exchange accelerates the learning curve for all involved.

Progress Tracking and Communication

Regular meetings offer a structured platform for Project Leads to communicate their progress in implementing the parenting support initiatives. This ensures transparency and helps identify areas needing additional attention, resources, or collaborative efforts. It allows for a collective evaluation of the overall project status.

Relationship Building

Establishing and maintaining relationships among Project Leads is crucial for the success of a multi-community project. The meetings provide a space for networking and relationship-building, fostering trust and cooperation among leaders. Strong relationships contribute to a more cohesive and collaborative network.

Focused Discussion on Relevant Topics

The meetings focus on specific topics relevant to the communities involved. Whether it's marketing strategies, community outreach, or racial equity approaches, the discussions are tailored to address the unique challenges and opportunities associated with CPSS. This targeted focus enhances the applicability of shared knowledge.

Transition and Continuity Planning

As the project transitions from the planning and implementation phase and progresses into subsequent years, the meetings become critical for planning continuity. They offer a platform for discussing strategies for sustained success, addressing potential roadblocks, and adapting to evolving community needs, ensuring a smooth transition and long-term impact.

Problem-Solving and Support

Project Leads often encounter challenges that may be unique to their communities. The meetings provide a collaborative space for collective problem-solving and support. Experienced leaders can offer insights and advice, fostering a culture of mutual assistance that strengthens the project's overall resilience.

Learning from Successes and Challenges

Successes and challenges are inevitable in any community project. The meetings provide a structured forum for Project Leads to reflect on successes and challenges. Learning from successes reinforces effective strategies, while addressing challenges collectively helps prevent the recurrence of issues in other communities.

Advisory Committee Sounding Board

An Advisory Committee can play a critical role in participating communities utilizing the CPSS framework by providing strategic guidance, acting as a sounding board, promoting awareness, and filling knowledge gaps. The committee is diverse, representing both organizational leadership and the local community, and it focuses on including parents who are actively involved in the initiatives. The selection process involves nominations from community collaborations, programs, and agencies, ensuring inclusive representation.

The committee's key responsibilities include offering insights into the local community's needs and context, providing input for project evaluation, establishing connections for long-term funding, fostering collaboration among communities, and promoting project awareness. By incorporating these elements, the committee becomes an essential link between the project and the communities it serves.

To ensure the committee's effectiveness, it is crucial to address questions regarding their expected accomplishments, communication methods, challenges, and factors that make participation attractive for nominees.

The committee nominees have diverse backgrounds, experiences, knowledge, and skills represented. While state agencies may be a part of the Committee, having parents/caregivers on the front lines of family engagement work and community collaborations is equally essential. State agencies that may be included are the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Department of Human Services, and the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development. A nomination form will be sent to community collaborations, programs, and agencies to ensure family, community, and program voices are present.

The Advisory Committee's responsibilities include attending quarterly meetings, participating in decision-making via consensus models, and actively discussing project goals and strategies. An orientation session sets expectations and responsibilities, emphasizing a commitment to a year-long term of service. The committee aims to empower local voices, bring diverse perspectives to early childhood education, and contribute to the project's success.

Meetings follow a structured template, starting with an orientation and establishing an overarching goal. Subsequent meetings focus on gathering information about community gaps, setting short-term and long-term outcomes, and creating actionable plans. The aim is to present findings and accomplishments at the end of the committee's service year.

Drawing from external resources, the project leverages strategies for citizen participation and empowerment in non-profit organizations, ensuring a framework that aligns with best practices for advisory boards. A helpful resource is the ABF101 Advisory Board Best Practice Framework, which provides additional guidance on structuring an effective advisory committee.[21]

Overall, the Advisory Committee serves as a vital bridge between the project leadership and the communities, ensuring that the initiatives are informed by local perspectives, responsive to community needs, and sustainable through strategic planning and collaboration.

[21]ABF101; Advisory Board Best Practice Framework™; Joint Technical Committee; Advisory Board Centre (2020).

Integrated Referral System

Having an integrated referral-type system in the community is a crucial element within the broader landscape of CPSS initiatives across communities. We have learned that communities need a robust referral system for a more connected, accessible, and responsive network of services. It enhances the quality of support available to families and contributes to the overall well-being and development of the community.

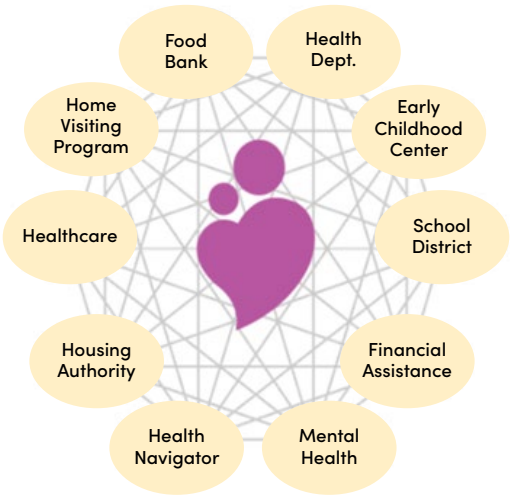
Having a coordinated referral system, such as the Integrated Referral and Intake System (IRIS) implemented in Aurora, Rockford, and North Lawndale, champions a 'no wrong door' approach for families seeking access to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) programs.

Systems like IRIS can be pivotal in promoting collaboration and coordination among partners engaged in CPSS efforts. It can serve as a unified referral system utilized by collaboration partners, ensuring a seamless and accessible process for families to connect with the needed ECEC programs.

In summary, an integrated referral system is not just a tool but a fundamental aspect of the CPSS framework, ensuring that communities benefit from a coordinated and collaborative approach to early childhood development support. It exemplifies the commitment to creating a unified system that prioritizes the needs of families and fosters community-wide collaboration for the betterment of early childhood education and care.

Below are examples of the benefits of using an integrated referral system. This example is from the system IRIS:

Coordinating for a Healthy Community



Reimagining access to care through. . .

- Shared vision
- Recognition of challenges
- Transparency
- Choice
- Coordination
- Technology

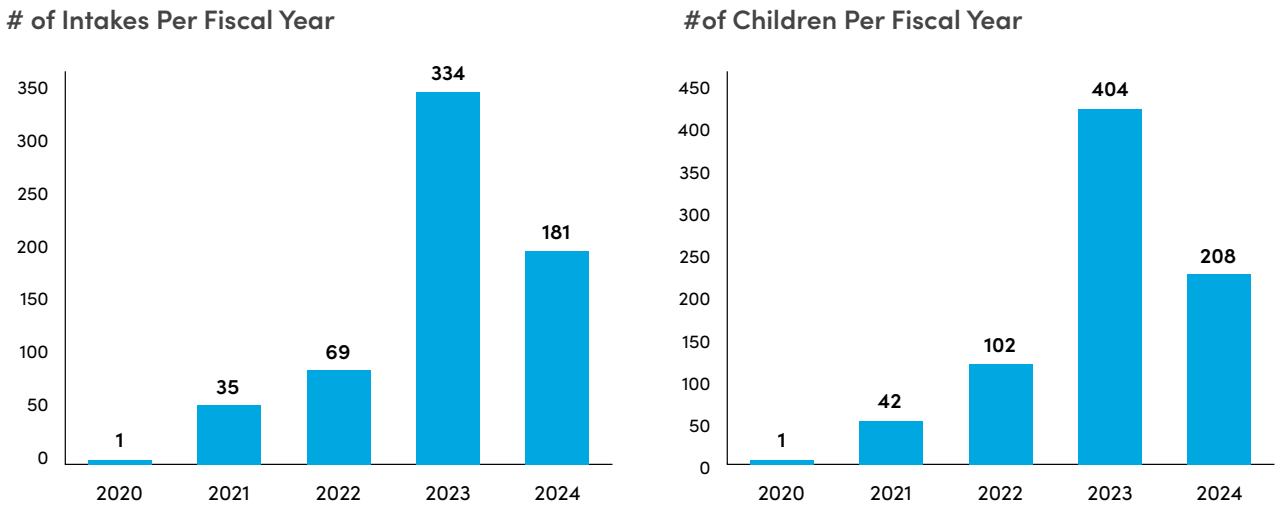
Data Collection System

Having a robust data collection system is crucial for CPSS in the following ways:

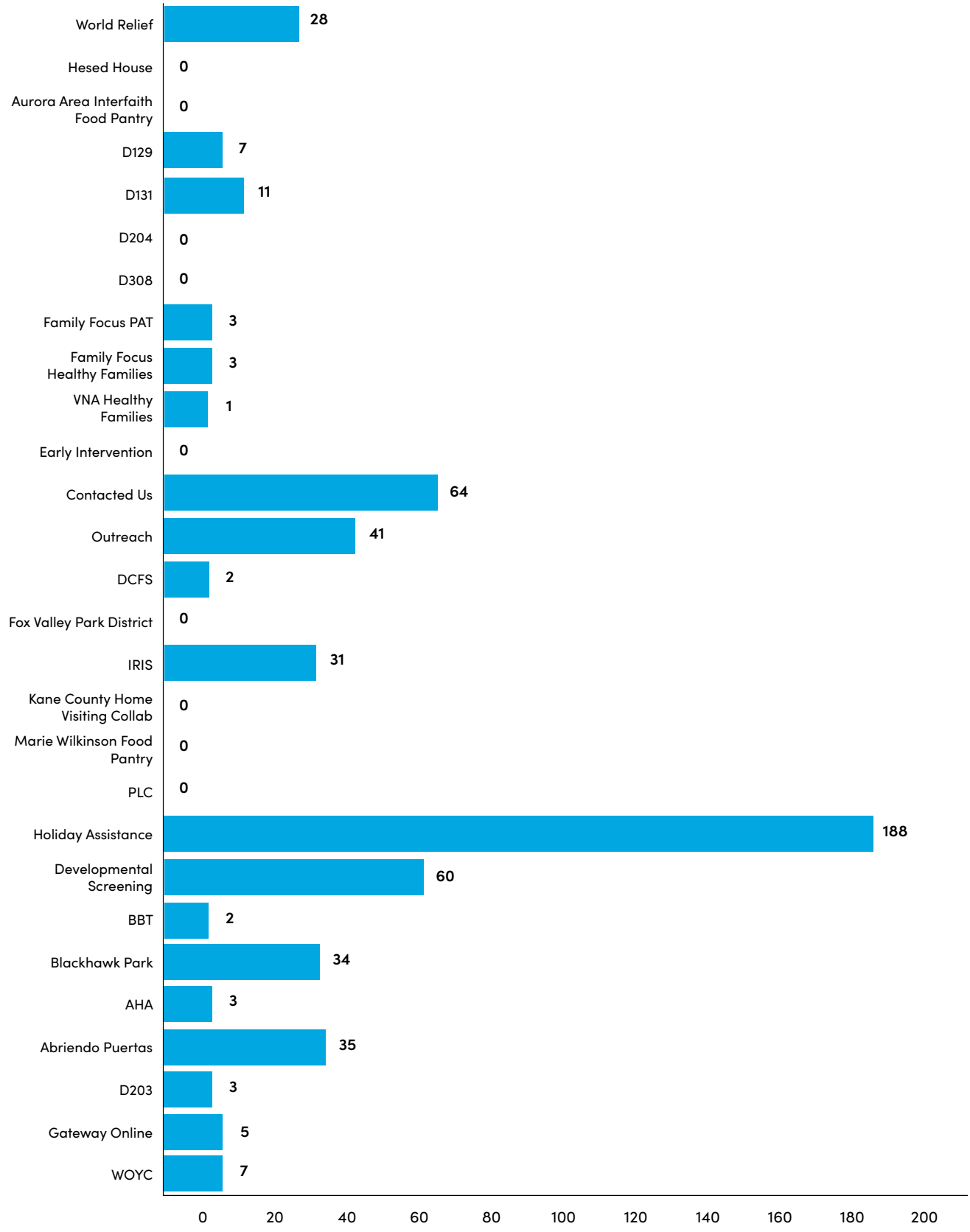
- **Assessment of Community Outcomes:** By collecting and analyzing data on a community-wide scale, evaluators can assess whether desired outcomes are evident on average across all parents and providers. This allows for a comprehensive understanding of the overall impact of interventions rather than focusing solely on individual cases.
- **Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment:** Robust data collection enables quantitative and qualitative assessment. Quantitative and programmatic data can provide measurable kindergarten readiness indicators. In contrast, qualitative data from focus groups with parents and community leaders can add depth and context to the assessment.
- **Community-Level Outcomes:** Robust data collection facilitates the assessment of community-level outcomes, such as shifts in knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, energy, power, and investment related to parenting and young children. Qualitative and quantitative data sources contribute to understanding these shifts and explaining observed outcomes.
- **Short-Term Outcomes:** In addition to long-term outcomes, short-term outcomes specific to each intervention are identified. These outcomes are linked to indicators that can be aggregated across interventions, providing a more comprehensive picture of the overall impact.
- **Interconnected Intermediate Outcomes:** The interconnected intermediate outcomes help in understanding the pathway to the end outcome. In this case, the goal is for parents to be embraced and supported as the most important influences in their children's early learning. Every child starts kindergarten thriving, ready to learn, and excited about school.
- **Community and System Outcomes:** Data collection extends to community outcomes, such as collective knowledge, energy, power, and systemic outcomes, including increased investment, collaboration, and shared power among organizations. Social network analysis is proposed to understand the connections between organizations in the process and outcome evaluation.

A robust data collection system is the backbone of a comprehensive evaluation plan. It provides the necessary information to measure and understand the impact of interventions at various levels in the community and service system. This allows for community tracking and continuous quality improvement (CQI).

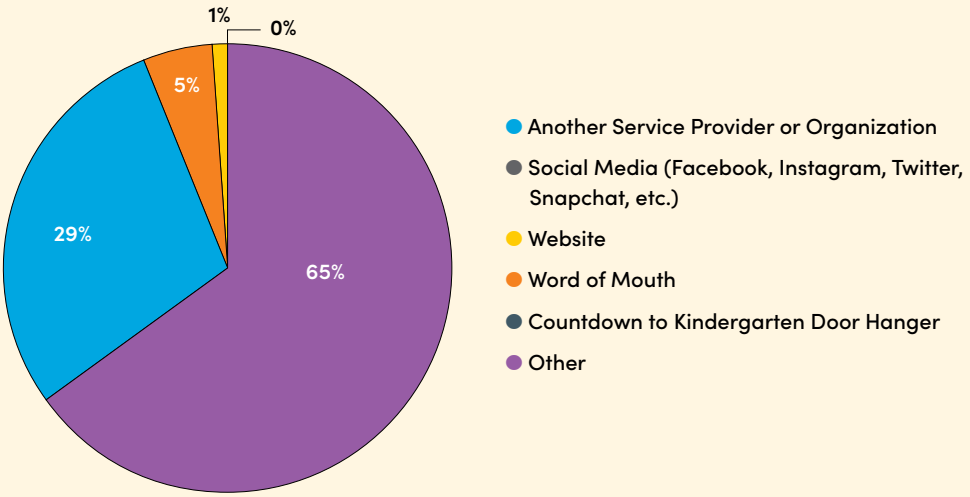
Below is an example of a Data Dashboard created by the Aurora community:



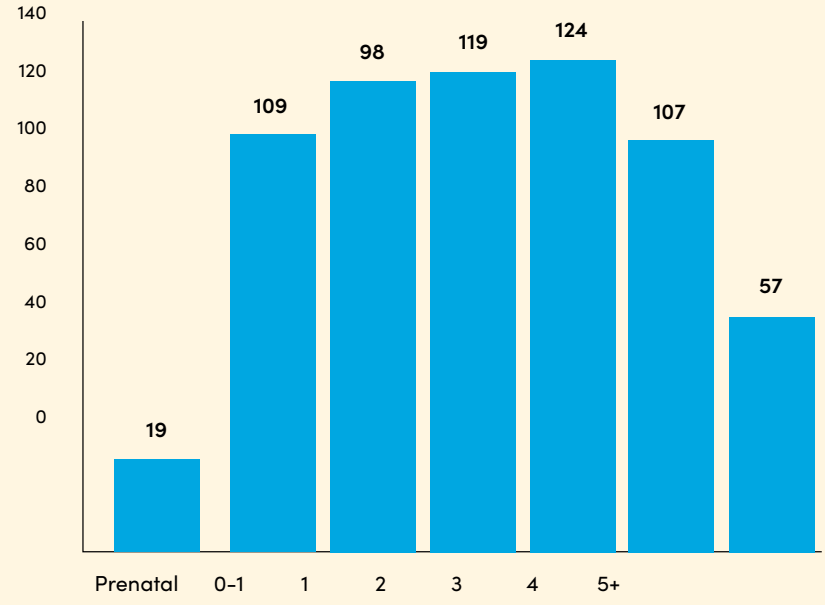
Intake Site


World Relief
28
Hesed House
0
Aurora Area Interfaith Food Pantry
0
D129
7
D131
11
D204
0
D308
0
Family Focus PAT
3
Family Focus Healthy Families
3
VNA Healthy Families
1
Early Intervention
0
Contacted Us
64
Outreach
41
DCFS
2
Fox Valley Park District
0
IRIS
31
Kane County Home Visiting Collab
0
Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry
0
PLC
0
Holiday Assistance
188
Developmental Screening
60
BBT
2
Blackhawk Park
34
AHA
3
Abriendo Puertas
35
D203
3
Gateway Online
5
WOYC
7
0
20
40
60
80
100
120
140
160
180
200

How Did Family Find Out About Gateways?



Child Ages At Intake



Marketing

Marketing is a useful strategy part of the CPSS framework because it helps raise awareness and engage stakeholders in important initiatives, such as early learning and parenting support programs.

Awareness Building

Through marketing efforts, organizations can effectively communicate the importance of their programs and services to the community. This raises awareness among families, educators, businesses, and other stakeholders about the resources available to them.

Recruitment and Engagement

Marketing campaigns can recruit families and organizations to participate in community programs and services. By promoting the benefits and value of these initiatives, marketing helps generate interest and engagement among target audiences.

Partnership Expansion

Marketing initiatives can facilitate partnerships and collaborations with other organizations and community stakeholders. By showcasing the program's impact and value, organizations can attract new partners and supporters to amplify their reach and impact.

Behavior Change

Effective marketing can influence behavior change within the community, encouraging families to prioritize early learning and parenting support. By highlighting the benefits and outcomes of participation, marketing campaigns can motivate individuals to take action and engage with the program.

Community Ownership

Marketing strategies that involve community members in the design and implementation process foster a sense of ownership and investment in the program. By co-creating messaging and materials, organizations ensure that marketing efforts resonate with the target audience and reflect their needs and preferences.

Sustainability

Sustainable community saturation requires ongoing support and engagement from stakeholders. Marketing helps maintain momentum and interest in the program over time by consistently communicating its value and impact to different audiences, such as families, community partners, and funders.

Overall, marketing plays a crucial role in driving awareness, engagement, and participation in community programs and initiatives, ultimately contributing to the success and sustainability of efforts to support early learning and parenting support.

Examples:

- **Alignment Rockford:**
  They work with a marketing firm to raise awareness of the importance of early learning and recruit organizations and families to programs. This demonstrates how marketing efforts can be utilized to inform the community about available resources and encourage participation in support programs.

- **Carole Robertson Center:**
  To recruit families into their strategies, the center's marketing campaign included take-home learning kits and specific community messaging through Parent Empowered. This illustrates how physical marketing materials and events can be used to engage with the community and promote program involvement.

- **SPARK Aurora:**
  They utilized parent ambassadors for door-to-door distribution of materials for Countdown to Kindergarten and collaborated on provider partnership events. These examples showcase how targeted marketing and community engagement can expand program reach and encourage participation.

These examples illustrate how community organizations effectively utilize marketing strategies to raise awareness, engage stakeholders, expand partnerships, and drive participation in early learning and parenting support initiatives.

Video marketing is another example that could be used as an effective marketing tool. Video marketing offers:

- **Visual Impact:** Video content provides a visually engaging way to showcase the overall CPSS program and its impact on kindergarten readiness. By using small, "digestible" videos, the CPSS program can effectively communicate its message and achievements to a wider audience.
- **Community Focus:** By creating smaller videos focusing on each community within the program - Aurora, Rockford, and North Lawndale - the CPSS program can tailor its message to specific audiences and highlight each community's unique efforts and successes.
- **Storytelling:** The videos will connect the work in the communities to tell an overarching story of the program's vision and successes. This storytelling approach humanizes the program's impact and makes it more relatable to viewers.
- **Call to Action:** The videos will include a call to action to support the program's sustainability and the long-term impact of kindergarten readiness. This will encourage viewers to get involved and support the program's goals.
- **Promotional Campaign:** The IAFC's marketing team will launch a campaign to promote the videos through emails to providers, newsletters, and social media. This will ensure the videos reach a wide audience and generate interest and engagement from parents, community/ provider organizations, and potential funders.

