



**GARY
COMMUNITY
INVESTMENTS**

Working together
for Colorado's children



SCHOOL READINESS

Low-income children are prepared to enter kindergarten “ready to learn.”

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

Low-income children are thriving in their first year of life.

Low-income children enter kindergarten socially and emotionally prepared to learn.

Low-income children enter kindergarten physically healthy.

The early childhood provider system is a clearly defined, professionalized and well-capitalized “sector.”

RATIONALE

Early childhood is a crucial developmental period. Young children, from birth through age five, grow and develop in the context of their families and caregivers. Families often need extra support to build the strong relationships and environments that young children need to develop to their fullest potential. High-quality child care and preschool settings support cognitive, social and emotional and physical development in the early years so that children are ready for success in school. The early years set the foundation for long-term success in school, future earnings, and lifelong health. As a sector, early childhood draws from the best of brain and child development research, advances in understanding what matters in early childhood teaching, and analysis of economic return on investment, in order to promote approaches that set children on a healthy and successful trajectory.

AREAS OF FOCUS

To make progress toward our long-term School Readiness outcomes, we are focused on achieving the following short-term goals.

Early Childhood Quality Infrastructure: The early childhood sector has the capacity to deliver high-quality settings so that young children are ready for school.

Early Childhood Capitalization: The early childhood sector is capitalized to deliver programming to support children’s school readiness.

Supported and Supportive Families: Parents and caregivers are supported and have the knowledge and skills to promote their children’s healthy development and later success in school.

Early Childhood Social and Emotional Wellness: Young children enter kindergarten socially and emotionally prepared and ready to learn.



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Our current work to promote School Readiness includes the following strategies and activities:

STRATEGIES

Early Childhood Education Quality

Strategies include investing in infrastructure that will increase the number of high-quality early childhood education (ECE) settings improving the stability and professionalism of the ECE workforce and fostering data utilization to gauge quality and child outcomes. We are looking to support the quality improvement system to ensure high-quality settings for young children, including licensed and family, friend and neighbor care; addressing teacher recruitment, retention, and compensation; and increasing the use of data to inform practice and measure school readiness.

Early Childhood Capitalization

Strategies include investing in cost models for the ECE sector, addressing public sector financing gaps and barriers across early childhood, expanding private sector capital, and exploring innovative capitalization models. We are looking to remedy financing challenges in the early childhood sector; explore opportunities for preschool expansion; and seek opportunities for innovation.

Supported and Supportive Families

Strategies include investing in efforts that increase parents' knowledge of child development, improve parenting skills and facilitate the development of positive relationships, and promote resilience among families with young children. We believe providing supports for families will require a coordinated, multi-faceted approach that may include public awareness, home visiting and other services.

Early Childhood Social and Emotional Wellness

Strategies include growing the professional pipeline of individuals with a specialization in early childhood mental health through increased workforce training and development; increasing integrated behavioral health and primary care through the utilization of medical homes for comprehensive care; and broadening access to mental health consultation in early childhood settings.

FEATURED INVESTEES

The following are two organizations we have invested in as part of our School Readiness strategy. For a list of more recent investments, visit www.garycommunity.org/investments.



Early Milestones Colorado: Multi-phase project with the State of Colorado to address early childhood workforce issues.



Launch Together: Improving social, emotional and cognitive outcomes for children.

SCHOOL READINESS • YOUTH SUCCESS • FINANCIAL SECURITY • COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

