

Boston's 2011 Early Childhood Summit: Final Report

Our City, Our Children,
One Focus, One Team –
Aiming for School Success



Children's Hospital Boston



MASSACHUSETTS



Boston's 2011 Early Childhood Summit

On April 14, 2011, over 300 individuals participated in Boston's 2011 Early Childhood Summit - celebrating the significant strides that we have collaboratively made to support Boston's young children, their families and communities.



This first Thrive in 5 Summit provided a venue for practitioners from health, early and K-12 education, business, academia, social services, philanthropy and community-based organizations to brainstorm opportunities across sectors to further support young children's healthy development in our community.

Throughout the day, speakers and breakout sessions emphasized a common message: the power of collaborating with families and professionals across different fields to support young children – and the need to work more closely together to reach our goal of universal school readiness.



Watch Boston's 2011 Early Childhood Summit online:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0CgVZ3XHNU>



Early Childhood Development is Economic Development

Highlights from the Opening Session

“We have to work together to prevent problems for our kids, to make sure that low-income kids don’t start kindergarten already years behind their middle-class peers in language and social skills.

That’s why I am making early childhood a permanent priority in Boston. Through our partnership with United Way, Thrive in 5 is turning all of what we are saying into action for our young children.”

- Mayor Thomas M. Menino



“Early childhood development is economic development. For sustained economic growth, it is critical that we invest in human capital, and the best investment starts early ...especially for our kids in poverty. They are not our at-risk kids, they are our high-return kids.”

- Arthur Rolnick

Speakers:

- Dr. Barbara Ferrer, Boston Public Health Commission
- Mayor Thomas M. Menino, City of Boston
- Michael K. Durkin, United Way
- Arthur J. Rolnick, University of Minnesota
- John Lippitt, Thrive in 5



Boston's Progress toward Universal School Readiness

Highlights from the Stakeholder Progress Panel



"If we can build LEED certified buildings, we can build child certified buildings. Our city should be designed to nurture and care for our children, because the return on investment is there."

- John Barros

"Twenty years from now, we should be able to tell our kids: Boston changed because there were adults who cared."

- Regina Robinson



Moderator:

- Marilyn Anderson Chase, MA Exec. Office of Health and Human Services

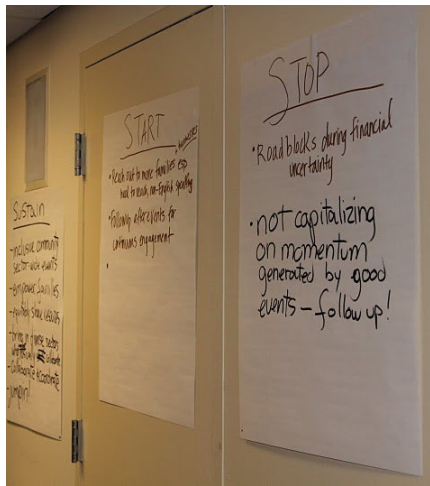
Panelists:

- Dr. Carol Johnson, Boston Public Schools
- John Barros, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative
- Shari Nethersole, MD, Children's Hospital Boston
- Regina Robinson, Parent
- Yvette Rodriguez, Action for Boston Community Development

Overview of Summit Breakout Sessions

Five engaging breakout sessions provided attendees with opportunities to learn about innovative work in Boston's early childhood community across a range of topics:

- Navigating Early Childhood Services and Systems
- Increasing Communication about School Readiness
- Engaging and Empowering Families
- Building Community Support for School Readiness
- Building the Economic Case for Early Childhood Investment



Each breakout session was asked to identify major issues and next steps support children's school readiness in Boston. Key recommendations from each session are presented on the following slides.

Making it Easier for Families to Navigate the System for Children's Success

In this session, representatives from health and K-12 education shared innovative models and ideas to communicate and partner across services and programs, making it easier for families to connect with the resources they need to support their children.

Key Recommendations:

- Educate parents and providers on how to navigate critical transitions in early childhood education (e.g. Early Intervention to special education or Boston Public Schools), including questions to ask and issues to address.
- Improve communication between parents and providers. (e.g. simplify language regarding Early Intervention and special education referrals).
- Reduce waiting time for developmental assessments as it delays the delivery of timely intervention and services.



Moderator:

- Latifah Hasan,
Boston Public
Health
Commission

Panelists:

- Joan Anderson,
EdD, Boston
Public Schools
- Alexy D. Arauz
Boudreau, MD,
Massachusetts
General Hospital
- Margot Kaplan-
Sanoff, EdD,
Boston University
School of
Medicine
- Priscilla Samuel,
MS, MA Dept. of
Public Health

Closing the Communication Gap in Early Childhood School Readiness

In this session, participants gained knowledge and shared strategies for better aligning services during transitions to ensure school readiness. Attendees also looked at ways to support families and effectively share information about children's development between providers so that a child enters his/her next placement with all that they need to be successful in learning.

