

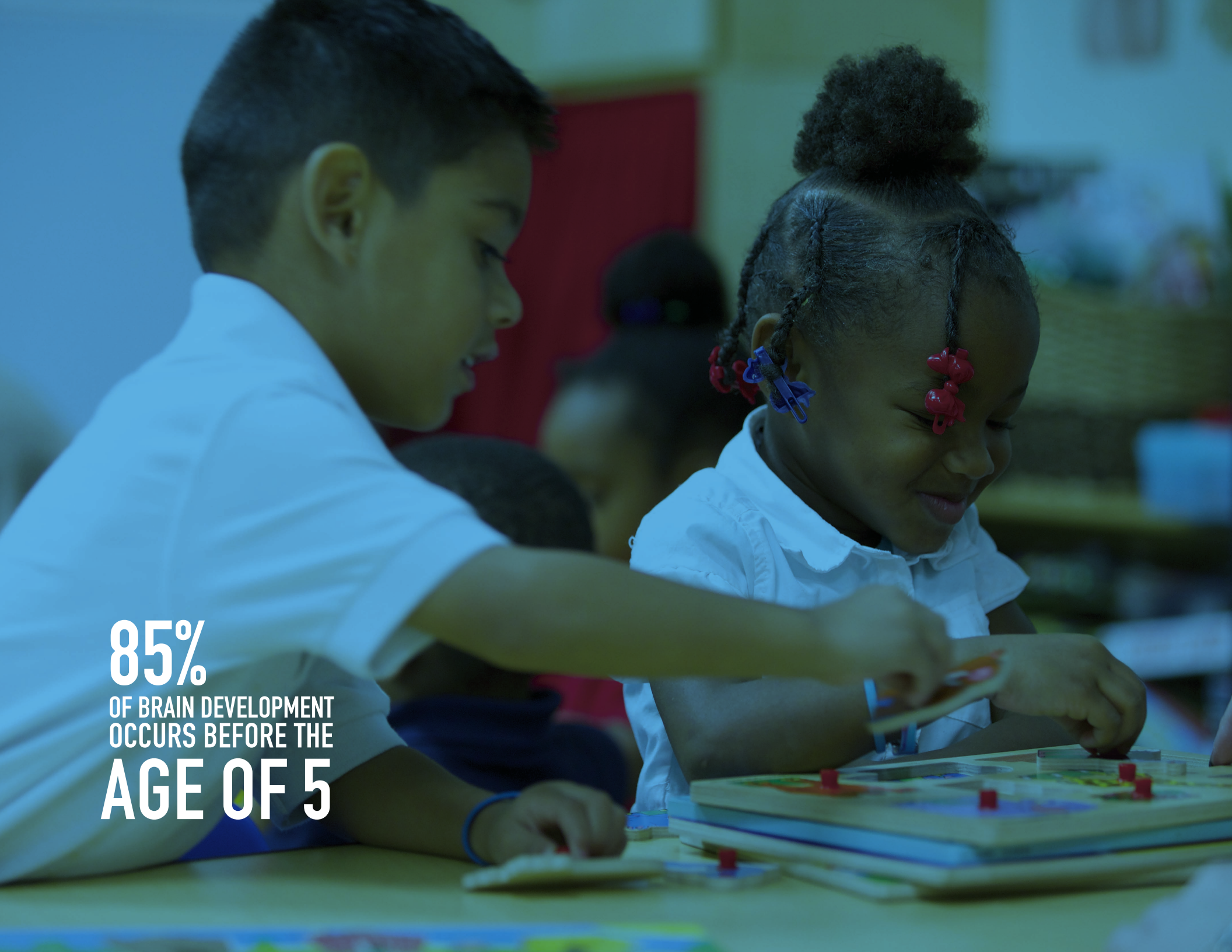


GROWING YOUNG MINDS. BUILDING FUTURES.

Transforming Vision into Action 2017



EARLY LEARNING
— ALLIANCE —



85%
OF BRAIN DEVELOPMENT
OCCURS BEFORE THE
AGE OF 5

The Early Learning Alliance: A System for Change

Improving learning in the early years is a difficult, complex and extremely urgent challenge. To meet that challenge, a wide range of nonprofit organizations, businesses, educators and government leaders in Tarrant County are working together through the Early Learning Alliance (ELA).