Overall, video marketing is an effective way for the CPSS program to communicate its message, highlight its achievements, and engage stakeholders in supporting its goals.

Link to a promotional video here:

https://youtu.be/vEtl7ishw48

Implementation of CPSS-Implementation Process

Here is a breakdown of how to implement CPSS in any community where the infrastructure for implementation includes an intermediary organization or coalition within that community.

1. Start-Up/ Planning Phase
2. Implementation Phase
3. Monitoring and controlling phase
4. Closing phase

Start-Up/Planning Phase

In the Start-Up/Planning Phase, the Program Manager at IAFC strategically coordinates CPSS's early stages with the community to ensure a solid foundation for a successful community saturation initiative.

The process begins with a kickoff meeting between the Program Manager and the anchor organization's project lead, where the scope and objectives are defined. This sets the stage for creating a detailed project charter and work plan, encompassing CPSS's purpose, objectives, stakeholders, schedule, and budget estimates for the community. A comprehensive feasibility assessment follows, determining the project's viability.

As momentum builds into the next phase, a virtual public event is organized to celebrate the project launch, establishing a core team and identifying collaborative partners. IAFC takes the lead in coordinating a training series on human-centered design for the community, fostering reflection, plan refinement, and information collection from involved families. Communities take ownership of early engagement, employing a human-centered design approach, with IAFC providing essential support to align efforts with the community's vision—the collaborative effort results in selecting at least two local strategies to achieve program goals effectively.

Advancing further into the initiative, IAFC continues its dedicated support by delivering coaching to each community, facilitating the practical application of acquired concepts and skills. Communities, now equipped with a clear understanding, review their needs assessment and strategically develop work plans. IAFC remains actively involved in incorporating necessary technical assistance and training. The collaborative effort extends to budget development for implementing chosen strategies, with IAFC providing ongoing coaching and technical assistance. Leveraging IAFC's Community Systems Statewide Supports (CS3) program, IAFC encourages additional support through the Partner Plan Act Collaboration Institute. This phase also involves communities engaging with vendors providing parenting interventions and understanding the intricacies of delivering training and services to families.

In the final stretch, the initiative takes a holistic approach to ensure success. Sophisticated marketing strategies are implemented to bring community partners on board and promote training for facilitators. Concurrently, crucial data agreements are secured during vendor-community meetings, laying the groundwork for seamless collaboration. Bi-monthly meetings for Project Leads are established, serving as a platform for cross-community and peer-to-peer learning conversations. This collaborative environment ensures the community effectively navigates the start-up phase, setting the stage for successful implementation and the development of sustainable community saturation strategies.

Start-Up/Planning Phase Timeline

- **Month 1: Initiation and Project Charter Development**
  - The Project Manager at IAFC sets up an initial meeting with the project lead of the anchor organization to define the scope and objectives.
  - The Project Manager creates a project charter and work plan outlining the project's purpose, objectives, stakeholders, schedule, and budget estimates.
  - A feasibility assessment is conducted to determine project viability.
- **Month 2-3: Virtual Public Event and Human-Centered Design Training**
  - Virtual public event celebrating project launch.
  - The core team is established from the public event, identifying partners for collaboration in the saturation work.
  - IAFC coordinates a training series on human-centered design for the community to refine their plans for implementation and collect information from families.
  - IAFC supports communities in implementing a human-centered design approach and provides coaching on family and community engagement strategies. It ensures alignment with the community's vision and selects at least two local strategies to achieve program goals.
- **Month 4-6: Coaching Support**
  - IAFC delivers coaching support to each community as they apply concepts and skills.
  - Communities review their needs assessment and develop a work plan, incorporating necessary technical assistance and training. IAFC assists in developing adequate budgets and offers ongoing coaching and technical assistance for family and community engagement.
  - Leveraging its Community Systems Statewide Supports (CS3) program, IAFC encourages additional support through the Partner Plan Act Collaboration Institute.
  - Communities meet with vendors providing parenting interventions to understand the delivery of training and services to families.
- **Month 7-12: Vendor Meetings, Cross-Community Learning, and Data Collection Understanding**
  - Implement sophisticated marketing strategies to engage community partners and facilitate training for facilitators.
  - Secure data agreements as needed during vendor-community meetings.
  - Establish monthly meetings for Project Leads to facilitate cross-community and peer-to-peer learning conversations.

Implementation Phase

During the implementation phase, we focus on implementing the strategies chosen by communities. This means working closely with local organizations to effectively promote and engage the community. As the strategy progresses through Tiers 1, 2, and 3, we aim to create a comprehensive marketing plan and collaborate with partners to spread awareness about the early learning programs and their impacts.

Building partnerships is crucial in this phase. We establish connections with key organizations, utilizing their strengths to implement the program effectively and leverage reach. To cater to diverse parenting needs, community providers are trained systematically in tiered strategies and learn about the impact they can have in the community. One way to deal with challenges around slow responses from providers involves adaptive measures like direct presentations on parenting interventions. This helps create buy-in from partners and an understanding of the CPSS framework. Engaging partner organizations is an ongoing learning process involving the partnering organizations leveraging their strengths and encouraging ownership. This involves effective promotion at each tier, collaborating with entities such as community-based organizations, educational institutions, museums, healthcare centers, and community centers for program participation.

The key to success during the implementation phase is collaborating with relevant resources and other grants in the community to combine efforts, such as grants like the Youth Mental Health System of Care. This helps align efforts across organizations and provides opportunities to create a no-wrong-door point of entry for families to access resources. This phase allows lead organizations to be creative in aligning efforts in the community to encourage collaboration instead of siloed programming and repetition of services.

The implementation phase follows the tiered approach, focusing on Tier 1 strategies with targeted promotion, such as collaborative door-to-door canvassing campaigns with community partners, promotion of strategies in high-traffic parent areas, and sign-ups at events. Community engagement can be done through participation in events, playgroups, and celebrations. Encouraging community-wide engagement involves leveraging in-person events and communication platforms like text messaging. Continuous collaboration and adaptation to external factors are crucial for sustained success, emphasizing continuous learning and training for effective parenting support strategies in any community. Social media platforms are utilized for marketing, and feedback informs adaptations for improved effectiveness.

Moving to Tier 2 strategy implementation, activities like curriculum-based parent groups are conducted in collaboration with local partners. Staff, parent ambassadors, and community members are trained to facilitate Tier 2 programs. Facilitator pools are built through the training programs, and playgroups are expanded with collaboration from various community organizations.

Tier 3 interventions are a necessary and important component of a saturated community. In the implementation phase, communities will leverage and help support their strong Tier 3 high-touch interventions, activities, and supports to increase enrollment. This includes helping support existing programs such as Early Head Start, Head Start, center-based child care, home-based child care, and early intervention programs for infants and toddlers with special needs to get families enrolled in these Tier 3 programs. Community leaders of CPSS will recruit and engage programs from Tier 3 strategies in their CPSS implementation. Therefore, a community would ideally be saturated with all three tiers of strategies and actively implement new strategies from Tiers 1 and 2 for the project. IAFC supports coordinating and aligning strategies from all three tiers to support CPSS goals.

If a community coalition identifies an increased need for Tier 3 supports within its community, creating those programs will be a coalition responsibility after completing the proposed saturation project.

Data Training

In the implementation phase, it becomes crucial to offer training to communities on data collection, analysis, and reporting to capture their efforts effectively. The design of the data system should be customized to fit the specific needs of each community. Various factors will influence how this system is constructed, including the current state of data collection, the staff's capacity to gather data, and the expected data contributions from partners. Building the data system should be collaborative, involving the community partner in assessing their ability to maintain data collection and outlining their usage plan. Consistency in data collection is deemed critical, as altering questions or their placement compromises the ability to measure changes over time. Any modifications should only be made if the benefits outweigh the associated costs.

CS3 Resources

Since IAFC is a leader in the community systems development work and is the lead anchor agency for the Community Systems of Statewide Supports (CS3), funded by the Illinois State Board of Education, CPSS communities can be connected to CS3 resources during the implementation phase. Through CS3, community leaders can access foundational supports (training, access to planning, and collaboration tools) at no cost to support their professional development goals and strengthen community collaborations focused on improving local early childhood systems. For example, CS3 can provide training in helping community leaders learn more about the Seven Standards of Quality for Family and Community Engagement, Engaging School Districts in Early Childhood Collaborations, and Advocacy for Early Care & Education to enhance their saturation work.

What Might Occur During The Implementation Phase

- **Systematic Approach with Tiers:**
  - Implementation involves a structured, tiered approach to address parenting support needs in the community.
  - Tiers 1, 2, and 3 represent the progressive stages of strategy development and execution.
- **Tailored Parenting Support Approaches:**
  - Focus on tailoring parenting support approaches to meet the community's specific needs.
- **Collaboration with Local Organizations:**
  - Establish collaborative partnerships with local organizations to enhance program effectiveness.
  - Leverage the strengths of key organizations for successful program implementation.
- **Comprehensive Marketing Strategy:**
  - Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy to raise awareness about early learning.
  - Actively involve partner organizations for broad outreach.
- **Human-Centered Design Process:**
  - Incorporate the Human-Centered Design Process in the systematic training of community providers.
  - Actively involve families in the implementation process.
- **Parent Engagement Strategies:**
  - Facilitate parent engagement through co-leads, encouraging collaboration between parents and providers.
  - Develop and implement saturation strategies for broader impact.
- **Adaptive Measures for Challenges:**
  - Address challenges, such as slow responses from providers, through adaptive measures.
  - Utilize direct presentations on parenting interventions to overcome obstacles.
- **Integration with Local Health Systems:**
  - Collaborate with local health systems to distribute parenting/learning kits.
  - Integrate strategies within healthcare settings for wider reach.
- **Robust Data Collection System:**
  - Implement a robust data collection system aligned with community goals.
  - Map specific data points to core domains for effective impact assessment.
- **Smooth Staffing Transitions:**
  - Navigate staffing transitions smoothly, utilizing new leadership to rejuvenate initiatives.
- **Continuous Learning with Partner Organizations:**
  - Engage in continuous learning with partner organizations.
  - Leverage strengths, encourage ownership, and adapt strategies based on shared insights.
- **Effective Marketing of Each Strategy:**
  - Implement effective promotion strategies at each tier, collaborating with educational institutions and community centers.

- **Centralized Information Hub:**
  - Develop a user-friendly website as a centralized hub for local services, parenting tips, and Tier 2 opportunities.
- **Strategic Partnerships with Funders Grants:**
  - Establish strategic partnerships with relevant grants, creating a single entry point for community participation.
- **Integration of Human-Centered Design Process:**
  - Emphasize using the Human-Centered Design process for designing a virtual community resource hub.
- **Achievements and Outreach Methods:**
  - Celebrate key achievements, such as enrolling families in Tier 1 and progressing through Tiers 2 and 3.
  - Utilize effective outreach methods, trained facilitators, and advanced tools for broader community engagement.
- **Targeted Promotion Strategies:**
  - Tailor promotion strategies for each Tier, including door-to-door canvassing, event participation, and social media marketing.
- **Continuous Reflection and Adaptation:**
  - Emphasize continuous reflection on the impact of strategy and adapt the work plan based on community-specific factors.
- **Community-Wide Engagement:**
  - Encourage community-wide engagement through in-person events and communication platforms like text messaging.
- **End-of-Year Recaps:**
  - Conduct end-of-year recaps focusing on Tier 1 success, ongoing Tier 2 activities, and positive outcomes from Tier 3.
- **Continuous Learning and Training:**
  - Prioritize continuous learning and training for effective parenting support strategies, adapting to external factors for sustained success.

Monitoring and Controlling Phase

In the Monitoring and Controlling phase, the focus is on ensuring the success and effectiveness of the CPSS framework based on insights and experiences gained during the Implementation Phase. A tailored implementation strategy is developed for each community, considering factors such as the implementing partner's capacity, engagement level, and organizational budget. Emphasis is placed on text messaging as a vital communication tool, leveraging community messaging to keep families engaged with offerings. In-person engagement and enrollment strategies are strategically designed, and learning kits serve as powerful bridges into other programming, with clear calls to action.

A customized data system is developed to fit each community's specific needs, involving the community partner in the cooperative process of assessing their data maintenance and utilization capacity. Strategic data collection is important, emphasizing collecting data only when there is a defined purpose and maintaining consistency for meaningful measurement of change over time. Continuous assessment and adjustment processes are established, allowing for regular evaluation and implementation plan adjustments based on ongoing monitoring, feedback collection, and data analysis.

Incorporating Human-Centered Design (HCD) training into the controlling phase becomes crucial for addressing community needs and ensuring user satisfaction. HCD principles are integrated to align more effectively with the community's diverse needs, encouraging teams to engage with community members, gather valuable insights, and iteratively refine project outcomes based on feedback. The "On Demand" training aspect allows team members to revisit HCD principles as needed, fostering an iterative and collaborative approach beyond the initial training. Continuous access to resources and an ongoing community of practice are emphasized to sustain a user-centered design culture. The audience for the HCD refresher within the "On Demand" program includes managers, community stakeholders, and partner organizations in the project control phases, empowering them to apply user-centric principles consistently throughout the project management processes.

Key Outputs

In the Monitoring and Controlling phase, several key outputs emerge to ensure the success and effectiveness of the CPSS framework's implementation strategy, reflecting on the learnings and experiences from the implementation phase.

Customized Implementation Strategy:

- Develop a tailored implementation strategy to meet the unique needs of each community.
- Conduct a thorough assessment of the implementing partner's capacity, current engagement level, and organizational budget.
- Use the gathered information to customize the strategy, ensuring alignment with the specific context of each community.

Text Messaging and Community Messaging:

- Emphasize text messaging as a crucial communication tool.
- Leverage community messaging to keep families engaged with community offerings.
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of text messaging platforms (BBT, Ready4K, Basics Insights) and tailor their utilization for optimal impact.

In-Person Engagement and Enrollment Strategies:

- Strategically focus on in-person engagement for initial sign-ups.
- Explore alternative approaches, such as billboards (like the CTA billboard for Ready4K), acknowledging the limitations of traditional methods like flyers.
- Design Tier 1 strategies with clear bridges into Tier 2 programs, addressing the need for initial engagement or incentives for attending Tier 2 offerings.

Learning Kits and Clear Calls to Action:

- Utilize learning kits as powerful bridges into other programming.
- Identify clear and simple actions associated with learning kits, such as signing up for text messaging or completing straightforward contact forms.
- Recognize the effectiveness of shorter-term Tier 2 engagements (cafes, playgroups) as bridges into sustained enrollment.

Customized Data System:

- Develop a customized data system tailored to the specific needs of each community.
- Consider factors like current data collection practices, staff capacity, and expected data contributions from partners.
- Involve the community partner in a cooperative process to assess their data maintenance and utilization capacity.

Strategic Data Collection:

- Emphasize the importance of having a clear plan for using collected data.
- Collect data only if there is a defined purpose.
- Prioritize consistency in data collection for meaningful measurement of change over time.
- Avoid unnecessary questions or question placement changes unless the benefits significantly outweigh the costs.

Continuous Assessment and Adjustment:

- Establish a continuous assessment and adjustment process.
- Conduct regular evaluations of implemented strategies.
- Be ready to adjust the implementation plan based on ongoing monitoring, feedback collection, and data analysis.
- Ensure the strategy remains adaptive and responsive to evolving community needs through an iterative process, enhancing the likelihood of successful outcomes over time.

Incorporate HCD Training Into the Controlling Phase

Integrating Human-Centered Design (HCD) training into a project's controlling phase is crucial for user satisfaction and addressing community needs. HCD's emphasis on understanding and responding to user requirements extends to the broader community context. By incorporating HCD principles during the controlling phase, projects can align more effectively with the community's diverse needs, ensuring that the solutions developed are inclusive and responsive. This approach encourages teams to engage with community members, gather valuable insights, and iteratively refine project outcomes based on this feedback. By combining HCD with a community-oriented approach during the controlling phase, organizations can create more impactful and socially responsible products or services that contribute positively to the well-being of the community at large.

In this phase, IAFC will provide on-demand training around HCD for continuous learning and to account for leadership transitions joining the CPSS initiative. This will allow team members to revisit HCD principles as needed, especially when seeking guidance or support during project control phases. This on-demand refresher can help teams uphold the iterative and collaborative nature of HCD beyond initial training.

To keep the process going after HCD training, the program may include continuous access to resources, case studies, and ongoing community of practice. This community-based approach ensures that teams remain engaged with HCD principles, sharing experiences and learning from each other to sustain a culture of user-centered design.

The audience for the HCD refresher within the "on-demand" program would likely include project managers, community stakeholders, and partner organizations in the project control phases. These individuals are responsible for steering projects, making decisions, and ensuring that the user-centric principles of HCD are consistently applied. The HCD refresher aims to empower this audience with the tools and knowledge necessary to integrate HCD seamlessly into the ongoing project management processes.

Closing Phase

In the closing phase of implementing CPSS, the Program Manager collaborates closely with the backbone organizations to ensure a smooth transition toward sustainability. This phase integrates various components to fortify the project's success and leave a lasting impact.

The Program Manager, alongside lead anchor organizations, assesses the effectiveness of each CPSS strategy in achieving sustainability goals, considering the long-term impact on the community. A collaborative work plan for sustainability outlines specific actions required to maintain CPSS achievements. This plan is documented alongside the final project report, providing a roadmap for future endeavors. Financial considerations are integrated into the sustainability work plan to ensure ongoing support for CPSS initiatives, with resources and funds allocated accordingly.

A communication plan emphasizes the transition to sustainable operations, engaging community partners and stakeholders while recognizing key champions of CPSS. Knowledge transfer sessions extend to developing skills and capabilities necessary for sustaining CPSS initiatives and providing training to individuals and organizations involved. A refined support plan ensures ongoing assistance for sustainability efforts, addressing resource integration, funds allocation, and capacity-building activities.

A closing celebration event commemorates past achievements and mobilizes the community for sustained efforts, highlighting CPSS champions and fostering community pride and ownership. Mechanisms for archiving and storing documents related to sustainability efforts are established, creating a repository for future reference and continuous improvement. Insights into managing resources, funds, and capacity for sustained impact are shared, documenting best practices for community-driven strategies and database collection ownership for future reference.

By integrating these components into the closing phase, CPSS ensures a seamless transition towards sustainability, leveraging community engagement and knowledge transfer to maintain and enhance its impact over time.

Example Objectives in Close Out Phase:

- **Project Evaluation and Assessment:** The Program Manager, alongside lead anchor organizations, assesses the effectiveness of each CPSS strategy in achieving sustainability goals, considering the long-term impact on the community.
- **Documentation and Reporting:** A collaborative work plan for sustainability is developed, outlining specific actions required to maintain CPSS achievements. This plan is documented alongside the final project report, providing a roadmap for future endeavors.
- **Financial Closure:** Financial considerations are integrated into the sustainability work plan to ensure ongoing support for CPSS initiatives, with resources and funds allocated accordingly.
- **Communication and Stakeholder Engagement:** A communication plan emphasizes the transition to sustainable operations, engaging community partners and stakeholders while recognizing key champions of CPSS.
- **Knowledge Transfer and Training:** Knowledge transfer sessions extend to developing skills and capabilities necessary for sustaining CPSS initiatives, and providing training to individuals and organizations involved.
- **Post-Implementation Support Plan:** A refined support plan ensures ongoing assistance for sustainability efforts, addressing resource integration, funds allocation, and capacity-building activities.
- **Celebration Event:** A closing celebration event commemorates past achievements and mobilizes the community for sustained efforts. It highlights CPSS champions and fosters community pride and ownership.
- **Archiving and Storage:** Mechanisms for archiving and storing documents related to sustainability efforts are established, creating a repository for future reference and continuous improvement.
- **Lessons Learned and Best Practices:** Insights into managing resources, funds, and capacity for sustained impact are shared, documenting best practices for community-driven strategies and database collection ownership for future reference.

List of Tier Strategies

Tier 1 Interventions

The Basics is a public campaign to reach parents/caregivers of children birth to age 3 with five evidence-based parenting and caregiving principles about what is important for their children's development and learning experiences based on those principles. Online guidance is available for replication into community settings.

Bright Beginnings is a communitywide birth to age 3 strategy that includes collaborating with local hospitals to distribute newborn bags to families discharged from Labor and Delivery, a roundtable that seeks to bring healthcare providers together with early childhood, home visiting, mental health, and community baby showers.