Key Recommendations:

- Improve communication between early childhood educators and Boston Public Schools (BPS) educators, including moving forward with a pilot of the Child Profile Form.
- Work to improve process for special education children transitioning from early intervention to BPS to prevent children falling through the cracks.
- Eliminate working in silos and reinventing the wheel by focusing on building and strengthening systems.



Moderator:

- Rosa Inniss,
Countdown to
Kindergarten

Panelists:

- Eilene Edejer,
Boston Public
Schools
- Mary Kinsella,
Boys & Girls
Clubs of
Dorchester
- C. Vieira,
Action for Boston
Community
Development
- Tiffany Young,
Holmes
Elementary
School

You Matter As Your Child's First Teacher: Engaging and Empowering Families

Panelists shared concrete strategies for successfully engaging and empowering families in health, early education and community settings, building relationships with parents to support their children's education.



Key Recommendations:

- Build a relationships and an environment that support family engagement, helping parents feel at home in the community.
- Empower parents so that they empower their children.
- Use technology (e-mail and Facebook) to connect and communicate with parents, and provide parents who need it with training and connections to technology.
- Be persistent and consistent. Don't stop reaching out when you don't get a response.

Moderator:

- Michele Brooks,
Boston Public
Schools

Panelists:

- Mara Dos Santos, Otis Elementary School
- Kathy Modigliani, EdD, Family Child Care Project
- Myriam Ortiz, Boston Parent Organizing Network
- Gloria Weekes, Boston Public Health Commission

Children Succeed When Everyone Plays a Part: Building Community Support for School Readiness

This session focused on East Boston Children Thrive as a model for tapping into a community's existing resources to improve children's healthy development and school readiness. The group discussed their current work and opportunities to build on their communication and outreach to businesses and partners through their School Readiness Roundtable.

Key Recommendations:

- Improve communication with families and partners (including follow up after events).
- Continue to support inclusive community-wide efforts to empower families.
- Engage hard-to-reach and diverse families and businesses to work towards the goal of school readiness.
- Collaborate with unlikely allies to build support for school readiness work despite limited funding.



Moderator:

- John Kelly,
East Boston
Social Centers

Panelists:

- Joanna Cataldo,
East Boston
Neighborhood
Health Center
- Margaret Kelly,
East Boston
Library
- Gail Kilmas,
East Boston
YMCA
- Clark Moulaison,
East Boston Main
Streets

The Great Return on Investment: Why Children's Success is Our Bottom Line

Expanding on Art Rolnick's keynote address, participants in this session explored ways for Boston's early childhood community to build support for early childhood investment in our corporate, philanthropic and public sectors.

Key Recommendations:

- Create champions who can lead an on-going communications campaign and command attention from new audiences.
- Make the case for early childhood development as economic development.
- Acknowledge the cost of creating high quality early childhood services, and demand a sizeable investment.
- Create a sustainable source of funding for early childhood through an early education endowment fund.



Moderator:

- Arthur Rolnick,
University of
Minnesota

Panelists:

- Jondavid "JD"
Chesloff, MA
Business
Roundtable
- Wade Horn,
Deloitte
Consulting
- Dr. Sherri Killins,
MA Dept. of
Early Education
and Care
- Laurie Sherman,
City of Boston

Closing Session

“These are extraordinary times of challenges and changes demanding a need for new and more creative ideas in supporting our families and preparing our children for the future. We will have to be courageous and take risks. Most importantly we must not forget why we are in this business in the first place. We were called to this work. We are healers and a world in pain desperately depends on us.”

- Liz Walker



“You have captured the collaborative nature of the city's partnership. You have come together to think about the critical issues facing families, professionals and the children entrusted to them. This is a celebration of a milestone year for the city, community agencies, families and professionals, all of whom are working diligently and care deeply about the health and well being of children in the city of Boston.”

- Marta Rosa

Speakers:

- Marta Rosa, Wheelock College
- Liz Walker, The Walker Group LLC

Acknowledgments

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- Alba Cruz-Davis, Thrive in 5
- Mary Dooley, East Boston Head Start
- Lauren Fawls & Sue Werley, Jumpstart for Young Children
- Danielle Gantt, Boston Community Partnerships for Children
- Ashy Hosseinmardy & Donna Remolete, South Side Head Start
- Mary Kinsella, Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester
- Damon Luloff, Higher Ground
- Larisa Mendez-Pendate, Massachusetts Department of Public Health
- Regina Robinson, Thrive in 5 Parent Advisory Group
- Carla Smith, Thrive in 5 Parent Advisory Group
- Maren Tober, Thrive in 5 Parent Advisory Group
- Karen Wontan, Thrive in 5 Parent Advisory Group

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