Alliance members have a shared commitment: to develop and sustain a coordinated, aligned and results-oriented system of services that promotes early learning for young children. As a result, children in Tarrant County will achieve continuing success – in school and in life.

The ELA is unique among coalitions in that members sign a letter of commitment and pay dues to demonstrate their individual and organizational commitment to the collaborative.

Another unique aspect of ELA is that it operates across multiple school district boundaries. Families and children today are mobile, and early learning doesn't neatly fit within a school district boundary. Instead, an Alliance of organizations can work to "follow the child" and prepare him or her for kindergarten regardless of the future elementary school.

Every ELA member has an equal voice for moving the work forward. Representatives of partner organizations participate in frequent, outcome-focused discussions that encourage innovation and accountability. Members recognize that, through ELA, each organization has a better chance of achieving not only its own mission but also having a broader community reach.

Combined, Alliance members possess vast expertise and experience in a wide range of disciplines, from education to health care to economic development. Through ELA, all of these resources are being harnessed and directed toward building a strong system of early learning and development for children.

"While there is great work being done in various regards to impact education, we must do more. It's no secret that there remains a great need in our area and in our nation to have great public education. But, we must do more to ensure that no child's zip code determines their future success in life. For these reasons, we are working closely with the Early Learning Alliance to improve quality early learning in Fort Worth."

Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price

ELA is committed to shared outcomes and key indicators to track progress and identify disparities.





A 10-Year Movement to Ensure that All Tarrant County Children are Ready for Kindergarten

VISION

A community united to provide a strong start for all children

MISSION

Community collaboration working to ensure all children have the foundation they need to succeed in school and in life



VALUES

Equity in Child Well-Being: ELA believes that race, ethnicity, income and gender impact opportunities for children to succeed, and we must work to eliminate disparities that undermine child well-being.

Relationships: ELA believes that positive relationships among organizations, as well as people, matter in making systems work better for the people they serve.

Inclusion: ELA believes that all stakeholders in early childhood education, including parents, should have a voice in developing the policies and practices that influence healthy growth and development.

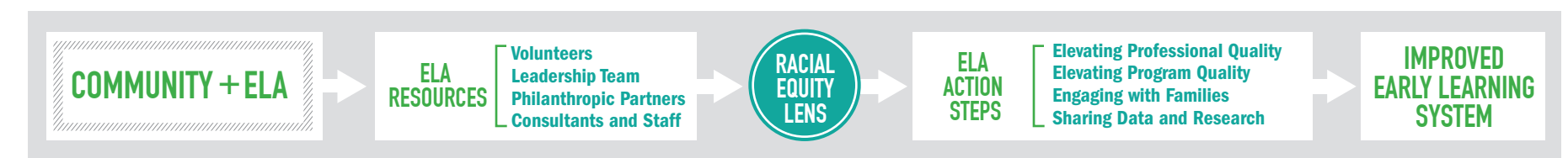
Collective Effort: ELA believes that only by aligning our work can we achieve significant, measurable change.

Communication: ELA believes that open, transparent and frequent communication is essential to maintaining trusting relationships.

“The city of Fort Worth and its partners have effectively galvanized the community to take action to improve the lives of Fort Worth’s youngest children. The Early Learning Alliance serves as a model for how community leaders can build a strong coalition to improve early care and education quality and access, support educators and engage all families so that every Fort Worth child can succeed and thrive.”

Dr. Tonja Rucker
National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education and Families

ELA is focused on creating an early learning system with equity for all children.



50 ORGANIZATIONS JOINING FORCES IN ELA

\$250M ESTIMATED MEMBER ORGANIZATION BUDGETS ALIGNED THROUGH THE SHARED FOCUS OF ELA

\$240K IN VOLUNTEER HOURS

\$107,660 IN MEMBER DUES TO CREATE SYSTEMIC CHANGE

\$473,400 IN PRIVATE FUNDS TO FURTHER ELA GOALS BY THE ALLIANCE AND PARTNERS

Early Learning Alliance Milestones

Through a shared commitment to ensuring success for all Tarrant County children, the Early Learning Alliance promotes positive changes in the early learning system. Here are some of the Alliance's most significant milestones and achievements.



