Finding and Enrolling Highest Need Children in Early Childhood Programs

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All participants will be muted.

Type your question here, then hit “send”

Technical issues?
Type your issue in the chat box or send an email to Mercedes Gonzalez mercedes.gonzalez@actforchildren.org
Who are you?

1. Early Childhood Provider
2. Collaboration leader
3. Cross-sector partner (health, social services, etc.)
4. State leader
5. Other
Where are you from?

1. Southern Region
2. Central Region
3. Northern Region
4. Cook County
What questions would you like us to answer? Please type these in the comment box.
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How might we foster relationships with partners in our community to build systems that support successful enrollment of children from priority populations in high quality early care and education programs?
Enrolling more children from priority populations

- Children and families who experience or are:
  - Homeless
  - Teen parents
  - Child welfare system (foster care/intact family)
  - Developmental delays or disabilities
  - Poverty and deep poverty
  - Linguistically isolated, new immigrant, refugee
Common obstacles to enrolling children from priority populations

- What obstacles may prevent programs from reaching enrollment goals?
  - Transportation
  - Families are not aware of information
  - Work schedules
  - Communication barriers, language, literacy, culture
  - Basic needs of families need to be met first
  - Systems are not aligned
A traditional community system

- Disconnected systems.
- Some sharing, based on relationships.
- Silos, no time, limited resources.
- Territorial, afraid to share waiting lists and information.

Example:
- Schools, EI
- Teen parent programs
- Child welfare system
- Homeless shelters
- WIC, TANF
- Health and hospitals

Courtesy of the North Lawndale Innovation Zone
A better, more effective community system

- Cross-training.
- Shared voice across organizations.
- Sharing information and resources.
- Enrollment, documentation.
- Facilitate referrals from multiple organizations.
North Lawndale Community Connect

Agency conducting referral: 

Agency Contact: 

Email Address: 

Name: 

Address: 

Email Address: 

Name of Child(ren): 

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

ASHF Early Education & Home Visiting Program

ASHF Nurse provides developmental screening

ASHF Nurse coordinates meeting with Illinois Action for Children

Illinois Action for Children provides home child care enrollment

ASHF's homeless children receive expedited application service

ASHF nurse serves as ASHF POC for Home Visitors

As assessed, Illinois Action for Children assigns Home Visitor

Early Education and Home Visiting Program

Illinois Action for Children

Aspire, Transform, Sustain.
Strategies in action

- Direct strategies we have tried
  - Partnerships with refugee programs (Aurora), shelters (Aurora, North Lawndale), Early Intervention (Greater East St. Louis, Aurora), public housing (Elgin, South Suburbs, Altgeld-Riverdale), health clinics (North Lawndale, Elgin), elementary schools (Altgeld-Riverdale, Austin, Williamson)
  - Onsite applications at homeless shelters (North Lawndale), public housing (Elgin), Mexican Consulate (Pilsen-Little Village)
Steps for successful planning

What feels feasible?

What might concern you?
"Pipeline" to facilitate enrollment

Who serves children from priority populations?

- Make a list
- Start with those you know very well

Set up a meeting with the director

- Ask if they would join you for an experiment
- Use a script
- Give them a script
- Make it easy

Create infrastructure to process referrals

- Create a visual map
- “Who does what how often using what tools?”
- Make protocols clear
- Check in weekly
Has more touch points!

An effective Enrollment Pipeline...
The traditional approach is a lot of work for little reward.

The usual way to recruit families is to have conversations with individual families at information tables, community events, etc.

Sharing this information one-on-one, you may be at an event for several hours, talk to 20 families and end up with a single referral.

This is a “one degree” pipeline.
Make it MORE Effective: A Two Degree Pipeline

1 + 1 > 2

ONE CONVERSATION

DIRECT CONTACT
NURSE/SOFTAL WORKER/ETC.

MANY CONVERSATIONS

ME

DAD

MOM

MOM
Make it MOST effective: A Three Degree Pipeline
Reflection: Pipeline Partners

- Look at your list of possible partners
  - Who do we have relationships with now?
  - Who is a willing partner (motivated) now?
  - Are they referring families now? Why, why not?
  - Who is an easy partner to help us find families to connect to early learning now?
  - Do we have a partner who would be willing to partner with us to test a few ideas now?
How do I learn more?

Take action to build a pipeline

Based on its experience in 11 Early Childhood Innovation Zones, Illinois Action for Children believes that each community will need to develop a “community system” that includes health and social service providers. Building a committed pipeline of partners is the first step. To learn more about how to build an effective enrollment pipeline, download the PDF or view the presentation below.
Going deeper to connect your partner request to action

+ What feels feasible?

What might concern you?
STAGE

1 Awareness

During Awareness, community leaders will learn about how collaborating will be good for your community. Share information with your potential partner—including your vision for children in the community.

- “We are a cross-system, early childhood collaboration. Our goal is aligned with the state’s vision for all children to begin kindergarten, safe, healthy, ready to succeed and eager to learn.”

