Illinois’ Early Childhood Innovation Zones: Early Wins & Lessons Learned So Far

Part 1 of 3: Building a Pipeline
Enrolling More Very High Need Children in High Quality Early Learning and Development Programs Through Targeted Parent and Cross-Sector Outreach
Agenda

• Innovation Zone Overview
• Stories from the Innovation Zones
  – North Lawndale
  – Pilsen & Little Village
  – Cicero
• Response from Office of Early Childhood Development
• Q & A
• Closing
All participants will be muted.

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Test 4
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Innovation Zone Overview

Leah Pouw,
Director of Program Innovation
Illinois Action for Children
North Lawndale Innovation Zone

Aminah Wyatt-Jones
North Lawndale
Program Development Manager
Illinois Action for Children
North Lawndale Community
North Lawndale Innovation Zone:
Priority Populations

- Homeless children
- Children of teen parents
- Children in the DCFS system including foster children
- Children with disabilities
- Children in poverty or deep poverty
- Children in home-based child care who need supplemental early learning
North Lawndale Innovation Zone: Hypothesis

• Available slots are under-enrolled by highest need populations

• 49% of 3-4 year olds not connected to early learning programs
  – Spring enrollment doesn’t make sense to families
  – Unaware of menu of eligible options
  – No enrollment sites in community
  – High transience
North Lawndale Innovation Zone: Experiments

• Build a connecting “pipeline”
• Targeted outreach
• Parent engagement innovations
• Connect “family, friend and neighbor” care to formal early learning programs
North Lawndale Innovation Zone: Pipeline (Before)

- WIC, TANF
- Child welfare system
- Health and hospitals
- Early childhood system
- Teen parent programs
- Homeless shelters

Disconnected systems
- Some sharing, based on relationships
- Silos, no time or limited resources to connect
- Territorial, afraid to share waiting lists
Pipeline of Partners

North Lawndale Innovation Zone team (neutral referral entity)

- St. Anthony Hospital
- TRIUMPH/Am Able (Mental Health Agency)
- Lena Washington Homeless Shelter/Primos
- Douglas Library
- UCAN
- Lawndale Christian Health Center
- CPS Home Visiting agencies (west-side of Chicago)

Early Learning Programs (preschool/child care and home visiting)

Targeted Outreach Events in North Lawndale
Referral Flow Chart

North Lawndale Innovation Zone Referral Flow Chart

Partner Agencies meet family w/ child 0-5 years old

Is family ready to enroll in a program?

YES

Discover what is hard & work with family to make enrollment easier

NO

Assess why the family is not ready & invite to Family Engagement & early learning opportunities

Complete referral form & give/email it to NLIZ Team

NLIZ Team inserts information into database

Was the family reached?

YES

NLIZ Team calls family

Child is 0-2 years old

Home Visiting

Child is 3-5 years old

Pre-School

Child is 0-5 years old

Childcare

NLIZ Team refers family to appropriate program

If referral is not completed, NLIZ Team will call 3x & document why referral cannot be fulfilled.
North Lawndale Innovation Zone: Accomplishments

• Providers sharing slot information with one another
• Referral partnership with Lawndale Christian Health Center
• Over 200 priority children enrolled in early learning programs (home visiting & preschool)
• 100% enrollment in all CPS early childhood slots in North Lawndale
North Lawndale Innovation Zone: Lesson Learned So Far

• Relationship building is key!
• Integrate early learning into other community efforts
• Make early learning messaging simple and to the point
• Ideas are easy, implementation...
• Find out what the data REALLY means by listening to parents in the community
Pilsen & Little Village
Innovation Zone

Dr. Caridad Rositas-Sheftel
Early Childhood Project Manager
Catholic Charities
Pilsen & Little Village Innovation Zone: Priority Populations

• Young children with cultural and language isolation are under-represented in early learning programs

• Children ages birth – 5 years that are living at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level, including children with undocumented parents.
Pilsen & Little Village
Innovation Zone: Goals

• Increase capacity of collaboration efforts
• Facilitate outreach and enrollment
• Build a pipeline of partners
Pilsen & Little Village Innovation Zone: Accomplishments

• The creation of a shared outreach and enrollment process:
  – Parent ambassadors
  – Shared database
  – Creation of common tools

• Small win: Eleven children are now enrolled in high quality learning programs as a result.
Pilsen & Little Village Innovation Zone: Strategy Adaptations

- Capacity to translate documents to Spanish
- Identify alternative ways to contact families
- Identify alternative ways to communicate as a core team
- Create safe space for peer support
- Reprioritize work plan activities
Pilsen & Little Village Innovation Zone: Lessons Learned So Far

• Families are very discouraged to enroll children due to Child Care Assistance Program changes
• Time to advocate!
Cicero Innovation Zone

Nancy Caban-Vazquez
Primeros Pasos Program Coordinator
Family Focus - Nuestra Familia
Cicero Innovation Zone: Priority Populations

- Homeless children
- Children in poverty and deep poverty
- Children of teen parents
- Children in home-based child care
- Children in DCFS System
- Linguistically isolated children
Cicero Innovation Zone: Goals

• Quality improvement in early learning programs
• Serve more children from Priority Populations
• Engage families across the community
• Develop networks of social and health services
Cicero Innovation Zone: Accomplishments

• Educate, assist, and support families

• Community outreach done by parent ambassadors using data
Cicero Innovation Zone: Strategy Adaptations

• Change outreach strategy
• Use of community newspaper
• Meet families where they are
Cicero Innovation Zone: Lessons Learned So Far

• Programs are full or have waitlists
• Programs that have openings are not accessible because of transportation
• Communication between programs, schools and parents is a challenge
Response from the Office of Early Childhood Development

Joanna Su,
Community Systems Policy Director
Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development
Q & A

Renee Tetrick,
Program Innovation Analyst
Illinois Action for Children
For more information:

• Today’s recording will be posted on Partner Plan Act Website www.partnerplanact.org/webinars

• Register for upcoming webinars on Innovation Zones:
  – December 10, 2015: Developmental Screening: Increasing awareness, access and use of early intervention services
  – January 14, 2015: Quality: Strategies for Improving Early Childhood Programs
  – www.partnerplanact.org/webinars

• Additional questions? Please send an email to partnerplanact@partnerplanact.org