2013

Fort Worth chosen by National League of Cities to be one of six cities for nationwide initiative - Educational Alignment for Young Children (EAYC) - to improve educational outcomes for children 0-8

EAYC adopts priorities:

- Family engagement
- Professional development to improve quality
- Creating system to collect and share data

2014

50 organizations join with EAYC and adopt A Plan for the Next 1,000 Days

The North Texas Community Foundation aligns "toolbox" funding with EAYC goals and awards \$120,000 to EAYC partner organizations

EAYC convenes statewide summit of 8 largest cities: the North Texas Community Foundation (NTCF) kicks off with panel of national experts including Dr. James Heckman and Dr. Neal Halfon

2015

NTCF invests \$246,400 in EAYC and its partner organizations

EAYC partners launch "Raising of Fort Worth" to extend message about importance of committing to early learning to additional sectors

EAYC awarded Outstanding Child Care Partner for 2015 by Workforce Solutions of Tarrant County

28 members pledge support to EAYC with \$60,550 in dues and contribute in-kind resources to accelerate systems change

2016

Fort Worth City Council endorses EAYC's Next 1,000 Days Plan and adds early learning as top 3 public policy priority

EAYC rebranded as the Early Learning Alliance

ELA recognized as a "Bright Spot" by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Network of Opportunity for Child Well-Being

ELA selected by NTCF members as single organization to receive special grant

2017

ELA adopts Results-Based Accountability for organizations to measure impact achieved together and communicate outcomes

Private foundations provide over \$160,000 to support the work of ELA

ELA hosts training on racial equity from National League of Cities

ELA leads the state in launching a financially supported early childhood career pathway and initiative to elevate early childhood program quality through coordinated mentoring and coaching in Tarrant County

The Key to Success: Kindergarten Readiness

In Tarrant County, too many children arrive at kindergarten without the skills they need, and by third grade are performing below their grade level. As a result, too many children fall behind academically and never catch up.

ELA unites early education and care providers in Tarrant County through integrated initiatives that accelerate the kindergarten readiness of all children, especially those at risk for academic underachievement.

The Alliance works across the community with adults – including teachers, caregivers, professionals and practitioners – to increase the quality of early learning.

ELA enhances the quality of early education by offering educational opportunities to teaching professionals and creating better learning programs for children.



“In order to have a college- and career-ready high school graduate, you must have a kindergarten-ready preschooler. The Early Learning Alliance is focusing our community so that every child is ready for school by kindergarten and is reading and solving math problems on grade level by third grade. Our partnership with ELA will build a foundation for our children’s success in the early years and throughout their lives.”

Dr. Kent P. Scribner
Fort Worth ISD Superintendent

ELA recognizes the role that race, ethnicity, income and gender can play in early childhood success, and seeks to create equitable opportunities for every child in Tarrant County.

Four Ways ELA is Taking Action to Increase Kindergarten Readiness



Elevating Early Childhood Professional Quality

STRATEGY A Professional Development Registry Campaign

Recruit, educate and empower early education providers through the Tarrant County Registry Campaign

**STRATEGY B
Career Pathway**
Develop stackable trainings and credit-bearing professional development opportunities for early education professionals to progress on a career pathway

**STRATEGY C
Instructional Quality Initiative**
Roll out a public-private partnership with local school districts, charter schools, nonprofits and researchers to improve the quality of classroom instruction, mentoring and coaching, using the CLASS assessment tool



Elevating Early Childhood Program Quality

**STRATEGY A
Texas Rising Star**
Increase the number of early care and education programs in the Texas Rising Star (TRS) system and move current TRS programs into higher ratings

**STRATEGY B
Pre-K and Kindergarten Entry Assessment Tools**
Identify an approach, or approaches, for programs to use and coordinate on common Pre-K and Kindergarten assessment tools

**STRATEGY C
Early Childhood Data System**
Assist early learning programs and inform parents on the benefits of the Texas Early Childhood Data System



Engaging with Families

**STRATEGY A
Infant and Toddler Developmental Screening Tool**
Identify an approach, or approaches, for families and programs to use/coordinate on a common Developmental Screening Tool for children aged 0-4

**STRATEGY B
Family Forums**
Create/align local parent groups to bring families’ voices forward

**STRATEGY C
Improve Organizational Processes for Family Engagement**
Develop organizational processes to provide better family engagement and community coordination



Sharing Data and Research

**STRATEGY A
Results-Based Accountability**
Create a shared data platform for community tracking and reporting on shared outcomes

**STRATEGY B
Early Development Instrument**
Present EDI results to community stakeholders and develop action plans for collective impact

**STRATEGY C
Research Roundtables**
Convene roundtables for practitioners, researchers, funders and policymakers to learn about critical sector and policy issues



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
CAN INCREASE BY **21%**

WHEN PRACTITIONERS RECEIVE QUALITY
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES,
SUCH AS COACHING¹

THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
REGISTRY CAMPAIGN

WILL HELP EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS FOLLOW
A CAREER PATHWAY AND INCREASE THE NUMBER OF
EDUCATORS WHO RECEIVE QUALITY COACHING AND MENTORING

How ELA is Elevating the Quality of Early Childhood Professionals

Assessing the Challenge

Children and their families need committed, well-prepared educational professionals.