Bright by Text is an evidence-based messaging platform that provides parents/caregivers with developmentally appropriate parenting tips and community messages. It provides parents of children from birth to age 5 with research-based content in English or Spanish via text messages that address cognitive and social-emotional development.

Parent Empowered provides parents/caregivers with an evidence-based family engagement curriculum by text message in English, Spanish, or Arabic. This is aligned with Head Start standards.

Basics Insights is a subscription-based text messaging program for parents/caregivers of young children by the Basics. The messages are based on science to help your child grow and learn. Two messages are sent weekly: "Fact" messages on Mondays and "Try This" messages on Wednesdays. The program is for children ages 0-5 and includes the option for community messaging.

Tier 2 Interventions

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors is an evidence-based program for Spanish- and English-speaking parents/caregivers of young children. It uses a two-generation approach to build parent leadership skills and knowledge to promote family well-being and positive outcomes for children. The 10-session program requires one to two trained facilitators.

Be Strong Families/Parent Cafes is a peer-to-peer learning process to keep children safe and families strong by creating safe spaces to explore their strengths and learn from themselves and each other how to use the Strengthening Families Protective Factors™ with their loved ones. The program requires a trained facilitator to lead the 6-hour modules.

Circle of Security® Parenting™ is a research-based parent education group to support and strengthen secure parent-child relationships. The intervention requires a trained and certified clinical facilitator for an eight-session series, which can be combined into four sessions.

The Incredible Years is a series of evidence-based programs to prevent and treat young children's behavior problems and promote their social, emotional, and academic competence. These include a 9 to 13-session parenting skills program for parents of children from birth to age three and an 18 to 20-session program for parents of children from ages three to five. Training and certification are available for facilitators, and training is recommended but not required. See http://www.incredibleyears.com/ for detailed information about the recommended educational background and experience for facilitators.

World Café is a methodology for parent/caregiver peer discussion groups, offered as a series, to build parent leadership and protective factors. Training on facilitating and hosting World Café parent discussion groups is available online and—in areas with master facilitators—face-to-face. An active online community supports hosts and facilitators.

Lessons Learned

Human-centered design is a continuous process that prioritizes people's needs and experiences throughout the design and implementation phases. It requires ongoing refinement and adaptation to ensure that solutions are relevant and effective for the intended users.

Demonstrating and measuring impact through saturation involves comprehensive data collection, which can be challenging but is ultimately worthwhile. This approach allows us to gain deep insights into the community's needs, preferences, and behaviors, enabling us to develop more targeted and impactful interventions.

Our data collection for this project is robust, and we have been concurrently building out the data systems and implementation strategies. This integrated approach has been particularly challenging for communities not previously engaged in this comprehensive data collection, requiring additional support and capacity-building efforts.

There is a pressing need for more focused staff dedicated to community saturation data efforts. This would help streamline data collection, analysis, and interpretation, ensuring we derive meaningful insights that inform our design and implementation processes.

Community partner engagement is crucial to the success of our initiatives. Collaborating closely with local organizations and stakeholders ensures that our interventions are culturally sensitive, contextually relevant, and meet community members' needs.

Communities must continue using the tools of HCD to tailor their strategies to meet changing family needs. The HCD process is illuminating to communities, but the greatest value is in the shift in orientation toward consistently gathering family and provider feedback, synthesizing that data, and being willing to shift plans when needed.

We're also seeing that this project's data collection arm is much bigger than anyone anticipated. On the next slide, I'll show one of our administrative databases, and you can get a sense of how much we learn from it and what it takes to collect it. IAFC provides a lot of that support for communities, but communities will need to quickly scale up their data collection so that we can better measure impact, which sometimes means new staff.

From the HCD process, we also know that partners need to be on board with our strategies and feel connected to the saturation work for it to reach the full community. The community organization leading saturation needs to be strategic in partner engagement and check in with partners often.

Implementing the CPSS program throughout the communities has led to the capacity building of the community organization and the communities themselves. This is demonstrated through the community organizations' ownership over program initiatives introduced through CPSS in funding and transformation of services. Additionally, parents and individuals who received services through CPSS-led programs have conveyed their desire to become more involved in early childhood initiatives inside and outside of community organizations.

As the Community Parent Support Saturation program grew, IAFC was vital in providing consulting and technical support for participating organizations and communities. Moving into the third year of implementation, IAFC wanted to provide additional support to communities with their sustainability plans. A monthly Vision and Strategy meeting was a recent addition to the monthly check-ins to prioritize time and discuss long-term goals, funding priorities, and ideation for community collaboration.

- All three communities demonstrate this capacity building through ownership and transformation of program initiatives.
    - *At Carole Robertson Learning Center,* a Tier 2 strategy for R4KR4L is the Circle of Security initiative through CPSS which has been received positively among parents. They are beginning their 10th cohort. CRCL staff report that parents are responding extremely well to the social and emotional support they have gained from CoS sessions. CRCL identified a need for a qualified Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant (ECMHC) to provide additional support to parents and necessary referrals. They worked alongside IAFC to create a scope of work and creativity for separate monthly sessions with the ECMHC. IAFC aided in the search, interview, and hiring process for the ECMHC, which was completed last month.
    - *At SPARK Aurora,* they have successfully overcome staff transitions and full-time shortages. They trained their new staff as facilitators for another popular tier 2 strategy, Opening Doors/Abriendo Puertas. Their new Director, Rosaisela Sida, also took the training and identified useful strategies they could implement. Additionally, they connected with an individual from the Fox Ridge Early Childhood Center in the neighboring city of St. Charles at the training. After the meeting, St. Charles identified a gap in services provided to Spanish-speaking families and is working to launch an Opening Doors/Abriendo Puertas cohort via Zoom so Spanish-speaking families from both communities can join.
    - *At Alignment Rockford,* their Opening Doors/Abriendo Puertas sessions have been so successful for parents in their communities that many repeatedly attend even after completing their cohorts. One of their key facilitators, Antonio Ramirez, identified a desire amongst parents in the community to engage with each other after completing the cohorts to expand their involvement and support. This plan is still in the ideation phase, but they have enlisted the help of IAFC in consulting with the setup of monthly check-in meetings for parents who participated and possibly interested parents. IAFC will act as technical support for the organization, format, and facilitation of meetings. Cohorts from SPARK Aurora also expressed a similar desire, possibly creating an opportunity to collaborate to reach more parents across the communities.

The transformation of these initiatives demonstrates ownership of the strategies launched through IAFC and CPSS and the communities' ability to respond to demonstrated needs.

A major learning from this work in each community is that Tier 3 connections have to be intentionally made. To ensure that referrals are systematically managed and tracked, each community must intentionally build a bridge between Tiers 1-2 and Tier 3. For example, in Aurora, SPARK had a strong coordinated intake process in the Gateway Interview but didn't have a process in place to systematically connect families who came to events and playgroups to Tier 3 interventions. Now, everyone who attends a SPARK event fills out the Gateway Short Form and gets a personal phone call inviting them to complete the full Gateway interview. Through this effort, SPARK has a better sense of who it's serving and ensures every family is offered the full array of community services based on their needs and eligibility. Alignment Rockford staff use Ready to Learn with the Basics Kits as the primary connector between tiers in Rockford. Kits are given out at Labor and Delivery at UW Health SwedishAmerican Hospital and will soon be distributed within each new Tier 2 cohort. Alignment Rockford is also making kits available to partners (such as the public library and Discovery Center) who are willing to share them even if they cannot host Tier 2 classes at this time. The coordinated intake will also be periodically advertised in Basics Insights community messaging. CRCL will follow the Rockford model, making its coordinated intake available on the community digital hub, sharing it via learning kits, and connecting the form to the larger IRIS system to increase referral capacity.

As the work grows in each community, so does the need for capacity for both communities and IAFC. As such, all three communities and IAFC are working to increase this capacity. Alignment Rockford has hired a community engagement lead to support Tier 2 growth. SPARK has expanded contractor hours to support Gateway short-form follow-up and increase Tier 2 offerings. CRCL has April 4, 2023, | Illinois Action for Children | CPSS Common Report 7 brought on a "committee" of contract workers to support packing learning kits and staffing events. IAFC will hire a Program Coordinator to support ongoing data collection and day-to-day activities and a Community Engagement Specialist to support Tier 2 in North Lawndale. This will allow current CPSS staff to focus on developing an evidence-informed framework to scale the work, creating financial sustainability, building statewide alignment, and identifying policy implications and pathways to possible policy changes based on learnings from this work.

Display of connections between tiers working to advance the intensity of intervention among parents.

- After the program's pilot and throughout its implementation, Tier 1 communication strategies are shown to connect parents with community events and encourage them to participate in other CPSS and early childhood initiatives.
- A demonstration of how these tiers have connected is through the use of CRC's Learning Kit distribution to highlight outreach initiatives like their community texting platforms. These texting platforms provide educational tips on early childhood to parents while keeping them in the loop of community events and resources.
- CRC's R4KR4L distributes Learning Kits to parents and providers. When distributing Learning Kits, CRC markets other initiatives like R4K texting and Circle of Security. This data has been analyzed to connect parents who picked up Learning Kits, those enrolled in their Ready4K texting platform, and those who completed Circle of Security interest forms. We have quantitative data from Ready4K on active subscribers, those who opted out, and whether they engage with links to community-centered flyers and events.
- This graph displays individuals who received a Learning Kit, signed up for Ready4K, interacted with community messages, and completed CoS interest forms.

Learning Kits Pathways - North Lawndale

# Learning Kit Recipients Enrolled in Ready4K - All Time	173
# Current Active Ready4K	149
# Non-Working Numbers in Ready4K	24
# Opted Out of Ready4K	3
# Completed CoS Interest Form	44
# Has Clicked a Ready4K Custom Message	24

Data we collect:

- We regularly collect extensive qualitative and quantitative data on CPSS program initiatives. Part of IAFC's role is to assist the communities in strategy and technical support regarding their program data. We operate as partners to help maintain accountability for updating data and advise what data measures and approaches can be taken for their interests.
- Some useful data we maintain:
    - Subscriber and click data for community texting platforms implemented in the communities. We can track if people sign up, unsubscribe, respond, and click through community messages. This data helps inform our performance on outreach to families within the communities.
    - Qualitative data was collected through evaluations conducted by community organizations after completing Tier 2 programs like Opening Doors and Circle of Security. Parents express what they learn after participating and identify areas for improvement.
    - Intake data: The Tier 3 strategy of direct intervention through referral to community resources provides us with demographic and characteristic information of families who interact with the organization and CPSS initiatives.
    - Quantitative data includes cohort enrollment counts, event attendance, household and age characteristics, and the number of kits received.

Adaptability and Continuous Evaluation

The emphasis on adaptability and continuous evaluation underscores the recognition that community projects operate within dynamic environments. It implies a commitment to regularly reassessing strategies and goals in response to changing circumstances, ensuring that project management remains agile and responsive. This involves a mindset that values learning from ongoing experiences, adjusting plans as needed, and embracing flexibility to navigate evolving challenges effectively.

Relationship Building and Trust

In the context of community projects, relationship building at the caregiver level takes on added significance. It involves cultivating individual connections beyond program participation, emphasizing the importance of personalized interactions. Trust-building, exemplified through accepting carefully curated learning kits, signifies a deeper connection with the community. This trust forms the foundation for successful advocacy efforts, fostering an environment where caregivers feel supported and engaged.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection and analysis emphasize the project's commitment to evidence-based decision-making. Human-Centered Design training and feedback evaluations contribute to a sophisticated approach to understanding community needs. The use of technology, such as data analysis tools, underscores the project's dedication to extracting meaningful insights from collected information. This data-driven approach ensures informed decision-making and allows for a more nuanced understanding of the project's impact.

Community Engagement and Messaging

Community engagement goes beyond participation and fosters a sense of inclusion and shared responsibility. Hosting diverse events and utilizing various communication channels demonstrate a commitment to reaching different community segments. Effective messaging strategies disseminate information and create opportunities for open dialogue. This ensures the community feels heard, fostering a collaborative atmosphere where stakeholders actively contribute to the project's success.

Tiered Program Strategies

Insights into tiered program strategies indicate a thoughtful approach to program design. Emphasizing partnerships reflects a recognition that collaboration enhances program effectiveness. The flexibility and streamlined intake procedures at different program levels demonstrate a tailored approach, acknowledging that community needs may vary across different demographic groups.

Learning Kits as Engagement Bridges

Recognizing learning kits as powerful tools for community engagement signifies an understanding of the tangible impact such resources can have. The kits recommend clear and simple actions to enhance their effectiveness as engagement bridges. This approach ensures that families receive valuable resources and have actionable steps to take, creating a pathway for sustained involvement.

Customized Implementation Strategies

Stressing the need for customized implementation strategies underscores an awareness that one-size-fits-all approaches may not be effective in diverse communities. Considering partner capacity, engagement levels, and organizational budgets indicates a strategic approach to implementation, ensuring that initiatives align with each community's unique characteristics and resources.

Financial Sustainability and Planning

Discussions on financial sustainability reveal a commitment to the project's long-term viability. Engaging the community in funding efforts emphasizes the importance of local support. Pursuing grants and planning long-term campaigns demonstrate a strategic approach to securing resources, ensuring the project's continued impact.

Consistency in Data Collection

The emphasis on consistency in data collection underscores the project's commitment to maintaining the integrity and reliability of collected information. Avoiding unnecessary changes in data collection methods ensures a reliable foundation for measuring change over time. This approach contributes to the project's ability to track progress, identify trends, and make informed decisions based on robust data.

Strategic Partnerships

The stress on forming strategic partnerships highlights a proactive approach to collaboration. Engaging with various organizations demonstrates an understanding that a network of partnerships enhances the project's reach and impact. These collaborations extend beyond simple cooperation, involving intentional efforts to align goals and amplify collective community impact.

Parents as Influential Change Agents:

- Empowered parents, supported by community efforts, become change agents and advocates.
- Parents are recognized as the most important influencers in their children's early learning, confident in their leadership and skills.

This theory of change envisions the outcome of parents being recognized and supported as the most important influencers in their children's early learning. Supported by community efforts, empowered parents are anticipated to become change agents and advocates, confident in their leadership and skills. Overall, the theory underscores the importance of community engagement, collaboration, capacity building, and evidence-based practices as critical elements in fostering a positive and lasting change in the community's approach to early learning and parenting.

Cost Models

Based on our learnings and findings of the Community Parenting Support Saturation (CPSS) work and considering the comprehensive framework needed to address the needs of the communities effectively, here's the breakdown of an example budget to take on the CPSS Framework:

1. **Average Cost for Communities: *$237,600.00***
   This is the estimated average cost required for implementing the program in each community. It covers various expenses such as personnel, resources, materials, and any other operational costs specific to each community. This is the most important piece of the funding for communities for equitable funding.
2. **Human-Centered Design Training: *$17,375.00***
   This amount is allocated to provide training in human-centered design methodologies. It includes hiring trainers, training materials, venue rental, and other associated costs.
3. **IAFC Admin Costs for Technical Assistance (includes data support): *$86,500.00***
   This covers administrative costs incurred by the implementing organization (IAFC) for providing technical assistance to the program. It includes staffing, overhead, data support, and other administrative expenses.
4. **IAFC Direct Costs: *$11,125.00***
   These are direct costs associated with IAFC's involvement in the program. It may include expenses for personnel directly involved in program management, coordination, and oversight.

Total: $352,600.00

This is the overall budget required for the Community Parenting Support Saturation Program, encompassing all the expenses. It represents the total amount needed to initiate and sustain the program effectively.

CPSSP Cost Model

Cost for Communities	$237,600.00
Human-Centered Design Training	$17,375.00
IAFC Admin Costs for Technical Assistance (includes data support)	$86,500.00
IAFC Direct Costs	$11,125.00
Total	**$352,600.00**

Example Community Budget

Category	Annual Cost
Personnel Costs	
Example: CPSS Lead (1 FTE), Administrative Staff (.35 FTE)	$ 100,000.00
Fringe	$33,000.00
Total Personnel Costs	*$133,000.00*
Direct Costs *(example below)*	
Marketing	$3,000.00
Training for tier 2 strategies-facilitators in the community	$20,000.00
Outreach materials	$ 3,000.00
Program supplies (Learning kits)	$50,000.00
Office Supplies	$ 2,000.00
Meeting expenses	$ 2,500.00
Program expenses	$ 2,500.00
Total Direct Costs	*$83,000.00*
Total Personnel Costs and Direct Costs	**$ 216,000.00**
Administrative Costs (10%)	**$21,600**
Total Program Expenses	**$237,600.00**

Example Costs for Learning Kits Through CRCL's Cost Model

Line Item	Cost Range per Item	Description
1. High-Quality Children's Book	$12.99 - $17.99	Each learning kit includes a carefully selected high-quality children's book that aligns with our curriculum and promotes early literacy skills.
2. High-Quality Learning Toys	$24.99 - $50.00	The kit includes a set of engaging and educational learning toys designed to enhance cognitive development and fine motor skills.
3. Printed Curriculum Card	$2.49 - $5.00	Each kit contains a printed curriculum card with clear and user-friendly instructions for parents and caregivers on effectively using the kit and engaging in educational activities with their children.
4. Other Parenting Resources	$5.00	This portion covers the cost of additional parenting resources, including pamphlets, brochures, and access to online materials that offer guidance and support for parents in North Lawndale.
5. Packaging and Assembly	$3.00 - $5.00	This covers the cost of assembling and packaging the learning kit, including the branded bag folder containing all the kit's paper resources.
6. Administrative and Distribution	$4.50	This line item includes administrative costs related to order processing, inventory management, and distribution of learning kits to families in North Lawndale.
Total Price Per Learning Kit	**$52.97 - $70.00**	**Excluding overhead and program support.**

Please note that prices are estimates and may vary based on factors such as specific book choices, types of toys, and production quantities. Discounts may also be available for bulk orders or through supplier partnerships.

Keys for Sustainability

Sustainability Key	Description
Diversification of Funding Sources	• Seeking philanthropic support and private funding opportunities. • Working with existing funding partners and local governments, school districts, and community foundations to identify and secure funding. • Leveraging local resources and blending and braid funds to maximize financial support and ensure sustainability. • Tapping into community assets, partnerships, and grants available within their communities. • Exploring innovative strategies to combine various funding streams effectively.
Marketing and Outreach	• Utilizing marketing strategies such as producing videos showcasing program impact. • Making conference presentations. • Creating marketing materials to engage new funders and partners.
Capacity Building	• Supporting communities in developing their internal vision for staffing and funding sustainability long-term. • Providing individualized capacity building based on community assets and needs.
Data Collection and Analysis	• Collecting and analyzing data for continuous quality improvement. • Using insights to drive decision-making. • Supporting evaluation efforts in collaboration with external evaluators.
Framework Development	• Creating a framework for saturation based on program learnings and successes. • Incorporating feedback from evaluation reports. • Defining what saturation means as the program evolves.
Community Engagement and Partnership	• Engaging with communities, stakeholders, and Advisory Committees. • Integrating CPSS with state-level policy and advocacy efforts. • Recruiting new members and stakeholders to support the program's goals.
Peer Learning and Support	• Establishing a cadence and structure for peer learning. • Providing ongoing coaching support. • Serving as a thought partner for future communities interested in integrating similar programs at the state level.

By focusing on these key elements, IAFC aims to ensure sustainability and scalability of the CPSS program, turning it into a state model for community saturation in early childhood education.

Evaluation

The success of the CPSS project hinges on improvements in kindergarten readiness, gauged through KIDS data, providing crucial insights into the efficacy of project interventions and their broader impact on children's preparedness for formal education.

With funding from the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation (ILCHF), Chapin Hall was selected in March 2021 to evaluate the Community Parenting Support Saturation project. Since then, weekly meetings between IAFC and Chapin Hall have been instrumental in refining the evaluation plan. To expedite the evaluators' understanding of each community, their work plans, and current progress, comprehensive introductions to each community and the provision of relevant documents and materials were facilitated.

Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago proposed a comprehensive mixed-methods evaluation approach for the CPSS pilot, assessing both implementation strategies employing a human-centered design approach and community outcomes for children, families, and systems. This evaluation employed various methods, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, participant observation, document review, and administrative data analysis. Data on the availability and utilization of parenting supports at Tiers 1, 2, and 3 were collected at the project's outset and two years later to assess community-level change.

Additionally, changes in collaboration among community partners, providers, and parental involvement were evaluated. Close collaboration with community partners ensured a deeper understanding of their implementation strategies, particularly their alignment with human-centered design principles.

