



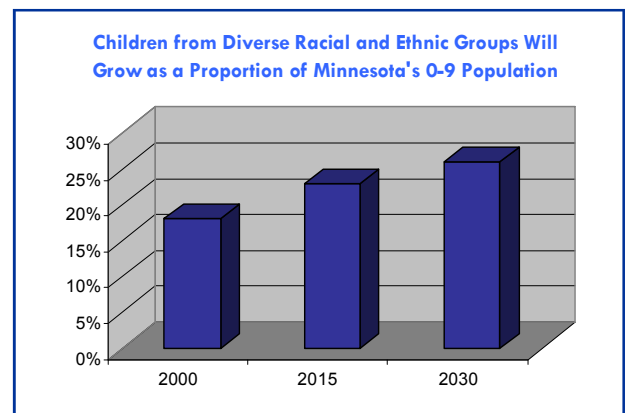
Business Plan Overview

Early Childhood Care and Education

Twelve Things To Know About Children's Development and Early Learning in Minnesota

the research...

1. **For young children, child care is early learning.** Children are born learning—their brains are wired to learn everything they need from a typical environment in any culture.
2. **School readiness is a developmental process, not a single event.** Young brains develop in phases and at different rates, especially through adolescence. Therefore, children's development is not always on the same timetable as the school system's.
3. **The academic gains from formal preschool education tend to fade by around second grade.** In commonly cited studies, high returns on investment from preschool education resulted primarily from factors other than closing the achievement gap, such as reduced correctional costs.
4. **Early learning and academic achievement is grounded in strong social and emotional skills.** Yet roughly one in ten young children are exposed to "toxic stress," such as abuse or parental depression, which impairs development.
5. **Intensive support for the home language during the preschool years will help, not hurt, long-term attainment in English.**
6. **Wage supports for low income families have been linked to improved educational outcomes for children.**



Minnesota's building blocks and challenges...

7. **Early childhood stakeholders in Minnesota have general agreement on the value of early learning** and on effectiveness factors – safe settings, small groups, warm and responsive adult-child interactions, language-rich environments, developmentally appropriate "curriculum," and qualified staff.
8. **In local communities, hundreds of early childhood partnerships and initiatives are establishing fresh approaches;** they are looking for more resources, flexibility, and two-way communication with state-level policymakers, not more bureaucracy.
9. **Minnesota has a good start in many areas,** such as establishing indicators of progress for children, core competencies for early childhood professionals, quality ratings for programs, and child development assessments. A remaining challenge is to ensure that definitions and measures suit all families and providers and have community acceptance— *all too often, voices of rural, cultural, tribal, and immigrant communities are lacking in the early childhood system-building work.*
10. **The leaders of the bi-partisan Early Childhood Legislative Caucus have coalesced around establishing a quality rating system** as the basis for funding early care and education in Minnesota. The Caucus has nearly 150 members
11. **Early care and education governance in Minnesota are structurally separated in three state departments of (education, health, and human services) which have no shared data or information systems;** many indicators of early childhood health and well-being have no data sources.
12. **Child care choices have eroded in the past 5 years,** affecting nearly 40 percent of parents with low incomes, parents of color, those with a child who has a special need, and those whose primary language is not English.

About the Funders Group: In February 2008, a small group of Minnesota based foundations and funders agreed to work together to fund a comprehensive business plan to guide the state of Minnesota in the area of early childhood education and care policies for the next five to seven years. Each of the funding organizations has invested in early childhood education and care for many years. The impetus for working together and supporting the creation of a comprehensive business plan came, in part, from the desire of new leaders in the foundation community to help make a lasting contribution to the area of early childhood - clearly a timely and pressing issue in Minnesota. The funders include the Bush Foundation, Blandin Foundation, Greater Twin Cities United Way, Grotto Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, The Minneapolis Foundation, Social Venture Partners, and Sheltering Arms Foundation.

Business Plan Overview

Vision

All children develop and reach their full potential within local and cultural contexts of diverse families and communities.

Goal

Every child is nurtured and educated, in home and non-parental care environments, according to his or her unique developmental needs.

Plan Purpose

To establish a set of collective actions and responsibilities for early childhood care and education in Minnesota that achieves our goal.

Proposed Outcomes

One: Recognize and strengthen the family as the natural provider of early learning and development for children 0-5.

Two: All parents who place their young children in non-parental care will have will access to their choice of high quality (i.e., developmentally and culturally appropriate) care.

Plan Development Process

1. Fact finding: asset review, literature review, community discussions—summer and fall 2008
2. Preliminary plan framework—December, 2008
3. Internal review of draft plan—January 2009
4. Funders' review—February 2009
5. Broad community review and input—March 2009
6. Funders' group approval—April 2009
7. Organizational board approvals—spring and summer 2009

Minnesota Facts

- About 76% of children age 5 and younger are in some type of child care, averaging about 27 hours per week during the school year.
- There are currently about 410,000 children five years of age and younger in Minnesota.
- Total spending for early care and education in Minnesota in 2008 was about \$1.6 billion. Total **public** spending was nearly \$399 million, a 13% decrease in inflation adjusted dollars since 2002. The value of unpaid Family Friend and Neighbor care is estimated at \$1 billion.
- Young children are more ethnically diverse and more likely to be in low-income households than Minnesotans generally. An estimated 14% of children five and younger live below the poverty line.
- Statewide, nearly 20% of students are children of color and 97% of teachers are white. In urban districts, the disparity is especially pronounced, e.g., in Minneapolis only 27% of public school students are white, while 82% of teachers are white.

