

Denver Birth to Eight Roadmap

Theory of Change Outline

We want all of Denver’s children to reach their developmental potential and succeed in school and life. Research affirms the centrality of literacy to future success—students who are reading at grade level by third grade are four times more likely to graduate from high school¹. We know that access to high-quality early learning experiences, both formal and informal, can set young learners on a pathway to academic success later in life by providing them with foundational skills and experiences. By starting early, we have greater opportunity to identify potential delays and gaps. Unfortunately, many of Denver’s children do not have equal access to these experiences. We endeavor to create a community-wide network that ensures all of Denver’s children have equitable access to the care and ongoing experiences that will allow them to thrive.

We know that the connections between a child’s environment, experiences and learning opportunities work together to impact a child’s developmental trajectory.

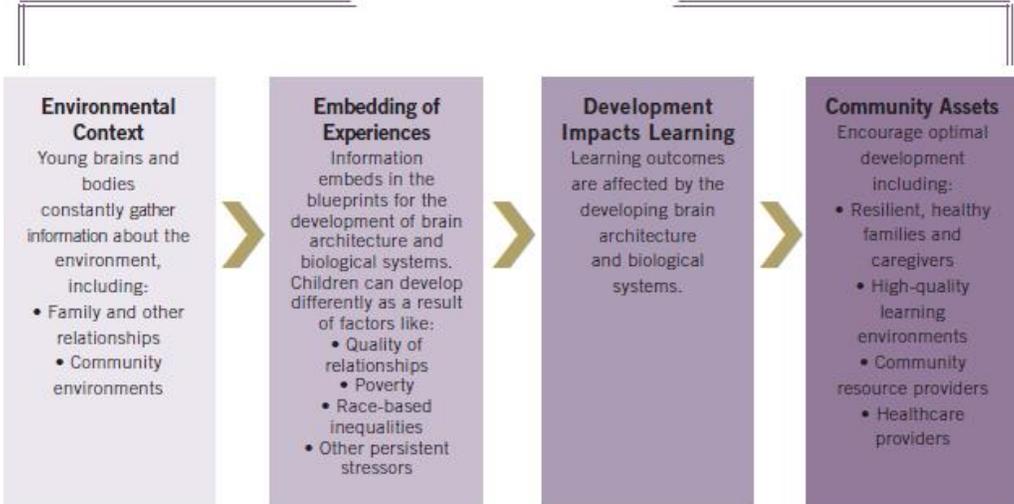


VISION

Families living in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty have the support needed to ensure their young children reach their developmental potential and succeed in school and in life, starting with early language and literacy.

PROBLEM

We want all of Denver’s children to reach their developmental potential and succeed in school and life.



¹ 1-The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2013) *Early Warning Confirmed: Executive Summary*. Baltimore, MD. <http://www.aecf.org/resources/early-warning-confirmed-executive-summary/>

Key Strategies and Methods:

The Birth to Eight Roadmap connects and builds upon existing community assets to support and empower families.

Shared Strategy

To effect change, the community designed an approach that works across these connections. The Birth to Eight Roadmap does not create a new set of programs. Rather, through a shared vision for change, the Roadmap **connects existing community assets** in order to: provide opportunities for collaboration; **partner with families to build on their strengths**; and **enhance the quality of early learning opportunities**. This in turn allows stakeholders to use resources in an efficient and effective manner, and to identify and fill gaps in programming and support services.

Birth to Eight Roadmap Strategies



- ✓ Promote consistency across settings by implementing tools, standards and approaches
- ✓ Implement shared and sustained leadership across services and programs
- ✓ Embrace data-driven continuous improvement

Connect Existing Community Assets

- Launch an “Early Opportunity System” to enable early screening and support
- Implement a birth to eight language and literacy strategy
- Create a network of resource hubs

Partner with Families

- Support neighborhood-based parent leadership
- Focus on ECE-K transitions through Countdown to Kindergarten
- Forge agreements between cultural institutions

Enhance Quality

- Increase and align professional learning and coaching
- Increase access to high-quality early education through alternative prekindergarten delivery methods



Rationale Behind the Roadmap Strategies:

- **Connect Existing Community Assets and Provide Opportunities to Collaborate:**
 - If we employ an enterprise approach, intentionally sharing expertise and coordinating services for families and children, organizations serving children and their families can tailor services and leverage cumulative supports to more effectively meet their needs.
 - If existing efforts adopt a shared vision and connect that vision to their goals, we can more effectively identify and address gaps, as well as make more efficient use of resources.
 - If we create regular opportunities to learn about and share existing efforts, we can leverage those efforts, enhance existing work, and identify ways to more effectively align our work to support children and families.
- **Partner with Families and Build on Their Strengths**
 - If families create positive early learning experiences for and with their young children, it will promote school readiness and later academic success for *all* of Denver's children.
 - If families living in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty can easily access trusted, high-quality resources, they will be more likely to use and benefit from them.
- **Enhance the Quality of Early Learning Opportunities:**
 - If we equip professionals with the tools to identify early when children are behind, create a network of high-quality resources to refer families to when needs arise, and create a system for coordinating support and following up over time, then needs will be identified and addressed sooner, and fewer children will fall behind. Furthermore, professionals will be able to address identified needs in a more comprehensive manner.
 - If we support the understanding and capacity of families and caregivers to provide care and support that prepares young children for Kindergarten readiness and supports their continued academic growth, children will develop in a way that prevents gaps from developing in the first place. In addition, if we enhance parent and caregiver knowledge of developmental milestones, they are empowered to know how to identify, access and advocate for their child's needs and share their assets.

Target Audiences for Our Work:

- Families and caregivers for children ages 0-8
- Adult professionals who interact with families and children ages 0-8

The Work and the Opportunity Ahead:

The City and County of Denver, Denver Public Schools and the many community organizations that serve Denver's children birth to eight years old and their families have worked together to develop the key strategies and action plans outlined in the Birth to Eight Roadmap. Some strategies will require coordinated, longer-term action and resources, and other strategies leverage existing work and resources. Individual partner organizations are committed to effecting change by connecting their independent work to the shared goals and recommendations outlined in the Birth to Eight Roadmap.

It takes all of us to support Denver's kids. That is the reason for this partnership among the Mayor's Office of Children's Affairs, Denver Public Schools, community partners, families and caregivers – all of whom are committed to helping our kids succeed and to make Denver ***the most literate city in the nation.***