The pilot's fundamental assumption is that developing a well-functioning network of evidence-based services for parents will enhance parenting practices, subsequently benefiting young children's health, well-being, and kindergarten readiness. Thus, the evaluation will scrutinize outcomes at the community, agency, and program levels. In addition to family and child outcomes, it focuses on improved service quality, enhanced provider knowledge, and improved communication and coordination among network participants.

In early 2023, parent interviews conducted by Chapin Hall revealed each community partner had established their own structures and processes for engaging and communicating with partners to fulfill the project objectives. Monthly or more frequent meetings facilitated networking, sharing of implementation updates, problem-solving, and decision-making among initiative leaders and providers, progressively streamlining processes over time. IAFC and Chapin Hall are collaborating to utilize the National Implementation Research Network's framework to measure each strategy's implementation stage, aiding in developing metrics and defining full saturation by strategy and community. This approach ensures the project's effectiveness is regularly monitored and refined by enabling continuous tracking of community saturation levels.

Evaluation Purpose & Questions

The overarching research question is: *"Is it possible to increase the number and percentage of children who successfully arrive at kindergarten fully ready to thrive by more effectively engaging and supporting primary caregivers in their parenting efforts and activities?"* The evaluation also outlines six areas and sub-questions about the implementation process and proximal outcomes to assess (Refer to Table 7).

Implementation

- How do community partners implement CPSSP?
- To what extent does parenting support "saturate" each community over time?

Proximal Outcomes

- Are there differences in collaboration among community partners and their support for families between years 1 and 3?
- Are there differences in awareness and use of parenting supports between a group of parents in year 1 and a group of parents in year 3?
- Are there differences in parenting knowledge and behaviors between a group of parents in year 1 and a group of parents in year 3?

Evaluation Questions and Sub-Questions

Research Questions	Data Sources
Process Questions on Implementation	
To what extent do the parenting supports actually 'saturate' or reach every family in an identified community? • What Tier 1 and Tier 2 services are available before and after implementation (e.g., 6, 12, and 18 months after)? • To what extent are parents aware of Tier 1 and Tier 2 services? What are their sources of information about these services? • How does "saturation" of services occur over time from initial to full implementation?	• Parent and provider surveys • Key informant interviews with selected service providers and service users • Service record data
What processes do Illinois Action for Children and the three community partners use to implement the Parenting Support Saturation Pilot? • What existing governance, communication, and • coordinating structures support implementation and what new structures are established? • How do parents learn about and engage in services? • How is program quality monitored to assure quality? • How do organizations and providers collect data? Do they share data? If so, what data and how are they shared? • How do organizations and providers use data to inform program development, implementation, and quality assurance? • How are parents actively engaged in planning, • implementing, and evaluating programs? What strategies do providers use to engage parents?	• Parent and provider surveys • Key informant interviews/focus groups with selected service providers and service users • Service record data
Parent and Child Impact Questions	
How do parents use different levels of parenting supports (universal, mid-level and intensive)? • What combinations of services do parents use? • What are the characteristics of parents who use or do not use services (or which parents use which services)? • What barriers do parents face in accessing parenting supports and services? • How satisfied are parents with the availability and quality of parenting services? What other services do parents desire?	• Parent and provider surveys • Key informant interviews/focus groups with selected service providers and parents • Service record data
What changes occur in the relationships between children and their primary caregivers? • What characteristics of children and caregivers are associated with these changes? • Which services are associated with these changes?	• Parent and provider surveys with standardized measures • Key informant interviews/focus groups with service providers and service users • Service record data • Parent training evaluations
What changes occur in children's social emotional, behavioral and academic functioning? • What characteristics of children and caregivers are • associated with these changes? • Which services are associated with these changes?	• Parent and provider surveys with standardized measures • Key informant interviews/focus groups with service providers and service users • Service record data • KIDS data

Methods & Data Sources

Program Data

- Service enrollment & participation (IAFC common data system)
- Parents' evaluations of Tier 2 services (if available)

Surveys (English/Spanish)

- Parent survey (children 0-5) at two points in time (100-150 per community)
- Community member/provider survey at two points in time (15-20 per community)

Interviews/Focus Groups

- Interviews/focus groups with selected providers & other community members in years 1 and 3 (10–15 per community)
- Interviews/focus groups with selected parents (years 2 and/or 3; 20 per community)

Year 1 Accomplishments

- Collaborated with IAFC & community leaders to develop a common data system
- Developed surveys and interview protocols for Time 1 data
    - Received IRB approval for the study
- Collected data
    - Parent survey (Nov.–Dec. 2021)
    - Community provider survey (Jan.–Feb. 2022)
    - Interviews with community members (Feb.–March 2022)

Year 1 Challenges

- Finalizing parent survey
- Identifying and recruiting an appropriate parent sample to ensure broad community representation during COVID
    - Validity of survey respondents
- Recruiting community partners to complete surveys and interviews
- Interpreting data on service use from different sources

Preliminary findings: CPSSP May 2022 Funder Briefing_5-4-22.pptx

Preliminary Findings

What the Preliminary Findings Cover/Answer

At Year 3 of the pilot, IAFC contacted Chapin Hall to discuss releasing a draft report of preliminary findings to discuss with funders before the final report was released.

The report drew from select administrative data on parent enrollment and the use of the newly implemented supports. Additionally, it included survey data on parents' awareness, knowledge, and behaviors in two groups of parents at two different times (Year 1 & Year 3) in each of the three communities. This draft report does not include qualitative data or Chapin Hall's interpretation of results.

The draft report assessed the implementation of every Tier support, parent participation in each initiative, and parent outcomes between the first and third years in all three communities.

Highlights From The Three Communities

When comparing program data to measure the implementation of Tier strategies, Chapin Hall looks at data before the CPSS program was implemented (pre-implementation: June 2018 – May 2020) and after (post-implementation: June 2021 – May 2023).

The parent survey measured awareness, different parental outcomes, and program satisfaction. It was administered at two points: Time 1 at the start of the program (2021) and Time 2 at year 3 (2023).

SPARK Aurora

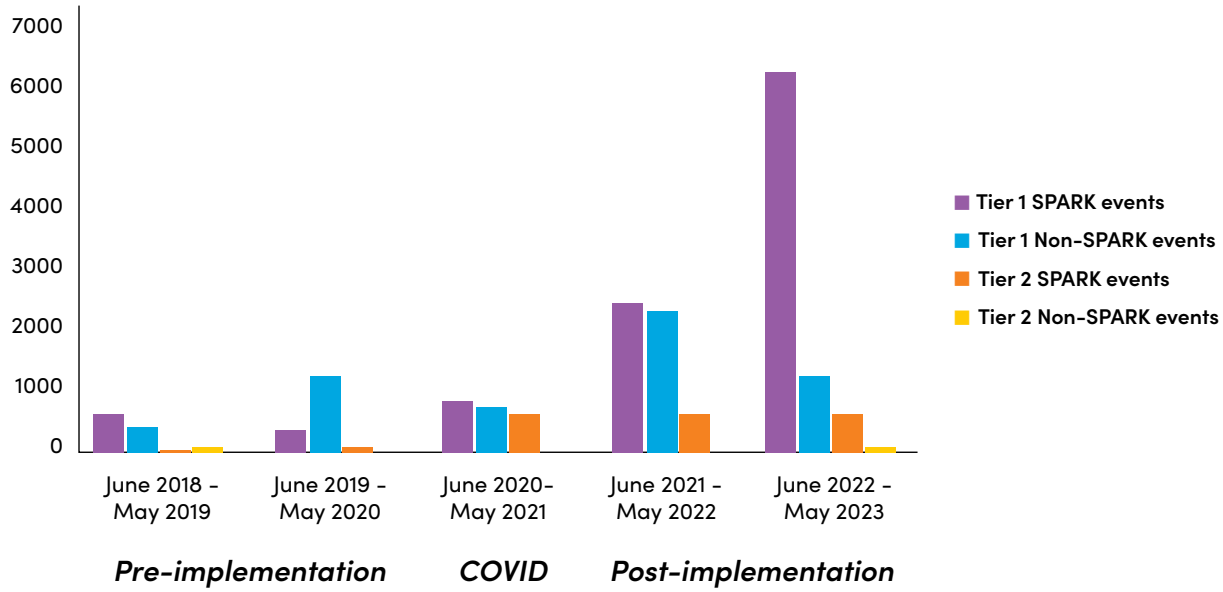
Outreach and Engagement

SPARK Aurora consistently held community and outreach events and kept a high level of participation throughout the initiative. The mean number of parents who attended each event significantly increased when comparing attendance for outreach and Tier 1 supports (resource fairs, family events, and community meetings) at pre- and post-implementation (See Figure 14). Additionally, children's attendance of Tier 1 supports significantly increased from pre- to post-implementation.

A total of 126 Tier 1 outreach events occurred between June 2021 and April 2023.

Parents who participated in Tier 2 supports (Playgroups, Parent Cafes, Opening Doors/Abriendo Puertas, etc.) increased their perceived support within the last year compared to those who did not. Among the Tier 2 supports, Playgroups were the most popular, with 78 held during the project period. There were 703 parents and 997 children who attended Playgroups.

Outreach Event Attendance - Aurora



Awareness

A greater proportion of parents from the Time 2 survey were aware of home visiting programs compared to Time 1. Additionally, more parents were aware of pre-K programs in the Time 2 survey sample compared to Time 1. The Time 2 survey also revealed that parents were more aware of childcare/early childhood education programs than parents from Time 1.

Intake and Referral system

SPARK'S Gateway Family Intake collects information from and about families it encounters and then uses it to refer families to appropriate community supports and services. The Gateway Intake has become a major source of extensive data collection on the characteristics and needs of Aurora caregivers who encounter SPARK. From those referrals, 48% of families had enrolled in the support or program by the 3-month follow-up. Among the programs/services they were enrolled in, School-based pre-K and the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) were the most frequent.

Parent Outcomes and Tier 2&3 Connections

Parent outcomes are measured through the Time 1 and Time 2 parent surveys, utilizing subscales from the Healthy Families Parenting Inventory (HFPI) and the Protective Factors Survey (PFS). Comparing answers from two different sets of parents at two different times, the survey measures parent-child interaction, social support, parenting efficacy, mobilizing resources, attachment, and nurturing. Additionally, the surveys provide insight into how parent outcomes are associated with engagement in various programs and individual characteristics (i.e., race, language, etc.). In Aurora, caregivers who participated in Tier 2 supports had a greater increase in perceived support in the last year compared to respondents from the Time 1 survey. They also found caregivers whose children were enrolled in a Tier 3 support (pre-K, Head Start, center-based childcare, family childcare, etc.) had a greater increase in their attachment, as measured on the PFS, with their child in the past year than those who were not.

There were significant differences when aggregating the survey data based on language, race, or ethnicity. For instance, Hispanic parents scored highest on awareness of supports, the three PFS scales, and all four HFPI parenting scales when measuring current functioning and previous functioning one year ago.

Program Satisfaction

77% of parent survey respondents reported satisfaction with the quality of SPARK's programs and services. Most caregivers (71%) reported they were satisfied with the quality of information about early childhood programs in the community, and 45% said the current available information is better than it was a year ago.

R4KR4L North Lawndale

Outreach and Engagement

Learning Kits varied in themes, from STEM to literacy or movement. There were 2,343 learning kits requested for distribution between November 2021 and April 2023. A small subsample, 118 families, filled out surveys about the learning kits, and 73 families reported the ages of the children who received the kits. Of the 73 families, there were 103 children total, with a majority falling between 3-5 years of age.

North Lawndale chose the R4K (now ParentPowered) texting platform as part of its Tier 1 support. Between August 2021 and April 2023, 87 parents enrolled in Ready4K text messaging. About half of those (51%) enrolled in Ready4K were parents of children between the ages of 3 and 5, while most other parents had children ages 6 and older.

Their most popular Tier 2 support, Circle of Security (CoS), had a total of 45 parents who participated in one of the 7 CoS cohort groups between March-April 2022 and May-June 2023. 280 caregivers completed a CoS interest form between March 2022 and April 2023. From this group, 204 parents were interested in learning more about CoS, 170 wanted to enroll in CoS to join a cohort, and 115 were interested in helping spread the word about the program.

ReadyRosie was a Tier 2 support that already existed at the Carole Robertson Center (CRC). R4KR4L decided to use parent enrollment in CoS as a pipeline to enroll in ReadyRosie. The first cohort of ReadyRosie comprised parents who had finished a CoS cohort as an avenue to continue receiving some support after the CoS cohort ended. Of the 26 enrollees in ReadyRosie, 22 participated in both programs.

Awareness

Respondents to the Time 2 parent survey reported a greater awareness of R4KR4L initiatives and CRC resources. 80% of caregivers from the Time 2 survey recognized the R4KR4L logo, compared to 35% at Time 1. A greater proportion of respondents at Time 2, compared to Time 1, reported seeing the logo on flyers in the community, social media, the North Lawndale resource hub website, and the learning kit tote bags. The Time 2 survey also showed parents were more aware of Ready4K text messaging, the R4KR4L website/resource hub, CoS, doula services, and home visiting programs than the sample at Time 1.

Parent Outcomes

In North Lawndale, parents at Time 2 scored higher on their parent-child interaction than parents at Time 1. The social support scale measures social capital and mutually supportive relationships with other parents. Parents at Time 1 and Time 2 scored similarly on social support. Respondents reported similar mean scores at Time 1 and Time 2 on the other parent outcome measures included in the survey. (Refer to Table 9 for the mean scores and percentage of parents with concern scores on the four scales).

Parent Outcomes - North Lawndale

	Possible range of scores	Time 1 (n = 42)	Time 2 (n = 38)
		M (SD)	M (SD)
Parent-Child Interaction,[1] M(SD) % "of concern"	10–50	41.6 (6.97) 32.6%	44.4 (4.00)* 15%
Social Support % "of concern"	5–25	20.8 (4.34) 23.9%	20.7 (4.46) 20.0%
Parenting Efficacy % "of concern"	6-30	26.2 (4.44) 23.9%	26.7 (3.24) 12.5%
Mobilizing Resources % "of concern"	6-30	22.4 (4.52) 23.9%	22.4 (4.13) 22.5%

Chapin Hall compared respondents who were and were not enrolled in one of the Tier supports to find a connection between enrollment and parent outcomes. Parents at Time 2 enrolled in the R4K text messaging platform had higher family functioning than those who were not. There were no significant differences among parents at Time 1 and Time 2 for the other parent outcome scales.

Program Satisfaction

The parent survey asked respondents about their satisfaction with the quality and availability of programs, services, and activities for families with young children in the community. In North Lawndale, 83% reported they were satisfied with the quality of the programs and services. When asked about the quality of information about early childhood programs in the community, 82% were satisfied, and 48% reported the information was better compared to a year earlier. At Time 2, 100% of parents enrolled in a Tier 2 program were satisfied with the quality of programs available in North Lawndale.

Alignment Rockford

Outreach and Engagement

Rockford consistently held between 1 and 5 outreach events per month between March 2022 and April 2023. As part of their outreach, Alignment Rockford distributed Ready to Learn with the Basics Learning Kits, which consisted of a tote bag with a Ready to Learn with the Basics book, a toy, a Basics magnet, and handouts about the Basics. They gave out 1,519 kits, 1,339 of which were distributed at hospitals for parents of newborns.

Alignment Rockford utilized the app Beginning with Babble (BWB) and the Basic Insights texting platform as part of their Tier 1 supports. During the pilot period, July 2021–April 2023, 176 caregivers enrolled in BWB. Since Basics Insights is part of The Basics strategy and its content aligns with the other Basics materials, Alignment Rockford shifted away from BWB toward the texting platform during the third year of implementation.

Between May 2022 and April 2023, 29 families participated in Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors. During this period, Alignment held seven cohorts. Over half of the participants were Hispanic (67%), and the majority reported hearing of the program through word of mouth.

Incredible Years, Rockford's other Tier 2 support, promotes social-emotional development in children, particularly those struggling with behavior and emotion regulation challenges. During implementation, they held two cohorts, and all parents learned about the program through other service providers, including the Booker Washington Center, Summerdale Early Childhood Center, and Alignment Rockford.

Awareness

At Time 2, over half of respondents had heard of Beginning with Babble, and 23 % knew of Basic Insights despite its relatively recent implementation. Unlike the other two communities, a greater proportion of parents in Rockford said they were aware of Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors (AP/OD) at Time 1 (40%) compared to Time 2 (15%).

When asked about awareness of Tier 3 supports, a significantly higher proportion of parents at Time 2 were aware of Head Start, pre-K, childcare, and Early Intervention than the Time 1 sample. The parent survey included questions around awareness of certain community messages centering on early childhood education (See Table 9). Between 73% and 89% of parents had seen at least one of these messages in the community. The message seen most often was "Ready to Learn," and flyers seemed to be the most effective for all four messages, followed closely by social media.

Message Reach - Rockford

Message	Flyers	Social Media	Text Messages	Alignment Rockford Website	Seen it Anywere?
"Ready to Learn"	43%	39%	11%	9%	88.9%
"You are your child's first and most important teacher"	26%	24%	15%	20%	86.5%
"Make friends with other parents and teachers while helping your child succeed"	37%	13%	11%	4%	73.0%
"Get access to one-on-one support for your child"	26%	20%	24%	6%	73.0%

At Time 2, almost one-third of respondents received the tote bag with the Ready to Learn with the Basics books. About half received the kit with Basics for Babies, and the other half received the Basics for Preschoolers book.

Outreach and Parent Outcomes

In Rockford, respondents in the Time 2 sample scored significantly higher on parent-child interaction, social support, parent efficacy, and mobilizing resources compared to the Time 1 sample. To measure connections between outreach and parent outcomes, Chapin Hall looked at parents who lived in zip codes 61103, 61104, or 61108, all areas with the highest concentration of community events and learning kit distributions. They found parents living in these zip codes at Time 2 had a greater improvement in family functioning over the previous year compared to parents from the Time 1 sample. Parents living in all other Rockford zip codes showed similar family functioning at Time 1 and Time 2.

Program Satisfaction

Like Aurora and North Lawndale, the majority of parents (85%) reported they were satisfied with the quality of programs and services in the community. Over 40% said information regarding early childhood programs has improved compared to a year ago. They also found parents at Time 2 with children ages 3-5 were more likely to be satisfied with the community's quality of programs and services than parents with children ages 0-2. 85% of the respondents were satisfied with the quality of and information about Rockford's early childhood programs and services.

Lessons Learned

Chapin Hall did not include their interpretation of results in this draft report of preliminary findings. Despite this, the data provided insight into the progress and work done by the three communities during the pilot's initial three years. Based on this report, a common theme across all three communities is an increase in awareness around ECE and the community organizations, improvement in parent outcomes at Time 2 compared to Time 1, and a high level of satisfaction with the quality of services and information around ECE.

For some relevant context, during the pilot's initial implementation and data collection (March 2021), communities were still dealing with and recovering from the many factors affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, the preliminary report offered a preview of the potential findings for the final report and a quantitative review of program data during implementation.

Tier 2 Qualitative Findings

Circle of Security in North Lawndale- Parent Focus Groups

The Circle of Security program implemented in North Lawndale was a crucial avenue for parents to enhance their parenting skills and strengthen their bond with their children. Through qualitative data collection, insights into parents' experiences were gathered, shedding light on the significance of this program in supporting families' well-being and child development. Despite the challenges posed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the program was adapted for virtual delivery, ensuring accessibility for participants.

Parents' reasons for enrolling in the Circle of Security program varied, from a general interest in learning new parenting techniques to seeking solutions for specific issues they faced with their children. Importantly, the positive feedback from all participants underscored the program's effectiveness in fostering a supportive and informative environment. Participants expressed gratitude for the insights and practical strategies learned, indicating tangible changes in their parenting practices and interactions with their children.

One parent shared, *"I did it because I wanted the information of learning how to deal with my child because I was having some... issues a little bit with [my child]. And I just wanted to understand more about the things that she was doing and how to handle the situation with her, to be able to... communicate better with [my child]. And being in the Circle [of Security], it helped me a lot with [my child], and my connection is a lot better than where it was going."*

Central to the program's success was recognizing participating parents' diverse needs and experiences. Discussions during focus groups revealed that parents not only acquired valuable parenting skills but also gained a deeper understanding of child development and the importance of self-care. Moreover, the program's emphasis on creating a safe and nurturing environment for children resonated with participants, prompting reflections on their own parenting approaches and expectations.

Another participant mentioned, *"One of the biggest things that I've definitely seen in my parenting now, I have a lot more compassion and empathy when it comes to my child. And I'm learning more about just where she is, you know, setting expectations that are realistic for her."*

Crucially, the findings highlighted the universal appeal of the Circle of Security program, with all participants expressing a willingness to recommend it to other parents. However, participants also acknowledged that the program may not be suitable for everyone, particularly those who may not be receptive to self-reflection or have experienced unprocessed trauma. Nonetheless, the overwhelmingly positive responses underscored the program's potential to strengthen parent-child attachment relationships and support families in the community.