However, early childhood professionals need more opportunities for ongoing learning – not only to increase their capacity to educate children, but to boost their careers as educators. Quality professional development for practitioners is a key to improving student outcomes. In fact, student achievement soars when their teachers receive an average of 49 hours of professional development a year.¹

Addressing the Challenge

ELA has identified the Tarrant County Professional Development Registry Campaign as a key strategy for attracting, supporting and retaining well-qualified professionals to work with young children along a career pathway. This campaign will launch in the fall of 2017.

Building Public-Private Partnership

Private foundations donated \$42,000 locally to draw down over \$75,000 in additional federal funds for scholarships and bonuses for early childhood staff moving up the career pathway for 2017-18.



“[Professional development] makes me more excited and motivated to incorporate new techniques in my classroom. It helps me to use skills in collaboration with the ideas presented. As a young teacher, I am learning more about little minds and how they develop.”

Teacher who participated in professional development at Camp Fire First Texas



¹Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley. (2007). Reviewing the evidence on how teacher professional development affects student achievement. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southwest/pdf/rel_2007033_sum.pdf.

How ELA is Elevating Early Childhood Program Quality

Assessing the Challenge

Quality interactions between adults and children are fundamental for strong child outcomes. Adopting proven practices in early childhood programs will ensure that more children have experiences that set them on a path for kindergarten readiness.

Addressing the Challenge

In 2016 and 2017, ELA partners identified a coordinated strategy for increasing the effectiveness of early education programs in Tarrant County through the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). ELA strives to strengthen classroom instruction for children ages 0-5 through coordinated use of the CLASS, an evidence-based assessment tool. High CLASS scores are strongly correlated with children's school readiness. Going forward, maps and data snapshots of CLASS results will point to bright spots of success and highlight areas of greater need.

Working Toward Policy Changes

Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County has adjusted its policies to promote children's access to higher quality of care by offering incentives to both the supply and demand sides of the child care subsidy system. Parents now pay a lower fee when they choose quality care, and providers get a higher reimbursement rate when they meet higher standards. As a result, more child care programs are striving to reach higher quality benchmarks.



"The Texas Rising Star (TRS) program has helped us set higher standards for our center, and with the help of TRS we are considered one of the top early learning centers in Arlington. TRS trainings/coaching have given my staff the necessary skills to increase the development of our children."

Josie Villarreal
Director/Owner

USING A COMMON METRIC FOR QUALITY ACROSS PROGRAMS FOR AGES 0-5

WILL ELEVATE CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION IN TARRANT COUNTY – REGARDLESS OF THE LOCATION OR TYPE OF PROGRAM

TARRANT COUNTY TEXAS RISING STAR (TRS) PROGRAM
HAS INCREASED THE NUMBER OF QUALITY FACILITIES WITHIN THE COUNTY BY 35%
WITHIN A ONE-YEAR TIMEFRAME

How ELA is Engaging with Families

Assessing the Challenge

When all the adults in a child's life – both at home and in school – work together to co-create the best possible learning environment, the synergy can make an enormous difference. Close collaborative relationships between all the adults in a child's life lead to better child outcomes.² Families are fundamental for supporting the achievement of their children, but too often families are not brought into full partnership.

Addressing the Challenge

ELA encourages shared responsibility among families, schools and communities to create a culture where families are leaders in the early learning and development of their children.

Proving the Concept

In 2016, a community-based approach in Stop Six – conducted by the University of North Texas Health Science Center, AB Christian Learning Center and The Parenting Center, working closely with the FWISD Historic Stop Six Initiative – determined what it will take to bring parents into full partnership through “Transformative Parent Engagement.” ELA will now extend this locally adapted approach to additional partner organizations.



