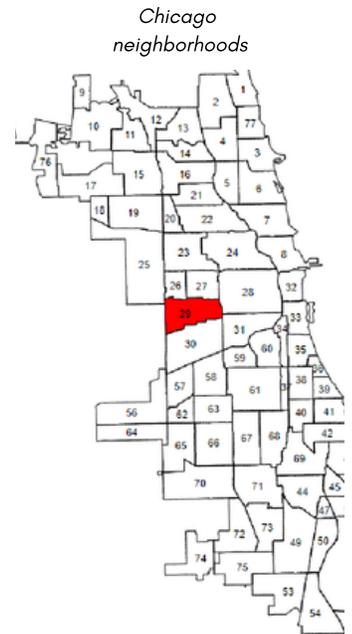




Community Parenting Support Saturation: North Lawndale

The Community Parenting Support Saturation Program was born out of a series of conversations between a small group of foundations about opportunities to develop strategies and interventions that effectively strengthen the way families engage with their children to ultimately improve their child’s outcome. They posed the question: *“Is it possible to significantly and measurably 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?”*

In 2019, Illinois Action for Children (IACF) was selected as the Lead Implementation Partner to provide strategic direction of the project and to support the pilot communities. The three communities, Aurora, North Lawndale, and Rockford, are part of this innovative effort to implement a wide array of parenting interventions locally to support parent’s skills and knowledge in parenting that ultimately leads to supporting their children’s growth, learning and readiness for kindergarten.



Project Vision and Outcome

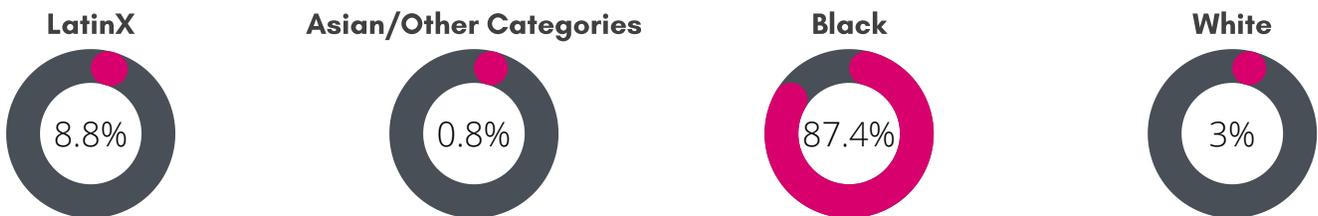
To ensure that parents are embraced and supported as the most important influences in their children’s early learning, and every child starts kindergarten thriving, ready to learn and excited about school.

Why North Lawndale, Chicago?

North Lawndale is a community in Chicago, located less than 3 miles from the loop, on the west side of Chicago. More than 3,500 children ages 0 to 5 years are growing up in North Lawndale. The racial/ethnic makeup of North Lawndale is:

“For decades, parents, caregivers, and community members have been tireless advocates for the children of North Lawndale. Our goal is to pair this care and energy with a fresh infusion of resources to give the children of North Lawndale what they deserve: the best early learning there is.”

—Sonja Crum Knight, VP, Programs and Impact, Carole Robertson Center for Learning



More than 40 percent of the community is living below the federal poverty line and 27.6 percent of families residing in North Lawndale do not have a high school diploma. A historic hub of industry and base for the civil rights movement, North Lawndale is a culturally and historically rich neighborhood that has faced a long history of social, racial, and economic segregation. Prolonged disinvestment has made a lasting negative impact on the availability and accessibility of community resources such as early childhood and early learning programs.



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Carole Robertson Center for Learning

In 2020, **Carole Robertson Center for Learning** was selected to launch the Ready for Kindergarten, Ready for Life initiative to advance the Community Parenting Support Saturation program. The Ready for Kindergarten, Ready for Life core team consists of community leaders from the Carole Robertson Center for Learning, Open Books, Holy Family Ministries, Sinai Chicago, and Illinois Action for Children (through a partnership with the North Lawndale Early Learning Collaboration).

Community Parenting Support Saturation Approach

Carole Robertson Center for Learning will be implementing a wide array of parenting interventions for families with young children. The parenting interventions and supports offered will allow families to identify and participate in the supports that best fit their need and interests.



»» Tier 1

- **Community Outreach & Learning Kits**—Raising public awareness of the importance of early childhood services and sharing educational materials through home-kits for families.
- **Ready4K**—Parents can sign up for text messages. Text messages are based on evidence-based family engagement curriculum and available in English, Spanish, or Arabic.
- **Community Hub**—A digital and pop-up community hub will help fill the gaps in resources for North Lawndale and create a space where any family can access resources that they may discover and need.

»» Tier 2

- **Circle of Security**—A research-based parent education program to support and strengthen secure parent-child relationships.
- **Ready Rosie**—An evidenced-based and evidenced-informed early education tool that helps families, schools, and communities across the nation deepen and scale their family engagement efforts. Leverages video modeling, family workshops, professional development opportunities, and mobile technology to build powerful partnerships between families and educators, resulting in Ready Families, Ready Educators, Ready Children.



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»» Tier 3

- Creating a recruitment and referral network to connect families to all the early childhood programs in the community; creating a Family Council to build parent voice and promote parent outreach

About the Carole Robertson Center for Learning

Founded in 1976, The Carole Robertson Center for Learning is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to “educating, enriching, and empowering children and families.” The Carole Robertson Center for Learning is named in memory of Carole Robertson, Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley, and Denise McNair – who were murdered in the 1963 bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. It was important to the families and youth who founded the Center in partnership with Maria Whelan, the first executive director, that the name of the organization reflect a commitment to social justice and equity. Mrs. Alpha A. Robertson gave permission to use the name of her late daughter Carole and the Robertson family remain honorary members of the Center’s Board of Directors. For the past four decades, the Carole Robertson Center for Learning has had the honor and responsibility of doing work in Carole’s name and in memory of the four girls.

The Center has grown to serve over 1000 children and youth, the largest concentration of which is out of our North Lawndale and South Lawndale locations. Programs serve children at every stage of development, from birth to age 17. Current programs include center-based and home-based early learning, preschool programming in community Charter schools, out of school time programming for youth through age 1, and an extensive partner network of Family Child Care and Center -based partners. The Center’s service to children and families is undergirded by extensive investment in family support and engagement, mental health, and health services

About Illinois Action for Children

Illinois Action for Children (IAFC) is a catalyst for organizing, developing, and supporting strong families and powerful communities where children matter most. We believe that lasting change comes only by empowering families and communities with knowledge leading to power; that institutions change only with resources and leadership; and that systems change only through the lever of informed power. Our work is therefore delivered in a series of concentric and interwoven circles of engagement, education, and empowerment, with children at the center of all we do.

The Community Parenting Support Saturation Program is generously funded by our philanthropic partners: CME Group, Crown Family Philanthropies, J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation, Illinois Children’s Healthcare Foundation, Irving Harris Foundation, Robert R. McCormick Foundation, and Steans Family Foundation.

Anticipated Impact

Through a community-wide effort with diverse partners, including families and other early childhood organizations, the project will provide families with young children the supports that they need to prepare their young children for kindergarten and life.

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