In conclusion, the Circle of Security program in North Lawndale provided parents with valuable insights, tools, and support to navigate the complexities of parenthood and foster healthy relationships with their children. The testimonials from participants further reinforced the program's impact, highlighting the transformative effect it had on their parenting practices and relationships with their children. As the program continues to evolve, it holds promise for further enriching the lives of parents and children alike, fostering resilience and connection within families.

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors in Rockford

The Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors (AP/OD) program implemented in Rockford served as a vital platform for parents to enhance their parenting knowledge and skills, fostering a supportive environment for families with children aged birth to 5. Through qualitative data collection as part of the Community Parenting Support Saturation Pilot (CPSS) evaluation, parents' experiences highlighted the program's significance in promoting early learning, family well-being, and advocacy. Parents primarily learned about AP/OD through various community programs, underscoring the importance of outreach efforts in raising awareness about such initiatives.

Participants' reasons for enrollment varied, but they were unified by a desire to strengthen their parenting abilities and gain valuable insights into child development. One parent expressed enthusiasm for the program's focus on providing tools to support children's development and the opportunity to learn from other parents' experiences. Additionally, the program's emphasis on fostering a supportive community resonated with participants, motivating them to engage actively in the sessions.

Parent testimonials provided firsthand accounts of the positive impact of AP/OD on their parenting journey. Parents appreciated the wealth of information and practical strategies offered by the program, citing the curriculum's focus on parenting and child development as particularly beneficial. Moreover, the peer interactions within the group were highly valued, with parents emphasizing the importance of a non-judgmental atmosphere and the opportunity to share experiences and ideas with like-minded individuals.

One parent shared, "I really loved what the program essentially stood for: it's giving us as parents tools to better help our kids develop in different areas... Just learning from other parents to learn what works for me or maybe getting perspective from another parent on a similar issue that I might be having with my little one."

Furthermore, AP/OD served as a source of support for parents, with facilitators and peers offering encouragement and guidance. Parents highlighted the therapeutic nature of the program, emphasizing the importance of the supportive environment in bolstering their confidence and well-being.

The program's impact extended beyond the classroom, with parents reporting changes in their family dynamics and parenting practices. The observed outcomes were improved parenting confidence, strengthened parent-child relationships, and a deeper understanding of children's social-emotional development. Additionally, parents noted positive changes in their children's behavior and confidence, attributing these transformations to the strategies learned in AP/OD.

Reflecting on their experiences, all parents, particularly new parents, expressed a willingness to recommend AP/OD to others. However, challenges such as scheduling conflicts and limited awareness of the program were identified as potential barriers to participation, highlighting the need for continued outreach and accessibility efforts.

In conclusion, the testimonials and experiences shared by parents underscored the vital role of the AP/OD program in supporting families with young children. By providing valuable resources, fostering peer connections, and promoting positive parenting practices, AP/OD has the potential to empower families and promote healthy child development within the community. One parent stated, *"If these resources open up our perspective and not see things as black and white, I just think we can all be better parents."*

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors in Aurora

The Evaluation Team at Chapin Hall conducted qualitative research on the Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors (AP/OD) program in Aurora, focusing on parents' experiences. AP/OD is a 10-session parenting support initiative that promotes early learning and family well-being for parents of children aged birth to 5, emphasizing cultural values and parental knowledge. Findings from the first two cohorts revealed positive experiences among participants, who learned about the program primarily through community programs and schools.

Parents enrolled in AP/OD seeking to enhance their parenting skills, driven by encouragement from program staff and expectations based on positive experiences with similar programs. Program participation was widely regarded as beneficial, with parents expressing appreciation for the supportive group environment and facilitators. They valued the opportunity to connect with other parents, feeling understood and supported, and highlighted the importance of small group sizes for fostering meaningful interactions.

Participants reported personal growth, including improved emotion regulation and enhanced parent-child relationships, attributing these changes to AP/OD. They gained confidence in their parenting abilities and learned practical strategies for supporting their children's early learning, such as incorporating math and literacy activities into daily routines. Additionally, parents felt more prepared to address kindergarten readiness and observed positive changes in their children's behavior and development.

All parents expressed willingness to recommend AP/OD to others, emphasizing the program's empowering nature and the importance of self-awareness in parenting. While few barriers to participation were reported, parents identified potential challenges such as lack of childcare, limited program awareness, and scheduling conflicts. Recommendations for program improvement included providing clearer program information and enhancing recruitment strategies through word of mouth and informative flyers.

Overall, the findings underscore the positive impact of AP/OD on family well-being and early childhood development. The program's strengths lie in its supportive environment, culturally responsive approach, and focus on empowering parents to nurture their children's growth. These insights highlight the potential for programs like AP/OD to continue serving as valuable resources for families to promote positive parenting practices and foster early childhood development.

Final Report

Research Methodology

Five main research questions guided the final evaluation report:[22]

1. What processes do Illinois Action for Children and the three community partners use to implement the Saturation Pilot?
2. To what extent do the parenting supports actually "saturate" or reach every family in an identified community?
3. How do parents use different levels of parenting supports?
4. What changes occur in parenting behaviors and functioning?
5. What changes occur in the relationships between children and their primary caregivers?

The evaluation focused on implementing the new supports and proximal outcomes expected to improve community-wide kindergarten readiness. (Refer to Figure 4 for the CPSSP logic model).

The evaluation utilized several data collection methods, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups, to gather information from parents, community providers, and initiative leaders. However, the short time for data collection and invalid online parent survey responses limited valid responses for the evaluation.

The parent survey was administered online, and respondents were recruited using digital flyers with QR codes via social media, community websites, and in-person through physical flyers and personal referrals from the Chapin Hall team at community events. A monetary incentive was provided once the survey was completed, and participants were screened before accessing the survey to ensure they met the criteria of the target sample. The key constructs of the survey aimed at measuring the intended proximal outcomes of the initiative. It also utilized three standardized measures of parenting and beliefs about kindergarten readiness:

- Healthy Families Parenting Inventory (HFPI)
- Protective Factors Survey Second Edition (PFS-2)
- Community Attitudes on Readiness for Entering School (CARES)

Chapin Hall conducted the parent survey to assess change across time at two points in time (Time 1: Fall 2021 and Time 2: Summer-Fall 2023). They encountered some challenges to the validity of results, mostly surrounding faulty responses. Thus, those responses were excluded, reducing the final sample size for both Time 1 and Time 2 surveys.

To gather in-depth qualitative data, focus groups and interviews were conducted in English and Spanish with parent participants of Tier 2 programs (Opening Doors/Abriendo Puertas, Basics Cafes, etc.) in Aurora, North Lawndale, and Rockford. Chapin Hall held five 90-minute focus groups and four 60-minute individual focus groups. An initial codebook based on the focus group questions and an open-ended coding process were utilized to analyze the transcripts using qualitative data analysis software (Atlas.ti). Finally, themes were identified among the codes in Excel by connecting and comparing the categories.

[22]Burkhardt, Spielberger, Huang, & Kakuyama-Villaber, 3-4

There were 80 total service providers identified by Illinois Action for Children and the three community organizations. Chapin Hall emailed all 80 providers with an online link to the provider survey in November 2021 (44% response rate). The survey used two standardized measures: CARES and Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory Third Edition. In addition to the standardized measure, they included 12 items to measure service availability in each community, which was developed for the study. The Time 1 provider survey was administered from January to March 2022. At Time 2, they identified 21 providers still involved in the initiative and received responses from 11 (52% response rate). In addition to the survey, providers identified as most involved in the initiative were invited to be interviewed at two points in time. Leaders of the implementation of CPSSP were invited to interview from all three communities at Time 1 and Time 2. Chapin Hall utilized two methods to analyze the data. For Time 1, an open-ended coding approach is used to code parent focus groups and interviews. For Time 2, they used a rapid appraisal approach for provider and leader interviews.

Finally, extensive program data was collected by the three community organizations managed by the CPSSP team at Illinois Action for Children. The data was used to measure the saturation and implementation of the initiative's supports and to understand the population served. Each community provided different program data elements based on their capacity and implemented supports. Data collected measured program participation, program characteristics, and participant demographic information.

SPARK Aurora

In Aurora, four of the tier strategies stood out as successes during implementation. Interview and focus group respondents reported the Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors (AP/OD) program filled a need in the community. Parents who participated in the first two cohorts had consistently positive feedback. They reported that the program increased their knowledge of supporting their children's early learning, understanding and having patience with their children, and connecting with other parents in the community.

The Newborn Kits distributed at hospitals were received positively and reported as useful in reaching new parents and connecting them to local resources, like the SPARK Gateway Intake. Shortening the Gateway Intake form to be more digestible for parents was another successful outcome of CPSSP. By doing so, SPARK and its partners were able to successfully identify and refer more parents to local and ECE resources based on their expressed needs.

Lastly, using the CPSS grant, the organization increased the number of Playgroups and Parent Cafes. Participants could connect with other parents, their children could socialize with other children, and parents could learn about community events and other ECE programming. The Playgroups and Parent Cafes also allowed parents to take the Gateway Intake form.

CPSS Outcomes

Chapin Hall measured parent awareness of community supports on their Time 1 and Time 2 parent surveys. They found respondents at Time 2 were more aware of home visiting programs, pre-K programs, and childcare/early childhood education programs than the Time 1 sample. Additionally, a greater proportion of children aged 3-5 were enrolled in center-based early care and education programs at Time 2 compared to Time 1.

Regarding the reach of messages for SPARK'S logo and early learning campaigns, most respondents reported seeing them on social media. At Time 2, 45% of caregivers reported seeing the "Countdown to Kindergarten" message, and 48% saw the "Play.Learn.Connect" message.

During a focus group of participants in Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors, caregivers reported hearing about family and children's programs at the food bank, community events, Family Focus, and from their child's pediatrician. They heard about these programs most during the summertime and reported flyers were the least effective outreach strategy.

Parent Outcomes

On one measure, the Healthy Families Parenting Inventory (HFPI), respondents at Time 2 scored significantly higher on parent-child interaction, social support, parenting efficacy, and mobilizing resources scales than the sample at Time 1. For all four of these subscales from the HFPI, a significantly smaller proportion of parents had a concern score compared to respondents from Time 1. (Refer to Table 10 for concern scores at Time 1 and Time 2). For the other measure, the Protective Factors Survey (PSF-2), caregivers reflected on their experiences at the time of the survey ("now") and one year prior. The Time 2 sample reported better family functioning "now" and had a significant increase in their family functioning compared to a year ago compared to the Time 1 sample.

Similarly, Time 2 respondents reported greater social support, attachment, and nurturing with their children than those at Time 1. There was no significant difference in the amount of change over one year for both social support and attachment and nurturing with their children when comparing the Time 1 and Time 2 sample. (Refer to Table 11 for the measures of the 3 PFS-2 subscales at Time 1 and Time 2)[23].

Scores of Concern at Time 1 &2 - Aurora

	Possible range of scores	Time 1 (n = 115)	Time 2 (n = 53)
Family Functioning		M (SD)	M (SD)
1 year ago	1-5	2.92 (0.66)	3.94 (0.90)
Now[a]	1-5	2.74 (0.75)	4.13 (0.88)***
Change[d]		-0.18[b*]	0.18[c**]
Social Support			
1 year ago	1-5	2.73 (0.60)	3.94 (0.90)
Now[e]	1-5	2.70 (0.62)	4.13 (0.88)***
Change[g]		-0.03[ns]	0.11[f**]
Attachment/Nurturing			
1 year ago	1-5	3.32 (0.60)	3.29 (1.21)
Now	1-5	3.30 (0.65)	3.39 (1.18)
Change		-0.02	0.09

**p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. Mean difference was significant. ns: not significant*

[a] Parent sample at Time 2 scored significantly higher than the parent sample at Time 1 on family functioning at the time of the survey, t(163) = 10.47, p < .001.

[b] Parents had a significant decrease in family functioning over the past year at Time 1, t(111) = 2.27, p < .05.

[c] Parents had a significant increase in family functioning over the past year at Time 2, t(52) = 2.70, p < .01.

[d] The amount of change in family functioning parents reported in the previous year was significantly greater at Time 2 compared to Time 1, t(156.3) = 3.47, p < .001, and this was a large effect size (d = .75).

[e] Parent sample at Time 2 scored significantly higher than the parent sample at Time 1 on social support at the time of the survey, t(73.9) = 8.74, p < .001.

[f] Parents had a significant increase in social support over the past year at Time 2, t(52) = 2.16, p < .05.

[g] The amount of growth in social support parents reported in the previous year was significantly greater in the Time 2 sample, compared to the Time 1 sample, t(161.7) = 1.70, p < .05, and this was a medium effect size, d = .61.

[23]Burkhardt, Spielberger, Huang, & Kakuyama-Villaber, 31

	Possible range of scores	Time 1 (n = 191)	Time 2 (n = 73)
		M (SD)	M (SD)
Parent-Child Interaction,[a] % "of concern"[b]	10–50	33.7 (8.6) 72.6%	42.2 (5.4)*** 35.6%***
Social Support[c] % "of concern"[d]	5–25	16.1 (4.8) 64.4%	19.6 (4.7)*** 30.1%***
Parenting Efficacy[e] % "of concern"[f]	6–30	19.1 (5.5) 69.5%	23.9 (4.3)*** 41.1%***
Mobilizing Resources[g] % "of concern"[h]	6–30	18.5 (4.2) 57.9%	22.3 (5.1)*** 23.3%***

**p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. Mean difference was significant.*
[a]Parents scored significantly higher on parent-child interaction at Time 2, compared to Time 1, t(262) = 7.87, p < .001, n = 175.
[b]A significantly smaller proportion of parents had a parent-child interaction score of concern at Time 2 compared to Time 1, χ2 = 28.22, p < .001 (chi-square statistic with Yates correction).
[c] Parents scored significantly higher on the social support scale at Time 2, compared to Time 1, t(262) = 5.33, p < .001.
[d]A significantly smaller proportion of parents had a parent efficacy score of concern at Time 2 compared to Time 1, χ2 = 16.77, p < .001 (chi-square statistic with Yates correction).
[e]Parents in the Time 2 survey sample scored significantly higher on the parenting efficacy scale than the Time 1 parent sample, t(262) = 6.71, p < .001. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago Burkhardt, Spielberger, Huang, Kakuyama-Villaber | 32
[f]A smaller proportion of parents at Time 2 had a parent efficacy score of concern compared to Time 1, χ2 = 16.77, p < .001.
[g] Parents who completed the survey at Time 2 scored significantly higher on mobilizing resources than parents at Time 1, t(262) = 6.18, p < .001.
[h] A significantly smaller proportion of parents at Time 2 had a score of concern on the mobilizing resources scale, compared to Time 1, χ2 =23.93, p < .001 (chi-square statistic with Yates correction).

Reading

The evaluation asked caregivers on the parent survey at Time 1 and Time 2 how often they read to their children. At Time 1, 45% of respondents read to their children less than three times a week, while 55% reported reading to their children at least three times a week. At Time 2, 75% of caregivers reported reading to their children at least three times a week, a significant difference from Time 1.

Kindergarten Readiness

Chapin Hall includes the CARES scale on both the provider and parent survey, which indicates parents' knowledge of the importance of early learning and development skills. The CARES scale utilizes two subscales: Classroom Readiness, which measures skills related to the classroom setting, and General Readiness, relating to skills around children's everyday lives, like health or self-emotional maturity. Responses were measured using a Likert scale, with 1 being "not too important" and 4 being "absolutely necessary." In addition to the survey, provider interviews and parent focus groups were conducted.

The mean scores for both providers and parents were 2 ("somewhat important") and 3 ("very important but not essential"). At Time 1 and Time 2, there was no significant difference in parent scores. For providers, however, at Time 2, there was a significant difference in the scores for Classroom readiness, with providers believing that classroom skills are less important compared to Time 1. (See Table 12 for subscale scores of parents and providers at Time 1 and Time 2)[24].

Parent & Provider Subscale Scores - Aurora

Group	Domain	Time 1 M(SD)	Time 2 (MSD)
Parents	Classroom Readiness	2.59 (0.69), n = 183	2.77 (0.97), n = 73
Parents	General Readiness	2.58 (0.74), n = 187	2.76 (0.94), n = 73
Providers	Classroom Readiness	3.17 (0.60), n = 17	2.33 (0.26), n = 3
Providers	General Readiness	3.35 (0.60), n = 17	2.61 (0.80), n = 3

Caregivers from the focus group identified how they began preparing their children for kindergarten, including prioritizing reading, visiting the library, and participating in Tier 2 strategies such as Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors. When asked about kindergarten readiness, three caregivers answered that it prepares children for school and gets them used to routines. "They believed that kindergarten is the environment for getting children ready, rather than getting children ready for kindergarten."

During the provider and community-led interviews, providers reported that CPSSP helped promote awareness of available early childhood programs and kindergarten readiness, provided more resources for families with children ages 0-5, and promoted child development and skills through connecting families. "One informant emphasized that all the supports in this initiative contribute to kindergarten readiness."

North Lawndale R4KR4L

In North Lawndale, four initiatives stood out as implementation successes. Interview participants gave widespread acclaim to the Circle of Security program as a significant achievement of CPSSP. Notably, its strength-based, trauma-informed approach was especially valued amongst Black families as it challenged the prevailing approach of viewing their parenting through a deficit model by society, social service, and education sectors. They reported that the program positively impacted parents and children and fostered enduring relationships with the Carole Robertson Center (CRC).

[24]Burkhardt, Spielberger, Huang, & Kakuyama-Villaber, 36

Another focal point was the Early Learning Kits, which gathered overwhelmingly positive feedback from families and service providers. Distribution was initially limited to community events, but high demand led to a system where organizations could order them via the R4KR4L website.

Respondents identified the partnership with Open Books and CRC as critical during CPSS implementation. They collaborated on the Caregiver Advisory Council to elevate families' voices and incorporate them into activities.

Lastly, participation in the North Lawndale Early Learning Coalition was pivotal, fostering relationships with early childhood providers while enhancing the effectiveness of the tier initiatives. Collaborations with other community organizations facilitated CRC better to address the diverse needs of families in the community and amplify their impact.

CPSSP Outcomes

Awareness of Tier 1 supports in North Lawndale varied based on initiatives. For Ready4k, a greater proportion of respondents at Time 2 were on the text messaging platform than at Time 1. Awareness of sidewalk activities by Playful Learning Landscapes stayed consistent among caregivers at Time 1 and Time 2. For both the R4KR4L website and North Lawndale Resource Hub, awareness significantly increased at Time 2 compared to Time 1. At the time, North Lawndale implemented two Tier 2 programs, Circle of Security (COSP) and Ready Rosie. At Time 2, awareness of COSP significantly increased from Time 1, and twice as many parents were aware of COSP compared to Ready Rosie. The proportion of parents aware of Ready Rosie remained consistent from Time 1 to Time 2. Lastly, awareness around Tier 3 programs like pre-K, childcare, and Head Start increased between Time 1 and Time 2 but was not statistically significant. However, most parents in North Lawndale were aware of these programs at both times. Awareness of doula and home visiting services significantly increased from Time 1 to Time 2.

Regarding Message reach, parents were shown the R4KR4L logo to identify whether they recognized it and where they saw it. A significantly greater proportion of respondents at Time 2 recognized the logo (80%) than at Time 1 (35%). Refer to Table 13 for the percentage of respondents aware of the R4KR4L logo and where it was seen most[25].

R4KR4L Logo Awareness - North Lawndale

	Time 1 (n = 44)	Time 2 (n = 40)
Respondents who had seen the "Ready for K, Ready for Life" logo	34.8%	80.0%[a]
Where did you see the logo?		
Flyers	17.4%	57.5%[b]
Social Media	10.9%	30.0%[c]
North Lawndale Resource Hub	4.3%	22.5%[d]
Tote bags (Learning Kits)	2.2%	37.5%[e]
Water bottles	0%	10.0%
Somewhere else	6.5%	5.0%

[A]significantly greater proportion of parents recognized the logo at Time 2, compared to Time 1, $\chi 2$ (1, n = 84) = 16.29, p < .001.
[b]A significantly greater proportion of parents saw the logo on a flyer at Time 2, compared to Time 1, $\chi 2$ (1, n = 84) = 13.91, p < .001.
[c]A significantly greater proportion of parents saw the logo on social media at Time 2, compared to Time 1, $\chi 2$ (1, n = 84) = 4.51, p = .034.
[d]A significantly greater proportion of parents saw the logo on the ready4kready4life.org website at Time 2, compared to Time 1, $\chi 2$ (1, n = 84) = 46.75, p < .001.
[e]A significantly greater proportion of parents saw the logo on the learning kit tote bags at Time 2, compared to Time 1, $\chi 2$ (1, n = 84) = 16.86, p < .001.