“I appreciate the family values the teachers at Sunrise instill into everyday activities. My daughter was also very well prepared for public pre-K and kindergarten after attending here – she excelled at every lesson.”

Sunrise Early Learning and Development Center Parent

² A New Wave of Evidence - The impact of school, family and community connections on student achievement; National Center for Family and Community Connections. c. 2002, Anne Henderson, Karen Mapp

THIS YEAR, ELA WILL LAUNCH
FAMILY FORUMS

TO INCORPORATE FAMILY VOICES INTO OUR WORK

**350 PARENTS
AND 35 ORGANIZATIONS IN
STOP SIX** WERE TRAINED IN
LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP
FORMATION IN 2016

How ELA is Using Data to Inform Action

Assessing the Challenge

Our community has lacked an organized, standard process for measuring the effectiveness of early learning in Tarrant County. Programs, families, funders and community leaders have not had the data they need. ELA has led the way in making data sharing a reality.



TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN HAVE THE SKILLS THEY NEED

TO BE SUCCESSFUL, WE NEED A SYSTEM FOR SHARING INFORMATION WITH PARENTS AND PROVIDERS TO MAKE COURSE CORRECTIONS

Addressing the Challenge

ELA has adopted **Results-Based Accountability** to measure results and indicators of success. These benchmarks will be the basis for communicating with the community and identifying what strategies are needed to reach key goals.

Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County conducted the first analysis in Texas of the cost of quality child care. Its findings are informing planning and policy development at regional and state levels.

FWISD administered the Early Development Instrument to 1200 kindergarten children in nine high-need neighborhoods. Community snapshots of children's health, development and school readiness will inform planning for each neighborhood.

Cook Children's Institute for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment mapped risk factors to children across Fort Worth. When combined with ELA's maps of early learning resources, a picture of areas with the highest needs emerges.

"ELA partners are excited, ready, willing and able to move forward with the Results-Based Accountability (RBA) decision-making process. With this implementation, and the use of the Clear Impact Score Card, we will be better able to share data around the work we do with children and families. More importantly, the RBA process will enable us to move quickly from talking about data to taking action and producing measurable change in the Tarrant County community."

Anne Ware
Research Solutions

Join the Early Learning Alliance

The strength of the Early Learning Alliance lies in the wide variety of organizations and individuals who are committed to building a strong system of early learning and development for children. We believe we can do better. If you're interested in joining this dynamic, ongoing effort, contact ELA today. You can participate in exciting initiatives to grow young minds and build a brighter future for Tarrant County.

Member Benefits

- Extend reach and impact on system-level change
- Build collaborative solutions with peer executives from other agencies and nonprofits
- Strengthen fund development for shared initiatives and programs
- Collect and share data
- Participate in Results-Based Accountability to track both organizational and community-level results
- Increase visibility and recognition
- Share knowledge and expertise through joint learning
- Connect to similar initiatives in Texas and nationally

To learn more about membership in ELA, call **817-413-4456** or send an email to **ELA@EarlyLearningNTX.org**

"As a nonprofit executive, the day is over when capturing an individual organization's programmatic impact is enough. We have to make time and room to re-organize efforts and measure our impact across organizational boundaries. It's time to accelerate our coordinated efforts."

Kara Waddell
CEO, Child Care Associates

It Takes a Village—Thank You!

DUES-PAYING MEMBERS

AB Christian Learning Center

ACH Child and Family Services

Ann Rice

AWare Research Solutions

AVANCE Dallas

Botanical Research Institute
of Texas

Camp Fire First Texas

Center for Transforming Lives

Child Care Associates

Child Study Center

Children At Risk

Clayton YES!

Colleen Allen

Connie Presley

Cook Children’s Center for the
Prevention of Child Maltreatment

ECI – MHMR of Tarrant County

Educational First Steps

First3Years

Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce

Fort Worth Library

Fort Worth Independent
School District
Parents as Teachers

Kathy Livingston

Lena Pope

Literacy United

Momentous Institute

Nicole Devlin Stroud

North Texas
Community Foundation

Pablo Calderon

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Workforce Solutions
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Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County

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“We support ELA because they take a thoughtful, strategic approach to creating systemic change in early education. ELA members are willing to put in the hard work necessary for cross-sector collaboration. We believe ELA is a driving force in the effort to ensure that Tarrant County children are ready for kindergarten.”

Jeremy Smith

Executive Director, Rainwater Charitable Foundation



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