



GARY
COMMUNITY
INVESTMENTS



10-19 YEAR 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.”

SCHOOL READINESS

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

Rationale

Young children, from birth through age five, grow and develop in the context of their families and caregivers. But not all families are equally equipped to provide the attention, support and positive environment that young children need to develop to their fullest potentials. When children’s early environments are lacking, inadequate or dangerous, their physical, social and emotional development, and potential to grow up healthy, is negatively impacted.

A disproportionate number of low-income children are growing up in highly stressful surroundings. Without amelioration, these children may not be “ready to learn” when they enter kindergarten, and, regardless of the efforts of teachers, they may often struggle to make up for those early deficits.

Strategies

Our strategies for improving outcomes for prenatal and young children focus on ensuring the parents-to-be are physically and emotionally ready to be the best parents possible. This includes raising awareness about the importance of prenatal care, and building parenting skills by providing support through home visitation, play and learn groups, and other targeted opportunities.

To ensure young children are socially and emotionally prepared to learn, our strategies include advancing efforts to

increase utilization of medical homes and comprehensive, integrated healthcare that is inclusive of mental and behavioral health; expanding the availability of early childhood centers and preschool coverage throughout low-income communities; and investing in the development of the early childhood field in Colorado, through a more coordinated and professionalized delivery system and ensuring that public policies and investments are increasingly targeted at early childhood efforts.