[25]Burkhardt, Spielberger, Huang, & Kakuyama-Villaber, 48

During the parent focus groups, caregivers cited the various sources for learning about community programs: their children's schools, healthcare providers, community events, and while participating in Tier 2 programs like COSP. During their discussion, many expressed difficulty accessing information and needing to rely on personal networks. The pandemic and limited advertising exacerbated these challenges. *"You gotta know somebody to know something. . . I'm in the North Lawndale area, I mean, born and raised, so I don't think they advertise like they should."*

Parent Outcomes

Time 2 parents scored significantly higher in parent-child interaction than Time 1, with fewer Time 2 parents showing concern. However, the percentage of parents with concern was still lower in North Lawndale at Time 2 than in the measure developer's recent sample. The measure developer refers to the cutoff for a score that indicates a "score of concern." There were no statistically significant differences between Time 1 and Time 2 for the following subscales: social support, parenting efficacy, mobilizing resources, and attachment and nurturing. However, caregivers reported significant improvement in family functioning at Time 2 compared to Time 1, indicating a notable change within the past year. (Refer to Table 14 for the scores of concern from the Healthy Families Parenting Inventory at Time 1 and Time 2)[26].

Scores of concern at Time 1 &2 - North Lawndale

	Possible range of scores	Time 1 (n = 42)	Time 2 (n = 38)
		M (SD)	M (SD)
Parent-Child Interaction,[1] M(SD) % "of concern"	10–50	41.6 (6.97) 32.6%	44.4 (4.00)* 15%
Social Support % "of concern"	5–25	20.8 (4.34) 23.9%	20.7 (4.46) 20.0%
Parenting Efficacy % "of concern"	6–30	26.2 (4.44) 23.9%	26.7 (3.24) 12.5%
Mobilizing Resources % "of concern"	6–30	22.4 (4.52) 23.9%	22.4 (4.13) 22.5%

Reading

There was a significant increase at Time 2 of parents who reported reading to their children at least three times a week (74%) compared to Time 1.

Kindergarten Readiness

Parents generally rated aspects as "very important, but not essential." In focus groups, parents discussed various readiness factors like school requirements, literacy, numeracy skills, and holistic readiness encompassing mental, physical, and emotional aspects. Providers highlighted the efficacy of CPSSP initiatives, particularly learning kits and Circle of Security, in supporting kindergarten readiness. Learning kits provided families with quality toys and books, while Circle of Security aided in kindergarten readiness and addressed generational trauma by offering tailored support to parents. Providers emphasized the program's unique approach in North Lawndale, foreseeing impacts on kindergarten readiness and intergenerational well-being.

[26]Burkhardt, Spielberger, Huang, & Kakuyama-Villaber, 50

Alignment Rockford

Alignment Rockford's Ready to Learn initiative achieved notable successes during the grant period, with four key aspects highlighted by interview respondents. First, partnerships expanded significantly, fostering deeper relationships with entities like Rockford Public Schools and local hospitals. Secondly, the initiative facilitated a clearer understanding of community needs and a shared strategic vision to support all families with young children. The concept of tiered support was particularly valuable in shaping community-based family support systems. Thirdly, the distribution of Basics Kits through hospitals marked a significant achievement, providing essential resources to new parents and introducing them to available community support. Finally, while the New Parents Program at the Discovery Center Museum was implemented towards the grant's end, it showed promise in supporting new parents and facilitating connections with resources like Basics and community services. However, its outcomes are yet to be fully assessed.

CPSS Outcomes

Beginning with Babble awareness increased significantly from Time 1 to Time 2, with over half of respondents aware at Time 2. Basics Insights text messaging awareness was noted in 28% of respondents at Time 2, introduced just before the survey. Awareness of Alignment Rockford and the Early Development Inventory (EDI) was also assessed at Time 2, with 17% aware of Alignment Rockford and 28% aware of EDI. Notably, Tier 2 supports showed a decrease in awareness of AP/OD from Time 1 to Time 2. Regarding Tier 3 supports, Time 2 respondents demonstrated increased awareness of Head Start, pre-K, child care, and Early Intervention compared to Time 1, possibly reflecting the initiative's messaging impact. Enrollment in Tier 1 supports remained stable between the two time points, while participation in AP/OD and Incredible Years decreased at Time 2. Center-based early care and education enrollment significantly increased from 57% at Time 1 to 75% at Time 2 for children ages 3-5. Additionally, Time 1 respondents reported higher participation rates in doula services and home visiting programs compared to Time 2, with similar participation in Early Intervention across both time points.

Parents heard about available programs from various places, like community events, their children's school, word of mouth, from their health care providers, and through other programs they participated in. Flyers and social media were mentioned as other sources of information, but notably, when discussing challenges, caregivers reported that it was difficult to get information during the COVID-19 shutdown. This might have affected parent engagement. "When things started to get a bit more normal, we could go out to the parks and in public it was easier to meet people and learn about the programs."

Parent Outcomes

The parent survey conducted at two time points revealed significant positive changes in various parenting-related aspects. Firstly, parents in the Time 2 sample showed significantly higher scores on parent-child interaction than those at Time 1, with a smaller proportion having scores "of concern" at Time 2. Similarly, Time 2 parents demonstrated greater social support and parenting efficacy, with fewer concerns than Time 1. Moreover, parents in the Time 2 sample reported higher scores on the mobilizing resources scale, indicating improved awareness of and access to community resources. The Protective Factors Survey (PFS-2) showed improvements in family functioning among Time 2 parents, with a significant increase in functioning over the past year compared to Time 1.

Additionally, Time 2 parents reported a greater sense of social support than Time 1, with a significant increase in support over the past year at Time 2. However, there were no significant differences in attachment and nurturing between Time 1 and Time 2, nor in the parent-reported change in attachment over the previous year between the two time points. Overall, the findings indicate positive shifts in various parenting-related factors among Time 2 parents, reflecting improvements in parent-child interaction, social support, parenting efficacy, mobilizing resources, and family functioning over the past year. Refer to Table 15 to see the scores from the PFS-2 subscales at Time 1 and Time 2.

Scores PFS-2 Time 1 & 2 - North Lawndale

	Possible range of scores	Time 1 (n = 115)	Time 2 (n = 53)
Family Functioning		M (SD)	M (SD)
1 year ago	1-5	2.92 (0.66)	3.94 (0.90)
Now[a]	1-5	2.74 (0.75)	4.13 (0.88)***
Change[d]		-0.18[b*]	0.18[c**]
Social Support			
1 year ago	1-5	2.73 (0.60)	3.94 (0.90)
Now[e]	1-5	2.70 (0.62)	4.13 (0.88)***
Change[g]		-0.03[ns]	0.11[f**]
Attachment/Nurturing			
1 year ago	1-5	3.32 (0.60)	3.29 (1.21)
Now	1-5	3.30 (0.65)	3.39 (1.18)
Change		-0.02	0.09

**p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. Mean difference was significant. ns: not significant*

[a] Parent sample at Time 2 scored significantly higher than the parent sample at Time 1 on family functioning at the time of the survey, t(163) = 10.47, p < .001.

[b] Parents had a significant decrease in family functioning over the past year at Time 1, t(111) = 2.27, p < .05.

[c] Parents had a significant increase in family functioning over the past year at Time 2, t(52) = 2.70, p < .01.

[d] The amount of change in family functioning parents reported in the previous year was significantly greater at Time 2 compared to Time 1, t(156.3) = 3.47, p < .001, and this was a large effect size (d = .75).

[e] Parent sample at Time 2 scored significantly higher than the parent sample at Time 1 on social support at the time of the survey, t(73.9) = 8.74, p < .001.

[f] Parents had a significant increase in social support over the past year at Time 2, t(52) = 2.16, p < .05.

[g] The amount of growth in social support parents reported in the previous year was significantly greater in the Time 2 sample, compared to the Time 1 sample, t(161.7) = 1.70, p < .05, and this was a medium effect size, d = .61.

Reading

There was a significant difference in the percentage of caregivers who read to their children three times a week at Time 2 (59%) compared to respondents at Time 1 (40%). In Rockford, most caregivers at both Time 1 and Time 2 reported reading to their children between 15 and 45 minutes each time they read.

Kindergarten Readiness

This section discusses parents' and providers' perspectives on kindergarten readiness, assessed through the CARES scale in surveys and focus groups. Parents in the Time 2 survey showed increased belief in the importance of classroom and general readiness skills compared to Time 1. In focus groups, parents defined readiness as setting children up for success academically, socially, and emotionally, emphasizing preparation for separation and routine establishment. Providers noted the initiative's potential impact on kindergarten readiness despite limited observable effects due to the focus on infants. However, they highlighted positive shifts, such as increased enrollment in early childhood programs and reduced child vulnerability, attributed to Alignment Rockford's efforts in addressing community needs. Challenges persist, with families facing difficulties meeting basic needs despite available resources.

Implementation Challenges

Staffing

All three communities encountered some challenges relating to staffing and capacity. The community organizations encountered turnover, some being key leadership roles and lacking hands to keep up with demand. Staff at Carole Robertson expressed the difficulty in maintaining "labor intensive" initiatives like the Learning Kits and COSP. "Interview respondents explained that having a small number of staff trying to implement and manage most of the CPSSP work was difficult, particularly when there were many moving pieces." Interviewees from Rockford mentioned COVID-19 as a barrier to staff availability and retention.

Partnerships

Interviewees from Rockford expressed that while partnerships were a major strength of the initiative, they also posed grant challenges depending on the partner. For instance, collaborations with school districts posed challenges due to "*strict hierarchy and bureaucracy, while both schools and community-based organizations have their own priorities, funding, and accountability mechanisms.*"[27] This impacted the implementation of the IRIS referral system. It was initially a priority but could not be fully implemented due to expansive undertaking and long-term commitment from the community and primary responsible organization.

Program Selection and Set-Up

Two of the communities incurred issues during the initial implementation of the several initiatives offered as part of CPSS. In Aurora, interviewees explained the broad scope of proposed activities may have been a barrier to deeper, more sustainable programming. During the selection process of the tier initiatives, it became clear some worked better than others. One example was SPARK's attempt to engage fathers in programming through the Dads Groups but it was unsuccessful despite many efforts. Similarly, getting planned initiatives off the ground in Rockford was challenging, resulting in planning changes and several delays. Some of those changes included the inability to recruit partners to implement tier supports, staff turnover, shifting organizational priorities or funding, and reconsidering planned activities.

[27]Burkhardt, Spielberger, Huang, & Kakuyama-Villaber, 66

Sustainability

The length of the CPSS pilot and funding commitment were mentioned as concerns for implementing sustainable programming. In Aurora, short-term funding made partner organizations too apprehensive to shift their priorities and staff insecure over their position if the program did not continue. In North Lawndale, they expressed similar concerns and mentioned continuing branding for R4KR4L as it was a community initiative, not just a Carole Robertson endeavor. This made sustainability strategies harder to identify as CRC services areas pertaining to their physical locations, limiting the breadth of R4KR4L if it were to integrate into the organization.

Conclusion

Despite launching amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the CPSSP initiative in three communities implemented many proposed activities, forged new partnerships, and expanded outreach to parents about early learning resources. However, not all program ideas were realized, and maintaining partnerships and engaging parents remained challenging. Although the initiative's long-term goal is improved kindergarten readiness, short-term outcomes were prioritized due to constraints like the pandemic's impact, lack of comparison data, and difficulty attributing outcomes solely to CPSSP. Social-emotional challenges in children post-pandemic highlighted the significance of early support for parents in enhancing child development. Despite facing challenges, CPSSP achieved successes, notably in reaching new families and supporting parents in novel ways, underscoring the pivotal role of parental support in kindergarten readiness.

Appendix

CPSS Objectives

Objective 1: Strengthening Community Collaboration and Partnerships

The first objective of the CPSS work is to enhance community collaboration and partnerships. This involves fostering collective knowledge, energy, and power within communities to shift dynamics toward valuing children and families. The goal is to actively involve the community in a way that creates a foundation for positive change, prioritizing and supporting parenting. This objective aims to establish a collaborative environment that values the input of diverse stakeholders and promotes a shared commitment to early childhood development.

Objective 2: Building Community Capacity and Promoting Relationship-Based Approaches

The second objective focuses on building community capacity and promoting relationship-based approaches. This involves prioritizing capacity building and emphasizing relationships to empower community leaders and stakeholders. The aim is to create an environment conducive to community-led change where leadership actively influences children's early learning, fostering a community-wide commitment. This objective emphasizes the importance of developing strong relationships and leadership within communities to drive positive outcomes in children's early learning.

Objective 3: Implementing Research-Based Strategies and Strengthening Financial Resources

The third objective is to implement research-based strategies and strengthen financial resources. This includes employing evidence-based approaches and building reciprocal relationships within the community to contribute to thriving kindergartens. Adequately allocating financial resources and cultivating a strengths-based coalition culture are essential components. The goal is to foster a collaborative commitment to early learning, where organizations in the community share investment and collaborate in planning and evaluating early learning services. This objective aims to ensure effective interventions and sustainable support for children's educational success.

Objective 4: Facilitating Reflective Practices and Human-Centered Design Processes

The fourth objective involves facilitating reflective practices and human-centered design processes. This includes implementing training, professional development, and awareness-building initiatives to lead to positive parent outcomes. By ensuring that interventions are responsive to the needs of parents and the community, this objective aims to achieve positive parent outcomes, including enhanced capacity, confidence, social capital, and informed decision-making. This contributes to the overall success of the CPSS program by creating interventions that resonate with and benefit the community.

Objective 5: Empowering Parents as Influential Change Agents

The fifth objective is centered on empowering parents as influential change agents. It envisions recognizing and supporting parents as the most important influencers in their children's early learning. Through community efforts, empowered parents are expected to become change agents and advocates, confident in their leadership and skills. This outcome underscores the importance of community engagement, collaboration, capacity building, and evidence-based practices in fostering positive and lasting change in the community's early learning and parenting approach. This objective aims to create a lasting impact by empowering parents to play a pivotal role in their children's education and development.

Accomplishments From Communities

During the first three years of the Pilot (FY2021-2024), all three communities could implement the planned array of Tier 1, 2, and 3 programs and supports (with a few exceptions where they needed to pivot to a different support). However, implementing the multiple tiers of support in the three communities took longer than expected and faced various challenges, including the ongoing effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic. In FY2024, the communities and IAFC are focused on sustaining the work and growing their capacity.

Phase and Human-Centered Design Nov 2020–May 2021

In the startup phase, we worked with each of the three communities to launch their projects and plan for implementation. On December 3, 2020, we celebrated the launch of this project with a virtual public event that included 75 participants.

To support planning, the IAFC team coordinated a training series on human-centered design for each community to reflect on and refine their implementation plans and collect information from families. IAFC values the inclusion of family and community input in the design and implementation of a program. To ensure that the program actively included family input, all three communities participated in developing their capacity to advance human-centered design approaches. A human-centered design approach allowed the program to unite diverse stakeholders to develop solutions and solve problems collectively with empathy, equity, and connection principles. IAFC partnered with Greater Good Studio to train and build the capacity of Rockford, Aurora, and North Lawndale community members to implement human-centered approaches, bringing family input and insight into their planning and project design. While human-centered design approaches vary, the general components of human-centered design embraced by Greater Good Studio include:

- **Framing:** Defining questions to answer and people to engage.
- **Research:** Learning from people about their needs and values.
- **Synthesis:** Finding patterns of behavior and areas of opportunity.
- **Concepting:** Creating a high volume of new ideas.
- **Prototyping:** Making tangible mock-ups and gathering feedback.

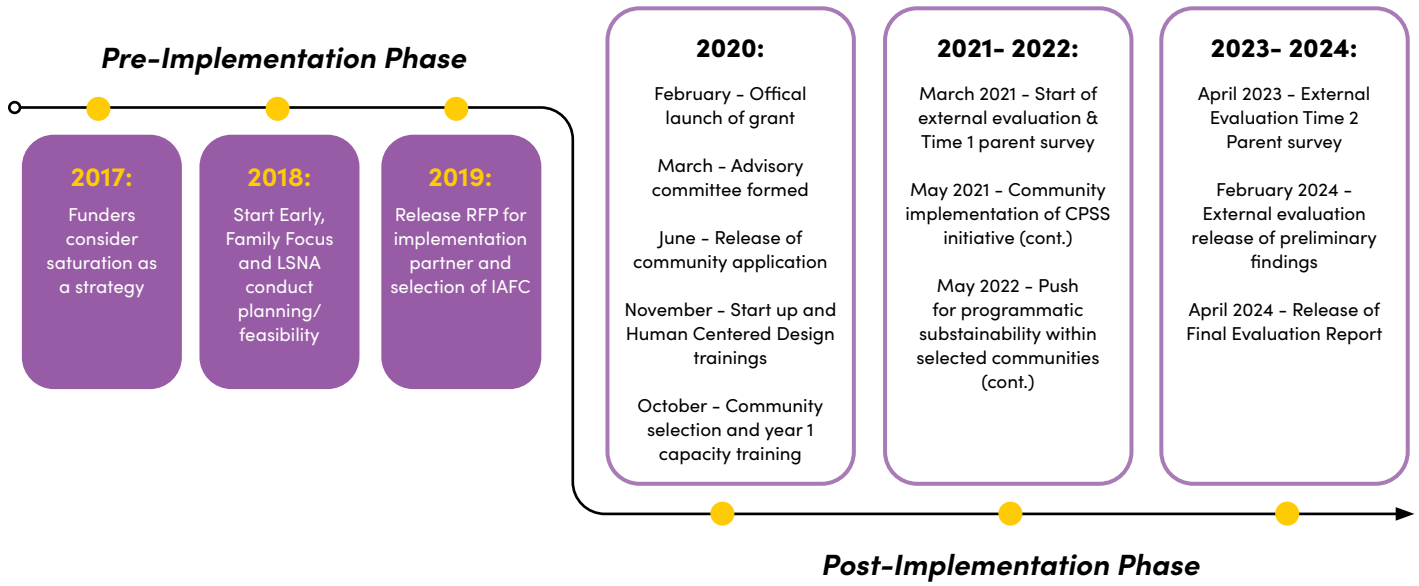
Communities benefited from strategies that engage, involve, and include families and their experiences with an intentional racial equity lens, ensuring success and sustainability.

The IAFC team delivered coaching support to each community as they applied concepts and skills. Through this process, each community engaged families to compile community input to inform their implementation. By the end of April 2021, each community had completed nine human-centered design workshops, delivering almost 14 hours of content to core teams of community leaders. Each community's core team refined its project goals and activities through human-centered design work.

We also established ongoing check-ins with each community's Project Leads. We helped each community meet with vendors that provide parenting interventions to understand their delivery of training and services to families, especially considering the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, we secured data agreements as needed during these vendor-community meetings. To facilitate cross-community and peer-to-peer learning conversations, we established bi-monthly meetings for Project Leads. These meetings provide opportunities for Project Leads to share insights, communicate progress toward project implementation, and build relationships. Each meeting focuses on discussion topics of interest to communities; recent topics included marketing strategies, community outreach best practices, and improving cross-community communication and collaboration. Project Leads plan to focus a future discussion on ensuring that local strategies apply a racial equity lens and approach.

In March 2021, Chapin Hall was selected to evaluate the Community Parenting Support Saturation program. Teams from IAFC and Chapin Hall meet weekly to discuss their evaluation plan. To support the evaluators in quickly learning about each community, their work plans, and progress to date, we introduced the evaluators to each community and provided them with significant documents and materials. IAFC is connecting the project to both the broader early childhood field and efforts occurring around the state. To ensure that the Early Development Instrument (EDI) project in Rockford is integrated and aligned with this project, we meet monthly with the team at Erikson Institute. With the support of the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, we have connected SPARK and Alignment Rockford to the broader Basics community in Illinois. We have also put Alignment Rockford in communication with the Robert R. McCormick Foundation as the Foundation develops a Basics website, which Alignment Rockford plans to leverage for this project. In North Lawndale, they support the Carole Robertson Center for Learning to integrate their efforts within the existing North Lawndale Early Learning Collaboration to align ongoing early childhood initiatives.

Each community shared that the human-centered design training process has helped them assess gaps in their outreach efforts, strategically frame their local efforts, and provide the structure necessary to implement their project concepts as concrete and actionable ideas. The process also helped each community generate excitement and synergy for the project within their core teams and develop a shared vision of implementing the work.