- “Would you like to join us in a small, easy experiment to try to enroll more children from Priority Populations in high quality early learning and development programs?”
STAGE

2  Consideration

If you hear phrases that suggest the individual *wants* to make referrals through your enrollment pipeline but they’re not sure *what is expected*, you need to FACILITATE—make it easier:

- Create and share a visual flow chart that displays the steps in the enrollment pipeline.
- Start very small. Try an experiment with one case worker or pediatrician for one month, track data and reconvene to plan and learn.
- Provide a card with three simple sentences they can use when talking to families with children from Priority Populations.
COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

STAGE

2 Consideration

If you hear language that suggests the partner finds the referral process easy to do and easy to remember, but shares a concern about being the only partner or that they are uncertain about the experiment, you need to LISTEN and SPARK their motivation:

- “Other medical professionals are joining communities of high need in this pilot. Would you like to hear about their experiences?”

- “Tell me more about your concerns?” Are there any you can address? Listen well and act on what you learn.

- “I’d like to introduce you to Ms. Jones from Homeless Shelter. She can share the results of our pilot. Working together, we were able to make a difference for the children and families in her shelter.”
STAGE

2 Consideration

If they share an eagerness to partner in the referral pipeline and feel it would be easy, but say they forget to make the referrals, you need to provide them with a WELL-TIMED REMINDER:

- Create a system to send them texts or Outlook calendar reminders.
- Suggest they create an easy-to-remember routine, such as “When you check developmental milestones, ask about early learning.”
- Set reminders for yourself to reconnect and check-in with your partners at least monthly.
The more responsive you are in addressing these three needs of your potential partner (i.e. helping them remember to make referrals, making it easy to make referrals, sparking their motivation to make referrals) the more likely they are to work with you.

- If they say yes, celebrate your first small win together.

- If they say no, it’s okay. It may not be the right time for this partnership. Do what you can do now. Who else can you engage?

- If they say yes, but are forgetting to make referrals, revisit Stage 2 (Consideration) and explore potential obstacles.
How do I learn more?

APPENDIX

UNDERSTANDING
BEHAVIOR
QUICK TIPS FOR REACHING
COMMUNITY PARTNERS

HOW CAN WE INCREASE A PARTNER’S
(OR POTENTIAL PARTNER’S) MOTIVATION TO WORK WITH US?

Motivation is difficult to change. It is unique to each individual. We can encourage partners/potential partners to work with us by asking our partners how they feel about working together and seeing where we can be responsive.

Emotions create habits. Keep it happy!

HOW CAN WE INCREASE A PARTNER’S/POTENTIAL PARTNER’S ABILITY TO WORK WITH US?

We can help make the partnership easier by sharing a clear vision, offering easy tools or helpful resources, and making the process really easy. We can also ask our partners what would help make it easier for them to partner with us on a collaborative outreach effort.

Help people do what they already want to do. Make it easy!

HOW CAN WE HELP A PARTNER/POTENTIAL PARTNER REMEMBER TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR ENROLLMENT PIPELINES?

To help partners remember when to participate in our collaborative outreach effort, send a reminder — both in advance of and at the activity dates. You can also add reminder connected to a partner’s goals. For example, “When I complete item 5, then I will turn in my business card of an early learner.”

Use a reminder that will keep them thinking about your specific partner at a time when they are ready to act.
What can we learn from each other?

- What obstacles do you think are preventing you from building a pipeline for referral and enrollment?
- What have you planned recently?
- What did you expect? What actually happened?
- What did you learn?
- What is your next step?
- How quickly will you go and see what you learn from that step?
How do I learn more?

Take action to improve your approach

Using a systems approach requires systems thinking. This easy-to-read Action Learning toolkit walks us through setting a vision, understanding data, planning and learning cycles. To learn more about the innovative process used in community systems, download the Action Learning toolkit or view the presentation below.
Questions?
Upcoming Events

- Register for any of the **4 caucuses throughout the state!** At each regional caucus, you'll learn about upcoming state and federal early childhood policies, including the status of:
  - Preschool expulsion legislation
  - Children’s Health Insurance Program
  - Child Care for Working Families Act and more!

- **Locations include:**
  - Mt. Vernon, IL – Tuesday, November 7, 2017 10 am – 1:30 pm
  - Springfield, IL – Wednesday, November 15, 2017 10 am – 1:30 pm
  - Schaumburg, IL – Thursday, December 7, 2017 10 am – 1:30 pm
  - Chicago, IL – Thursday, December 14, 2017 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm

- **Register for a policy caucus near you!** The content for each caucus will be the same – simply pick the one that works for you! Registration is **$15** to cover the cost of a meal.

- Register today [www.actforchildren.org/event](http://www.actforchildren.org/event)
Closing

On a scale of 1 to 5, how valuable was your participation in today’s webinar?

1. Not valuable
2. Slightly valuable
3. Moderately valuable
4. Valuable
5. Very valuable
Thank you!