

St. Louis Regional Early Childhood Plan

STRATEGIC FOCUS »

To assure that all children are ready to succeed in kindergarten and beyond

GOAL 1 »

Improve racial equity and reduce disparities across health and early education domains

STRATEGIES:

- Foster healthy development and resiliency in young children
- Promote cultural competency and trauma-informed practice that includes reducing Pre-K expulsions
- Increase the number of children who live in safe, stable and supportive families who have the resources to support early childhood development

GOAL 2 »

Create a system of early care and education as evidenced by shared goals, deliberate and clear communication, coordinated efforts and adequate resources

STRATEGIES:

- Improve the quality of early childhood programs in the region
- Expand access to early childhood programs
- Establish an early childhood data system that informs system-building efforts and measures progress in achieving goals

GOAL 3 »

Increase the participation of all key stakeholders including parents, service providers, policy makers and the business community

STRATEGIES:

- Build public will to develop public-private partnerships that assure every child has a healthy beginning and quality learning experiences from birth
- Ensure that families and communities prepare children for a smooth transition from early childhood programs to kindergarten
- Improve the literacy skills of young children



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GOAL 1»

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GOAL 2»

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GOAL 3»

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GOAL 1 Strategy: Foster healthy development and resiliency in young children

- Reduce infant mortality
- Promote efforts to assure that every child and pregnant woman has health insurance
- Ensure that all children have a medical home that integrates mental and physical health
- Increase the number of children who receive developmental screenings, including social-emotional screenings
- Develop and implement a referral protocol so children with identified mental health concerns receive needed treatment
- Use data collection to improve services to children using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire Enterprise System

GOAL 1 Strategy: Promote cultural competency and promote trauma-informed practice that includes reducing Pre-K expulsions

- Increase both parents' and providers' knowledge of CLAS (Culturally And Linguistically Appropriate Standards)
- Provide training to early care providers regarding trauma, toxic stress and trauma-informed responses to children's behavior
- Promote school/center policy that provides options other than suspension or expulsion of young children who show challenging behaviors

GOAL 1 Strategy: Increase the number of children who live in safe, stable and supportive families who have the resources to support early childhood development

- Develop the capacity of early education providers to engage in family support
- Increase the number of families who benefit from home visitation programs
- Increase the number of parents who understand child development milestones
- Support efforts to assure that families have adequate resources to care for their children (e.g., an earned income tax credit, child development accounts, living wages)

GOAL 2 Strategy: Improve the quality of early childhood programs in the region

- Collect systematic data that informs efforts and measures outputs and outcomes
- Improve the ability to improve and reward high-quality programs through a pilot Early Childhood Quality Rating and Improvement System
- Increase reimbursement rates for child care subsidies to enable providers to train and retain quality staff and implement quality programming
- Strengthen the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership program
- Integrate Educare resources with other community efforts to improve the quality of family care providers
- Promote inclusion in early childhood programs

GOAL 2 Strategy: Expand access to early childhood programs

- Increase financial support (subsidies) that allow parents with low incomes to access quality programs
- Expand eligibility guidelines to all low-income parents to access subsidies on a sliding scale
- Establish a universal preschool program that builds on public/private partnerships
- Build the capacity of existing providers to provide high quality early childhood education through partnerships and shared services

GOAL 2 Strategy: Establish an early childhood data system that informs system-building efforts and measures progress in achieving goals

- Collect baseline data related to elements of the plan
- Track key indicators of early childhood well-being on an on-going basis
- Establish a system of shared measurement to assess early childhood outcomes
- Develop a shared communication plan to share learnings and modify efforts as data indicate

GOAL 3 Strategy: Build public will to develop public-private partnerships that assure every child has a healthy beginning and quality learning experiences from birth

- Develop a strategic communication plan to educate the business community and thought leaders about the importance of children's early years
- Develop a shared advocacy agenda
- Develop sustainable funding to support a quality early education system in the St. Louis Region

GOAL 3 Strategy: Ensure that families and communities prepare children for a smooth transition from early childhood programs to kindergarten

- Create a common, shared understanding of kindergarten readiness among early care providers, parents and schools
- Promote communication among early learning and kindergarten programs, when possible, to support children and families as the transition is made
- Identify and implement the use of a shared tool to assess kindergarten readiness
- Create models of positive communication between early care providers and parents, as well as between schools and parents

GOAL 3 Strategy: Improve the literacy skills of young children

- Improve literacy by raising public awareness about the joy and importance of literacy-related activities
- Support and coordinate a series of community events that provide books and resources to families and children