SPARK Aurora

Year 1
May 2021 - April 2022

Launch of Tier Strategies

- 1 staff member (father) trained to provide parenting support to fathers.
- Launch of Bright by Text (BBT), 55 families enrolled reaching 66 children.
- Partnership with several community organizations to hold Tier 2 strategies: Parent Cafés & Playgroups.
- 13 playgroups held, engaging 98 parents & 123 children.
- Parent ambassadors as "table facilitators" for Parent Cafés.
- Collaboration with World Relief to enroll families fleeing ware into preschool programs.
- Fateway intake as Tier 3 strategy to connect families to community & ECE resources.

Year 2
May 2022 - April 2023

Adapting Strategies

- Distribution of Bright Beginnings Welcome Bags through Rush Copley.
- Community baby shower, infant & toddler playgroups, & Pediatricians' Round Table held.
- Creation of a dedicated B-3 landing page on the SPARK website.
- 5 parents successfully trained for Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors.
- 253 parents & children reached across 11 playgroups.
- 2,084 countdown to kindergarten door hangers in 8 neighborhoods.
- Shift in focus from the Family Connects strategy to Bright Beginnings.
- Introduction of shortened Gateway interview for all Tier-2 program attndees.
- Delayed re-launch of fatherhood groups to refine group model & alighn with BeStrong & Basics Parent Cafés.

Year 3
July 2023 - 2024 (present)

Impact & Reach

- AFC adds sustainability planning as priority via monthly Vision Strategy meetings.
- 335+ families subscribed to Bright by text, reaching 454 children.
- Continued collaboration with Rush Copley & expansion to Ascension Mercy & Northwestern Delnor Hospitals.
- 482+ parents attended Basic Café.
- 3 new SPARK staff trained held over zoom, cross district collaboration with AOK in St. Charles, IL.
- 620 Gateway instakes administered.
- 99 families referred to Child Care Assistance Programs (CCAP) via Gateway intake.

Alignment Rockford

Year 1
May 2021 - April 2022

Launch of Tier Strategies

- Beginning with Bobble launches & dissemination of information to over 4,000 parents & caregivers (107 parents enrolled by mid-year).
- Basics IL launches website & Alignment Rockford provides input.
- Partnership with Swedish American Hospital & other health systems to distribute Basics IL kits.
- Alignment Rockford secures commitments from organizations like Children's Home & Aid to support Tier 2 strategies.
- Community classes held in various locations & community centers.
- Overhaul of website.
- Partnership with the Youth Mental Health System of Care grant to enhance resource availability for famlies.

Year 2
May 2022 - April 2023

Adapting Strategies

- Alignment develops interactive virtual space for single point of entry & centralized space for parenting support.
- Shift in Basics IL strategy towards community engagement, creating & distributing Basics IL learning kits for children of various age groups.
- Successful launch of updated website with a coodinated intake feature to connect families with appropriate early childhood programs.
- Facilitated incredible Years & Opening Doors (OD)/Abriendo Puertas (AP) programs at local community centers.
- Press conference held to launch Basics IL Learning Kits.
- Community classes held in various locations & community centers.

Year 3
July 2023 - 2024 (present)

Impact & Reach

- IAFC adds sustainabiltiy planning as priority via monthly Vision Strategy meetings.
- Full transision from Beginning with Bobble to Basic Insights texting platform.
- 84 parents subscribed to Basic Insights, reach 87 children.
- 2,328 total Basics Kits distributed 1,699 being newborn kits.
- Partnership with 6 organizations to hold OD/AP & incredible years.
- 30 families served via OD/AP & 14 families participated in Incredible Years.
- Youth Mental Health System of Core promote CoS training & classes for 2024, 1 failitator trained.
- 10 read, play, learn LaundryCares centers deployed.
- Aligment serves as convener, data managers & community champion in IRIS rollout in Winnebago & Boone county.

R4KR4L North Lawndale

Year 1
May 2021 - April 2022

Year 2
May 2022 - April 2023

Year 3
July 2023 - 2024 (present)

Launch of Tier Strategies

- Launch of digital community resource hub in North Lawndale via website.
- Carole Robertson Center (CRC) purchases 250 more R4K texting licenses for families in N. Lawndale.
- CRC staff get trained for Ready Rosie & Circle of Security (CoS).
- 69 new families sign up for R4K texting, 250+ total parents subscribed.
- 462 Learning Kits distributed.
- In-person & virtual (R4K) outreach efforts to promote awareness of Tier 1 parenting supports.
- Establishments of a Caregiver Advisory Coucil to connect families with EC programs & promote commuity engagement.
- First CoS cohort completed & integration of Ready Rosie for participants planned.

Adapting Strategies

- Shift in recruitment strategy for Ready Rosie from R4K to families participating in CoS or on the waitlist.
- Over 300 families reached through initiatives like outreach events, learning kit distribution, & facilitating access to the Ready4K.
- Bolstering team recruiting facilitators & trainers, & streamlining internal data processess.
- Convening the Caregiver Advisory Group to establish a representative Family Council.
- CoS becomes critical Tier 2 strategies garnering positive & powerful feedback from parents.
- Revisiting the workplan for sustainable growth of Tier 3 strategies, emphasizing utlilization of it's Family Needs Survey & internal capacities.

Impact & Reach

- IAFC adds sustainability planning as priority via monthly Vision Strategy meetings.
- 407 parents subscribed to R4K texting during CPSSP grant period.
- Over 3,1000 Learning Kits distributed.
- 489 individuals completed their CoS Interest form, 187 interested in joining a cohort.
- 90 families participated in a CoS cohort, 60 families completed CoS Circle of Security Parenting programming.
- Official re-launch of R4KR4L website & first ever IRIS integrated referral system through single point of entry via website in N. Lawndale.

Community Implementation Year 1: May 2021–April 2022

Rockford (Alignment Rockford)

At the outset of the year, Alignment Rockford initiated its Ready to Learn program, focusing on its Tier 1 strategy called Beginning with Babble, which introduced a literacy-encouraging app for families. By collaborating with a marketing firm, Alignment Rockford developed a plan to raise awareness about early learning and recruit organizations and families for CPSS.

Additionally, Alignment Rockford provided input for the Basics Illinois website. Plans were made to integrate and launch Basics Illinois, Opening Doors/Abriendo Puertas, and Incredible Years, with community providers set to be fully trained by October. Furthermore, four parent co-leads were interviewed as part of the Tier 3 strategy, and a consultant was hired to provide grant support and manage project workflow and data collection.

Mid-year progress saw 107 parents enrolled in Beginning with Babble, demonstrating significant engagement in early learning activities. Additionally, a Tier 1 strategy involving Basics Illinois Take-Home Kits for new parents was implemented within a hospital setting. Despite initial challenges such as slow provider responses, Alignment Rockford secured commitments from organizations like Children's Home & Aid to support Tier 2 strategies. Trained facilitators from Rockford Public Schools were scheduled to start classes on Opening Doors and Incredible Years in community centers by late April.

In the latter part of the year, Alignment Rockford partnered with Swedish American Hospital to implement Basics Illinois. The hospital incorporated Basics through Take-Home Kits in various clinics, ensuring widespread distribution to families. Moreover, Alignment Rockford enhanced its data collection system to align with its core vision, facilitating local support for young children and families.

However, the year faced a brief interruption due to a staffing transition, with a new Executive Director, Emily Klonicki, taking over in January. Despite this, the Ready to Learn initiative regained momentum, with plans to revitalize strategies and processes.

Highlights by tier included the successful dissemination of information about the Beginning with Babble app to over 4,000 parents and caregivers, the launch of the Basics Illinois website, and partnerships with major health systems for distributing parenting kits. Tier 2 achievements encompassed training facilitators and holding community classes in various locations, including community centers and the Discovery Center Children's Museum. Tier 3 efforts involved overhauling the website and partnering with the Youth Mental Health System of Care grant to enhance resource availability for families.

Reflecting on the year, Alignment Rockford acknowledged challenges such as low organizational capacity but remained optimistic about future prospects. Plans were made to focus on partner engagement and create a centralized website connecting parents, caregivers, and service providers. Notably, partnerships with SwedishAmerican Hospital and educational institutions were established to embed early learning initiatives into community settings, demonstrating Alignment Rockford's commitment to fostering positive early childhood development outcomes in Rockford.

North Lawndale (Carole Robertson Center)

As the Carole Robertson Center (CRC) progressed through the HCD process, it identified the necessity for a digital community resource hub in North Lawndale. It actively sought community and family input to design the resulting website. Following the website's launch, CRC continued to utilize HCD practices to gather more parent feedback for ongoing improvement.

Since July, CRC has been recruiting families through local community events, leveraging its existing Ready4K texting program by purchasing 250 more licenses for families. Collaborating with IAFC, CRC integrated preexisting strategies like Learning Landscapes and Family Connects into its efforts, meeting with the McCormick Foundation to further understand Learning Landscapes and encouraging families to attend related events.

In response to parent feedback obtained through the HCD process, CRC designed a virtual community resource hub for families, set to be formally launched at the end of October. A marketing strategy was also developed to promote all family engagement and parenting support services. CRC staff underwent ReadyRosie and Circle of Security training to support implementation.

CRCL has enrolled 289 families in Ready4K, its Tier 1 texting strategy, with 69 new families signing up since October 2023. Progress was also made in implementing its Tier 2 strategy, Circle of Security, training four facilitators, providing 462 Learning Kits to families, and increasing awareness of available family support services. CRCL also established stronger relationships with the Core Planning Team and the North Lawndale Early Learning Collaboration to recruit parents for Tier 2 strategies.

Year 1 implementation focused on Tier 1 parenting supports, such as community outreach and learning kits, promoting kindergarten readiness through various events. COVID considerations posed challenges, such as suspending in-person events from January to February. However, efforts continued through digital platforms like Ready4K and developing a digital community hub to provide families with essential resources and information.

The Ready4K texting service, available in multiple languages, reached parents across North Lawndale, with 269 parents signed up and engaged in various community initiatives. Custom messages tailored to specific events and resources were sent out, further enhancing community engagement.

The introduction of Circle of Security and Ready Rosie as Tier 2 and Tier 3 strategies demonstrated promising results, with the completion of the first COS cohort and plans for Ready Rosie's integration with COS participants. Establishing a Caregiver Advisory Council aimed to connect families with early childhood programs and promote community engagement.

Despite challenges, such as technology issues hindering ReadyRosie implementation, CRC adapted its strategies to meet families' needs better, shifting focus towards engaging families who completed COS workshops or remained on the waitlist for active involvement in Ready Rosie.

Looking ahead, CRCL remains committed to scaling its programs while maintaining quality. It focuses on increasing parent voice in decision-making processes to ensure the long-term impact within the North Lawndale community.

Aurora (SPARK)

Throughout its journey, SPARK Aurora has experienced several significant milestones and adaptations that have shaped its approach to supporting families in the community.

At the outset, the Human-Centered Design (HCD) process revealed a crucial service gap: the underrepresentation of fathers in parent engagement events. Responding to this insight, SPARK decided to train a staff member who is a father to provide targeted parenting support services to fathers, ensuring inclusivity in their approach.

In May, SPARK reached a major implementation milestone by fully launching the Bright By Text texting platform, a Tier 1 parenting strategy. This initiative saw 55 families (comprising 66 children) signing up for the service, demonstrating a promising start. Additionally, plans for implementing Family Connects began taking shape, with key community leaders attending an extensive training series and laying the groundwork for a potential future partnership.

Partnering with various community organizations, SPARK launched parent cafes and playgroups as Tier 2 strategies, focusing on enhancing positive child-parent interactions. These initiatives have already made a tangible impact, with 13 playgroups held, engaging 98 parents and 123 children.

Implementing Tier 1 strategies like Bright By Text garnered positive feedback from families, who reported improved connections with their children and increased access to local services. Similarly, Tier 2 strategies received acclaim from community partners, with several expressing interest in incorporating these programs into their services.

Mid-year adjustments saw SPARK adapt creatively to challenges. Although unable to train parents as facilitators, they effectively utilized parent ambassadors as "table facilitators" for parent cafes, fostering skill development and community engagement.

SPARK's holistic support approach has been pivotal in connecting families to vital resources and services. Notably, the collaboration with World Relief enrolled families fleeing war in Afghanistan into preschool programs, demonstrating the profound impact of community partnerships.

As the year progressed, SPARK continued to expand its reach and impact. Through a series of playgroups and community events, they successfully enrolled new families into Bright By Text and facilitated transitions into other support programs. The dedication to meeting families where they are has been evident in every aspect of their strategy.

At the end of Year 1, SPARK reflected on its achievements and challenges. They remained agile and adaptable while facing varying community capacities and implementation hurdles. Challenges such as delays in implementing Family Connects prompted strategic pivots, ensuring that the program's core goals remained intact.

Looking ahead, SPARK remains committed to its mission, adjusting its work plan to accommodate changing circumstances. Training initiatives like Opening Doors and Be Strong Families are poised to expand their support network further, promising even greater impact. Through continued collaboration and innovation, SPARK Aurora is poised to make a lasting difference in the lives of families in the community.

Community Implementation Year 2: May 2022–June 2023

Rockford

Alignment Rockford quickly realized that its initial marketing campaign for saturation strategies was too broad. They identified the need for a single point of entry (SPOE) and a centralized virtual space for parenting support. Originally envisioned as a SPOE form, the community is now developing an interactive virtual space, slated for launch in early August. They also shifted their Basics Illinois strategy towards community engagement, creating and distributing Basics Illinois learning kits for children of various age groups. These kits, adapted from Boston Basics, include activity cards, age-appropriate materials, and information to connect families with support services and the interactive SPOE website. This initiative aims to facilitate easy access to early childhood education (ECE) services for families with children under 5 in SwedishAmerican Hospital's network.

Additionally, Alignment Rockford successfully launched an updated website with a coordinated intake feature to connect families with appropriate early childhood programs. This step is crucial for increasing enrollment in such programs. They also facilitated Incredible Years and Opening Doors/ Abriendo Puertas programs at local community centers over the summer, catering to diverse family demographics. Despite challenges in partner engagement and staffing shortages, they are actively seeking solutions, including hiring outreach and engagement staff and co-developing a Parent University-style model.

In a significant move, Alignment Rockford held a press conference to launch Basics Illinois Learning Kits, a Tier-1 strategy to saturate and reach all newborns in Rockford. These kits, distributed in partnership with Rockford Public Schools and SwedishAmerican Hospital, contain tools and tips to support children's development. The kits also include a QR code linking to the new Coordinated Intake form on Alignment Rockford's website, facilitating seamless service access. Rosecrance supports this initiative, representing the first phase of efforts to bridge referrals via the Integrated Referral & Intake System (IRIS), emphasizing collaboration and support for families from birth.

As they continue implementing Tier-2 and Tier-3 strategies, Alignment Rockford faces challenges in fully advertising the Coordinated Intake form due to staffing changes at partner Rosecrance. However, they are proceeding cautiously and planning a more complete launch following the IRIS launch. Meanwhile, efforts are underway to strengthen Tier-2 partnerships and develop a coordinated intake form. Once IRIS launches, Alignment Rockford aims to offer the form to other organizations, expanding access to services.

In summary, Alignment Rockford is making significant progress in its mission to provide comprehensive parenting support services to Rockford families. Despite challenges, it adapts strategies, fosters collaboration, and seeks innovative solutions to ensure every family can access early childhood education and support.

North Lawndale

In the endeavor to implement ReadyRosie, North Lawndale's Carole Robertson Center for Learning (CRCL) encountered technological setbacks, prompting an adaptation of their recruitment strategy. Instead of utilizing Ready4K, CRCL directed ReadyRosie towards families engaged in Circle of Security workshops or on the waitlist, recognizing their proactive approach to early childhood strategies. This adjustment was complemented by CRCL's robust efforts in advancing kindergarten readiness, including outreach events, distribution of learning kits, and facilitating access to the Ready4K texting platform. Over 300 families benefited from these initiatives, with notable engagement in North Lawndale-specific community messages. Meanwhile, CRCL bolstered its team, recruiting facilitators and trainers, and streamlined internal data processes.

Amidst these efforts, CRCL continued to build its infrastructure by convening the Caregiver Advisory Group to establish a representative Family Council. Circle of Security remained pivotal, evidenced by impactful testimonials from participants highlighting its role in strengthening parent-child relationships. Furthermore, CRCL revisited its work plan for Tier-3 strategies, emphasizing the utilization of its Family Needs Survey and internal capacities for sustainable growth. Meanwhile, capacity-related delays were experienced in launching Tier 3 systems, prompting consultations with IAFC for viable solutions.

Transitioning to the next phase, CRCL focused on saturating North Lawndale with early childhood resources, enlisting parents and providers to support community-facing events, and expanding reach. Meanwhile, efforts to enhance Circle of Security and address Tier 3 enrollment challenges continued. Plans to implement a coordinated intake form on CRCL's website and the proposal for the IRIS system underscored a commitment to facilitating access to early childhood education and care programs. The collaborative efforts among CRCL and partners aimed to strengthen a 'no wrong door' approach, promoting inclusivity and increasing enrollment in ECEC programs in North Lawndale.

Aurora

In Aurora, significant adjustments were made to the Family Connects/Rush Copley project, prompted by Rush Copley's determination in April that implementing Family Connects as intended was not feasible. Despite this setback, the commitment to strengthening connections between pediatrics and early childhood programs for Aurora families remains steadfast. In response, SPARK Aurora has entered a renewed brainstorming phase, proposing initiatives like the distribution of Bright Beginnings Welcome Bags through Rush Copley and organizing events such as Community Baby Showers, Infant & Toddler Playgroups, a Pediatricians' Round Table, and the creation of a dedicated B-3 landing page on the SPARK website. Additionally, SPARK Aurora plans to collaborate with Talking Cities Aurora to tailor activities for specific segments of the B-3 age group.

Meanwhile, SPARK Aurora has made significant strides in implementing its Tier-2 strategy, Abriendo Puertas, having successfully trained five parents since the program's launch in the summer of 2022. Efforts are underway to expand sessions, including those conducted in English and Spanish, in collaboration with local school districts. The agency has also facilitated a total of 253 parents and children across 11 playgroups, further reinforcing community engagement. Moreover, SPARK Aurora's Countdown to Kindergarten door-hanging campaign has seen substantial success, with the distribution of 2,084 door hangers in eight neighborhoods, generating excitement and anticipation for kindergarten enrollment. Notably, SPARK Aurora has seamlessly transitioned its focus from the Family Connects strategy to Bright Beginnings. This prenatal-to-3 initiative fosters synergy between pediatrics and early childhood programs, primarily through community events, playgroups, and coalition-building efforts.

In recent developments, SPARK has introduced a shortened Gateway interview for all Tier 2 program attendees, facilitating streamlined data collection and enhancing the referral process. This initiative aims to establish a baseline against which to measure future progress and ensure a seamless transition between Tier 2 offerings and Tier 3 referrals. Additionally, a compelling narrative highlights Liz's transformative journey as a first-time mother participating in the Abriendo Puertas program, showcasing the profound impact of SPARK's initiatives on parent-child dynamics.

Looking ahead, SPARK Aurora has delayed the relaunch of fatherhood groups to refine its group model, aligning it with the successful Be Strong and Basics cafés groups. Scheduled for mid-to-late February, the relaunch will leverage available space and facilitator availability to ensure optimal engagement. Furthermore, from January 15 to April 14, 2023, SPARK made significant progress across its Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 initiatives. Notably, the Bright Beginnings initiative gained momentum through strategic partnerships and resourceful events like the Bright Beginnings baby shower, which saw substantial attendance and positive feedback from attendees.

However, despite these achievements, SPARK Aurora faces challenges in its second year of operation. Low Tier 2 enrollment rates persist across communities, partly due to COVID-related restrictions and scheduling conflicts for training sessions. Moreover, organizational dynamics between lead anchor agencies and partner organizations have posed obstacles, impacting forward momentum and program implementation. Additionally, staffing and enrollment issues in early childhood programs statewide have further complicated Tier 2 strategies, with partners hesitant to commit to programs with low enrollment rates. To address these challenges, SPARK Aurora aims to leverage lessons learned and adopt strategic approaches for recruitment, outreach, and engagement, focusing on enhancing parent involvement and community connections.

Community Implementation Year 3: July 2023–Present

SPARK Aurora: CPSS Impact and Reach

Tier 1

Bright by Text: Currently, SPARK has over 335 families who are active subscribers to the educational text messaging subscription. Thanks to their parents' enrollment, 434 children are actively receiving early education resources. SPARK Aurora's new Family Support Specialists are working on increasing their community engagement by continuously pushing and assisting parents to sign up for text messaging. IAFC collects data on both subscribers and engagement with the text message content.

Bright Beginnings: Although staff changes at SPARK and Rush Copley Hospital have caused challenges in engaging with the hospital staff, they have been expanding their work, and newborn bags are still being made. They are reconnecting with key staff at Rush Copley to further partnership goals and expanding to Ascension Mercy Hospital in Aurora and Northwestern Medicine Delnor Hospital in Geneva.

Tier 2

The Basics Parent Café: IAFC and Chapin Hall collect two types of data from The Basics Café: attendance and satisfaction. In total, over 482 parents have attended Basics Café since its pilot in 2021, with 179 attending in 2021, 214 in 2022, and 89 in 2023. Some significant staff changes and leadership transitions in FY '23, including their new Executive Director, Rosaisela Sida, account for the dip in attendance.

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors: It has been very successful as it continues to build partnerships with schools and other agencies interested in learning more about the program. Three new SPARK staff were trained in November, and they already have plans to co-host a virtual Spanish program with the preschool program in St. Charles D303 and AOK that will be open to all parents in the area, including Aurora.

Tier 3

Gateway Intake: A large part of SPARK Aurora's identity is the Gateway Intake, which provides families access to necessary resources. They have administered over 620 Gateway Intakes since 2021, and now, with full staff capacity, they can increase their productivity in delivering the intake and screenings. From the Gateway Intake, IAFC and SPARK capture relevant data around risk factors, household size, family characteristics, referral sources, and program interests. SPARK can make referrals to programs or resources the caregivers express a need for. For example, SPARK has been able to refer 99 families to Child Care Assistance Programs (CCAP).

Additionally, we can see the connections between the strategies since SPARK records current CPSS initiatives in which the caregiver is interested or has participated. Among those who took the intake, 38 knew of BrightybyText, 35 knew of Parent Cafes, and 44 knew of the PlayLearnConnect Groups. Moving forward, SPARK has expressed a strong desire to intensify its intervention through its Tier 3 strategy by investing in staff dedicated to referrals and home visiting.

Community Plans for Sustainability

SPARK Aurora has engaged the new Fox Valley United Way Director of Development to be part of the Vision and Strategic meeting to understand the program's priority needs and funding of the work. The Director of Development will create and present a strategic plan for funding each program strategy. The plan will summarize furthering community collaborations and grants like Bright by Text. It will provide an analysis of what the budget is right now going towards each initiative and how they will be covered and braided into current funding for the future. They have expressed that they feel confident in their ability to braid funds. Secondly, they have also planned new fundraising activities for 2024 to continue the work of the community.

Impact of "Community Saturation" Within The Community

SPARK Aurora has strategically expanded developmental screenings (ASQ-3) by increasing the number of days and locations, complemented by integrating social-emotional screening tools (ASQ-SE). This initiative significantly broadens outreach, empowering SPARK Aurora to reach more children and substantially increasing referrals to Early Intervention and other essential services.

The annual Holiday Assistance Program at Fox Valley United Way goes beyond traditional gift-giving, offering a transformative opportunity for SPARK Aurora to connect with each family personally. Through interviews and assessments using the "short" Gateway form, SPARK Aurora identifies families expressing interest in early childhood programs and services. This includes developmental screenings, Bright By Text, and playgroups. The systematic addition of Gateway forms to their comprehensive database enhances overall impact and outreach for the year.

SPARK Aurora's collaboration with the Aurora Public Library—Eola Rd. Branch has flourished. This fall, SPARK Aurora organized five playgroups in a strategic alliance with the library's storytime sessions. Following engaging story sessions, SPARK Aurora facilitates enriching activities for parents and children and provides access to the Gateway intake or developmental screenings. The consistent weekly attendance of 8-15 families, including fathers' active participation, underscores this partnership's success. Scheduled playgroups for January-May 2024 and September-December 2024 demonstrate SPARK Aurora's commitment to ongoing community enrichment.

In line with SPARK Aurora's commitment to community empowerment, efforts are underway to establish a parent committee set to launch in the new year. Once implemented, this committee will provide a platform for various training sessions and parent cafes, further empowering parents with valuable knowledge on a range of topics. This initiative reflects SPARK Aurora's dedication to enhancing parent empowerment within the community.

Meaningful Change and Additions In Key Partnerships

Throughout the past year, key partnerships have played a pivotal role in shaping programming efforts. The collaboration with Aurora Public Library's Eola Rd. Branch has witnessed the expansion of services, heralding the introduction of playgroups and an Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors cohort. This strategic move has effectively reached new families through dedicated advocacy and promotion efforts.

The enduring partnership with Fox Valley Park District has yielded significant results, culminating in the successful application for a grant to host additional summer playgroups in different areas. This accomplishment marks a meaningful extension of outreach to previously untouched families. While World Relief's contract for hosting playgroups concluded, the generosity of New England Church, providing free space, has sparked exploration into the addition of infant playgroups—a promising development in diversifying services.

The Place for Children with Autism partnership has been transformative, introducing a direct referral form that guides parents towards Affordable Care Act insurance plans. Furthermore, collaborations with Fox Valley Therapy Dogs and Therapy Dogs International have impacted social and emotional well-being. The successful enlistment of a therapy dog volunteer for community events stands as a heartwarming testament to their commitment.

These strategic collaborations, characterized by meaningful change and additions, extend beyond mere service expansion. They have become integral to the foundation of strengthened community engagement, introducing innovative programs that directly benefit children and families.

Alignment Rockford: CPSS Impact and Reach

Tier 1

The Basics (Basic Insights and Kits): Alignment Rockford originally chose the app Beginning with Babble as their tier 1 strategy to reach the community. They have since decided the app did not reach the community or perform as expected and shelved the strategy. They currently engage in two tier 1 strategies, Basics Insights texting and the Basics Kits distribution. There are 84 parents in total who are subscribers to Basic Insights texting, subsequently reaching 87 children in total. Alignment Rockford has also distributed the Basics Kits, a majority of which are distributed through their Universal Newborn Support System, to reach children as early as possible. They have distributed 1,699 newborn kits and 2,328 kits in total. There have been staff transitions in Ready to Learn in the past year, and now, at full capacity, they are strategizing partnerships with hospitals and increasing engagement. IAFC collects data on attendance, characteristics of attendees, and Basics Kits distribution.

Tier 2

Opening Doors/Abriendo Puertas and Incredible Years: Alignment Rockford currently employs two tier 2 strategies, Opening Doors/Abriendo Puertas and Incredible Years. There are several types of data IAFC collects from the cohorts. Both programs give participants an intake survey to gather demographic information and awareness of other CPSS initiatives. Alignment also keeps track of each facilitator trained to administer the programs. They partnered with six organizations for Opening Doors/Abriendo Puertas and four organizations for Incredible Years. Over 30 families were served through Opening Doors/Abriendo Puertas, and 14 have participated in the Incredible Years program so far. With full-time staff now at full capacity, they are actively planning more cohorts for both strategies. Alignment also diligently tracks existing partnerships and actively works towards cultivating new partnerships. Lastly, Alignment Rockford plans to incorporate Circle of Security as a new Tier 2 strategy for the Rockford community. Their partners in the Youth Mental Health System of Care are promoting Circle of Security training and classes and a community of practice component for 2024. Rockford also held a first-ever regional in-person Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors (AP/OD) cohort training, bringing some key organizations into the AP/OD work, such as the YMCA, and providing in-person training to members of other IAFC pilot communities. Ready to Learn is also launching a "new parents" group for up to 100 new parents of babies 0-18 months in partnership with the Discovery Center Children's Museum based on a successful and strong program started at the Madison Children's Museum in

Madison, WI. This program will help parents access and utilize the support pipeline created through CPSS/Ready to Learn.

EDI: They have expanded their reach and impact by bringing more organizations and partners on board with Ready to Learn. Between the IAFC funding for the outreach coordinator position and the Winnebago County Community Mental Health Board-funded EDI expansion team, which are expanding the EDI to canvas the County of Winnebago, they are making headway on the work they have been working on for the past three years. The Community Parent Support Saturation team is deploying 10 Read, Play, Learn LaundryCares centers across the community in key areas of need.

Tier 3
Coordinated Intake: Alignment Rockford provides connections to necessary resources for the Rockford community through their Coordinated Intake. Through this intake, Alignment tracks data pertaining to participant demographics. Alignment Rockford and IAFC identify valuable needs and awareness of program initiatives through the intake data. For example, most respondents express a need for housing and utility assistance. The data collected from the intake can also identify gaps to help improve the marketing and delivery of CPSS program services. Alignment Rockford also served as a convener and community champion in the rollout of the IRIS coordinated referral system for Winnebago and Boone counties during its launch in 2023. They now serve, along with the regional planning council, as the data managers for the 2-county IRIS platform.

Community Plans for Sustainability
Alignment Rockford is developing a cradle-to-college support pathway for children in Rockford. They are expanding many key concepts of the CPSS work into a holistic support approach to families of students, focusing directly on five vulnerable areas in the community while doing direct work with eight vulnerable schools in the RPS 205 school district. Finally, Alignment Rockford will be starting work in February 2024 with Conlon Public Strategies, a Chicago-based public policy firm that has been instrumental in shaping legislation and implementation of universal newborn systems of support (UNSS—aka, Tier 1 universal newborn home visiting) for a feasibility study and landscape analysis which will result in a June 2024 plan for implementing UNSS services in Winnebago County over the next year.

All of the work in CPSS, UNSS, IRIS data management, and implementation of the Healing-Centered Student Support initiative comes with an increased need for support and participation through leadership, a seat at the table, and financial support. Alignment Rockford is constantly seeking appropriate grant funds to support the work they are doing and have been diligent about keeping the community informed and involved through large events, community-based projects, participation in, and convening of various summits, numerous outreaches, ongoing community studies and reports, and discussions about supporting youth and families in Rockford, which includes the Ready to Learn initiative for early childhood.

Impact of "Community Saturation" Within The Community

Alignment Rockford actively contributes to the community, providing introductory welcome baby kits to 3,500 babies born in the Rockford region annually through a partnership with UW Health and OSF Health Systems. Initiatives like the New Parents program with Discovery Center, the landscape analysis and feasibility study with Conlon Public Strategies for a Universal Newborn System of Support in Winnebago County (verbal confirmation for funding pending official review), and the installation of ten Read, Play Learn Centers underscore Alignment Rockford's commitment.

The expansion into school-age levels through The Healing Centered Student Support project, a collaborative effort with the Rockford Public School District, the City of Rockford, the Winnebago County Health Department, Rosecrance, The Youth Mental Health System of Care, The Rockford Park District, the YMCA, the Boys and Girls Club of Rockford, and NAMI, aligns with the "pipeline" principle exemplified by the Harlem Children's Zone. This sustainable, systemic approach creates a pipeline following early childhood directly inside the most vulnerable school district schools, supporting the full academic pathway of students beyond the early childhood level.

Meaningful Change and Additions in Key Partnerships

Alignment Rockford has fortified its relationship with the Youth Mental Health System of Care, intertwining various initiatives in a collaborative web of mutual support. A more robust connection with the City of Rockford has been established, particularly as a pivotal partner in the Healing Centered Student Support initiative. Simultaneously, Alignment Rockford has fostered a key partnership with the Winnebago County Health Department, which spearheads the Universal Newborn Support System work. The ongoing fruitful relationship with UW-Health continues to yield positive outcomes, with plans to explore additional ways to support families through the Ready to Learn pathways. Moreover, the newly formed partnership with healthcare providers, OSF Saint Anthony, has proven instrumental in delivering essential resources to families engaged with Ready to Learn.

Emphasizing collaborative leadership, Alignment Rockford welcomes the increased participation and proactive roles of organizations such as the YMCA of Rock River Valley, the Boys and Girls Club of Rockford, the Discovery Center Museum, and the Rockford Park District. Their heightened involvement signifies a shared commitment to leadership in early childhood and healing-centered initiatives. This expanded network of partnerships showcases Alignment Rockford's dedication to meaningful collaborations that positively impact the community.

R4KR4L North Lawndale: CPSS Impact and Reach

Tier 1

Ready4K (ParentPowered): The R4KR4L initiative with Carole Robertson Center (CRC) uses the R4K texting platform, now formally known as ParentPowered, for parents in North Lawndale to access early education tips and community information. Program facilitators at CRC collect extensive data from the backend of the text messaging platform, including program and satisfaction data. IAFC collects this data from CRC for our records to track user demographics, qualitative feedback around parenting topics, and raw click data. They currently have 218 parents subscribed during their grant period, extending the service to 417 children. IAFC analyzes the R4K data to make live connections between beneficiaries enrolled in the platform and participating in tier 2 strategies. (We hope to do the same with tier 3 once IRIS is officially integrated into R4KR4L).

Learning Kits: The Learning Kits distributed by Carole Robertson Center have been extremely well received and garnered a high demand from providers and parents. In total, they have distributed over 3,100 kits, often handing out hundreds at a time to providers. CRC has also customized the kits, creating different series based on child development or creating bookbags. They collect quantitative and qualitative data from kit distributions, including the number distributed, demographic information on providers or parents, and overall feedback on the kits' content. The data from Learning Kits are connected to R4K data through cross-analysis by IAFC to identify connections between the tier strategies.

Tier 2

Circle of Security: R4KR4L at Carole Robertson Center has made a name for itself by implementing the Tier 2 strategy, the Circle of Security program (COSP). Carole Robertson Center collects participant and attendance data. With every cohort, participants complete an intake survey at the beginning and end of the program. 489 individuals have completed their COSP Interest form, 187 of which were interested in joining a cohort specifically. They are currently holding their 10th cohort and have collected a mass of positive and useful feedback from participants. The Carole Robertson Center team has taken ownership of COSP and the R4KR4L branding by actively identifying parent and community needs. After realizing a desire amongst parents for greater emotional help when dealing with difficult topics during sessions, they enlisted in IAFC to help find a qualified Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant (ECMHC). This is one example of capacity building among organizations and transforming program initiatives in response to community needs.

60 families have participated in the Circle of Security Parenting programming. This achievement is a testament to the dedication of families and the program's ability to provide essential support for building secure attachments between caregivers and children in their care. Since the program's inception, a total of 90 families have participated in the program, reinforcing the long-term impact of the program on nurturing secure and loving environments. They are pleased to announce the addition of a new team member to their circle of COSP facilitators: Angel Morales, a 20-plus-year employee and former parent of our program, who is looking forward to bringing COSP to fathers. The heart of our program lies in the stories of transformation.

Tier 3

Plans for IRIS integration: The team at Carole Robertson Center has developed R4KR4L as a brand and recently launched their website, which integrates IRIS for their referral and tier 3 strategy. They are the first in North Lawndale to provide a community referral case form integrated into their website to serve their entire community. CRC has worked with IAFC to coordinate the data we should collect to inform program services and community needs.

Community Plans for Sustainability

CRCL recognizes that sustainability goes beyond fundraising; it involves integrating the work into existing workflows and utilizing available resources for long-term success and scaling. This approach includes leveraging programmatic supports and engaging with families within the Center and the community to prepare children to transition from preschool to kindergarten. To facilitate this, CRCL will use their internal kindergarten Community Liaison, Candice Washington, and the resources of the Carole Robertson Center for Learning's BASES-K (Bridging Academic and Social Emotional Supports into Kindergarten) program. The work will be furthered through partnerships with similar departments within the center, such as the ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance), Family Support and Engagement, and Social and Emotional Learning teams. By leveraging existing structures and resources, CRCL aims to continue facilitating school readiness and providing children and caregivers with the tools they need to succeed academically and socially. Sustainability is viewed as a practice rather than a one-time goal, and the objective is to incorporate these lessons into all initiatives for long-term impact.

As part of the integration efforts, CRCL has seamlessly integrated the Ready for Kindergarten, Ready for Life efforts with the BASES-K program, enhancing sustainability and providing continuous support for school readiness. The parent committee's sustainability is strengthened by incorporating insights from Circle of Security Parenting Workshops, ensuring ongoing parent engagement and input through participation in policy committees. In their commitment as a core partner in the North Lawndale Early Learning Collaboration (NLELC), CRCL builds strong partnerships with other organizations in the community, ensuring continued accessibility, collaboration, and organizational adaptability.

The essential support and commitment of Phil Kaplan, who generously donates $18,000 per year to CRCL's work, has been crucial in maintaining and expanding initiatives. Actively assessing program effectiveness through key data points in collaboration with the data team and IAFC, CRCL has made significant investments in recruiting and staffing a robust data team. This internal resource is harnessed for CPSS efforts and is expected to be vital in deepening and scaling key activities.

To enhance sustainability, CRCL continually prioritizes initiatives demonstrating success and engaging in strategic restructuring based on data-driven insights. This ensures that resources are allocated efficiently and effectively to maximize impact. Through these activities and partnerships, CRCL is laying a robust foundation for the long-term sustainability of programs and initiatives.

Impact of "Community Saturation" Within The Community

The successful engagement of a knowledgeable web designer by CRCL has led to the creation of the revamped 'Ready for Kindergarten, Ready for Life' website. This platform boasts a built-in calendar designed for community use, focusing on kindergarten readiness in North Lawndale. Additionally, it features links to existing program tiers and introduces the new IRIS Referral Network. This innovative web-based tool is a valuable addition, connecting families in the North Lawndale community to appropriate resources. CRCL's commitment shines through in this multifaceted approach, demonstrating dedication to providing comprehensive support and resources tailored to the community's diverse needs.

Meaningful Change and Additions in Key Partnerships

The collaboration with Dolores Alvarado, Community Engagement Specialist, and Rarzail Jones, Assistant Director of Community Connections (IAFC) from NLELC (North Lawndale Early Learning Collaboration), has undergone a transformative evolution. Their invaluable contributions to the Integrated Referral and Intake System (IRIS), programming, and future services position Candice as an integral core team member in the ongoing IRIS implementation. Candice Washington maintains unwavering dedication as a North Lawndale partner, actively contributing to the community's growth and success through bi-weekly and monthly engagements.

Recent partnerships with providers, including Gads Hill, and collaborations with Parent University showcase a commitment to establishing personal relationships with partners and caregivers. These efforts have not only increased accessibility for partners to receive Ready for Kindergarten, Ready for Life access, and tangible kits in person but have also fostered deepened connections through the Circle of Security Parenting (COSP) program. Collaborating with Parent University emerges as a valuable platform, providing high-quality parent voice and access to workshops that align with the community's preferences and needs. This chosen approach significantly strengthens engagement and enhances the overall quality of services.

References

ABF101; Advisory Board Best Practice Framework™; Joint Technical Committee; Advisory Board Centre (2020).

Burkhardt, T., Spielberger, J., Huang, L. A., & Kakuyama-Villaber, R. Community Parenting Support Saturation Pilot Evaluation: Final Report. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. (2024).

Greenwood, Charles R., Tracy Bradfield, Ruth Kaminski, Maura Linas, Judith J. Carta, and Donna Nylander. "The response to intervention (RTI) approach in early childhood." Focus on Exceptional Children 43, no. 9 (2011): 1-22.

Gao, Jie, Clare Brooks, Yuwei Xu, and Eleanor Kitto. "What Makes an Effective Early Childhood Parenting Program: a Systematic Review of Reviews and Meta analyses." (2020)

Havighurst, Sophie S., Katherine R. Wilson, Ann E. Harley, and Margot R. Prior. "Tuning in to kids: an emotion-focused parenting program—initial findings from a community trial." Journal of Community Psychology 37, no. 8 (2009):1012.

Morawska, Alina, Cassandra K. Dittman, and Julie C. Rusby. "Promoting self-regulation in young children: The role of parenting interventions." Clinical child and family psychology review 22 (2019): 43-51.

Pandey, Anuja, Daniel Hale, Shikta Das, Anne-Lise Goddings, Sarah-Jayne Blakemore, and Russell M. Viner. "Effectiveness of universal self-regulation–based interventions in children and adolescents: A systematic review and meta-analysis." JAMA pediatrics 172, no. 6 (2018): 566-575.

Shepley, Collin, and Jennifer Grisham-Brown. "Multi-tiered systems of support for preschool-aged children: A review and meta-analysis." Early Childhood Research Quarterly 47 (2019): 296-308.

Stanton-Chapman, Tina L., Virginia L. Walker, Mary D. Voorhees, and Martha E. Snell. "The Evaluation of a Three-Tier Model of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports for Preschoolers in Head Start." Remedial and Special Education 37, no. 6 (August 2, 2016): 333–44.

illinois action for children

CELEBRATING 55 YEARS

Illinois Action For Children
4753 North Broadway
Chicago, Illinois 60640

partnerplanact@actforchildren.org
www.partnerplanact.org