

Center for Social Policy



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FULFILLING BOSTON'S PROMISE TO ITS CHILDREN: TAKING STOCK

PREPARED FOR THRIVE IN 5

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Purpose

In 2008, cognizant of persistent academic achievement gaps, especially for low income children and children of color in the city, the late Mayor, Thomas M. Menino, and United Way of Massachusetts Bay issued a school readiness call for action toward the goal of ensuring that - by 2018 - 100% of Boston's children would be ready for school success upon kindergarten entry.

The Roadmap¹ for reaching this goal was created over a two year period through an inclusive community-wide participatory planning and decision making process involving over 100 Boston Public School, philanthropic, policy, early education and family support community leaders, along with parents and researchers.

By the winter of 2010, five Boston neighborhoods were selected to be pioneers in implementing what came to be known as Boston Children Thrive, the heart of Thrive in 5's family engagement agenda. Now, at the five year marker, the UMass Boston evaluation team is using this opportunity, at the request of Thrive in 5, to offer a big picture reflection on lessons learned --- to *take stock* in order to inform present planning efforts for current and future generations of Boston's children.

Our perspectives are informed by interviews with city and state policy, nonprofit, philanthropic, neighborhood organizational and parent leaders, as well as evaluation research conducted over five years in those pioneering Boston neighborhoods. We have also drawn upon learnings from the research literature, as well as other state, city and county jurisdictions.²

¹ http://thrivein5boston.org/bostonuniver/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/NL_Summer2008.pdf

² *Thrive in 5* is one of 12 nationally recognized early childhood initiatives invited to be part of the Early Childhood Learning and Innovation Network for Community (EC-LINC) led by the Center for

We first revisit the original vision for Thrive in 5 and then offer perspectives and evidence as to its successes and challenges, as well as options for the future --- informed by relevant learnings from other communities which have been successful in building and securing sustainable funding mechanisms necessary for long-term systems changes.

The Original Vision

The Roadmap for Thrive in 5 spelled out strategies and success indicators associated with promoting Ready Families, Ready Educators, Ready Systems and a Ready City, which, if aligned, were anticipated to close the achievement gap for all of Boston's young children entering kindergarten. As detailed below, much progress has been made in the Ready Families, Ready Educators and Ready Systems dimensions of the original vision; indeed, these successes serve as a strong foundation for the next phase of a citywide early childhood systems change agenda.

Little progress has been made, however, on the Ready City segments of the Roadmap, to the *detriment of the overall citywide campaign for Boston's young children*.

Specifically, four key Ready City strategies identified in the Roadmap were:

Strategy 1 --- find and align federal, state and city funding streams;

Strategy 2 --- create a public/private governance and operational structure;

the Study of Social Policy in Washington, D.C. See Appendix for a listing and video links to these communities. Over the past year, Jane Tewksbury, Mary Coonan or Donna Haig Friedman have participated in monthly learning lab conference calls. These conversations have facilitated the cross-fertilization of ideas, including how 'big vision' early childhood initiatives are sustained financially and organizationally for the long haul.

Strategy 3 --- align the work of city departments, coordinating all programming and initiatives of Thrive in 5 with existing neighborhood work, including at least one neighborhood where all the pilots are implemented; and

Strategy 4 --- convene an Early Childhood Summit in years 2, 4, 7 and 10 as a vehicle for accountability and for sustaining the citywide campaign for Boston's children.

Five years into this ten year initiative, an inability to make progress with Ready City Strategy 1, **identifying and aligning sustainable funding**, appears to have seriously hampered *Thrive in 5's* ability to make progress toward the system level changes and impacts originally envisioned.

Advancing the Vision in Thrive in 5's First Five Years

An Early Shift from Systems-Level to Project-Based Focus

Although the ambitious vision for Thrive in 5 prioritized system-level changes that could have citywide impacts, its beginnings set into motion a project-based focus. From the start, support was insufficient for *Thrive in 5* to be a 'collective impact' convener, driving and facilitating city-wide cross-system dialogue and collaboration on a shared systems change agenda.

First, the original organizational infrastructure and sheer number of strategies set out in the Roadmap, albeit comprehensive, quickly became unwieldy. Second, a public investment plan did not materialize. This funding constraint required Thrive to seek private funds which led to what became a 'demonstration project strategy'. Thrive in 5 has been limited by a yearly budget of approximately \$1.5 million, restricted to use for 'projects', clearly a resource level that has been inadequate for realizing the Roadmap's big vision.

Third, being limited to a 'project-based' focus had several problematic consequences. In a tight funding environment, Thrive in 5 began to be perceived by valuable community partners as a competitor for funds, rather than a facilitator of a common shared agenda leading to resource generation from which all could benefit.

The limited funding also undermined Thrive in 5's internal organizational capacity necessary for implementing a communications and marketing strategy, "lifting up" the learning and systems changes that were happening with its demonstration projects --- necessary functions for keeping the citywide *campaign* for Boston's children alive.

As Thrive in 5 evolved in its first two years, its Leadership Council recognized the importance of streamlining the organizational infrastructure and prioritizing the initiative's core strategies. As a result, with the hiring of Jane Tewksbury as Executive Director in 2012, a more centralized organizational infrastructure was put into place and three overarching strategies became the focus of all of Thrive's activities.

Fundamentally, the newly configured focus was based upon the belief that Boston could close its kindergarten achievement gap using three core strategies: (1) family engagement (Ready Families --- Boston Children Thrive); (2) healthy child development through universal development screening (Ready Systems --- Screen to Succeed); and (3) continuous quality improvement in early education and care programs (Ready Educators --- Boston K1DS and REQIP).

Recognized Achievements: A Strong Foundation to Build Upon

Thrive's Family Engagement Strategy. The ***Boston Children Thrive (BCT) initiative*** is a stellar accomplishment. Now in its fourth year, across six

Boston neighborhoods³, BCT engages **4,494 families** with **6,874 adults**, and **5,310 children** ages birth through 5, with a focus on families most likely to be affected by the achievement gap -- low income families, families of color, and English language learners. Families of children with special needs also receive greater supports.

Of all enrolled families across the six communities, **66% live in poverty**. Notably, enrolled children represent **24% of ALL children ages birth through 5** in the original 5 neighborhoods, **59% of children ages birth through 5 living in poverty in the six neighborhoods**; and **39% of all young children living in poverty in Boston**. In addition, enrolled children and their families are being connected to food and school readiness supports through strong alliances with Women, Infant and Children (WIC), as exemplified by the large number of family members receiving WIC – 56% compared with a Boston average of 25 %. Parent leader partners have enabled community organizations to reach parents previously disconnected from services and resources.⁴ The parent leadership model has been so successful that a state sponsored Boston-based coalition, “The Boston Family Engagement Network”, has now instituted Parent Partners in each of their nine grantee sites in the city. The Children’s Museum of Boston has also replicated the Parent Partner model increasing patronage from previously underrepresented communities.

In BCT neighborhoods, the core elements of BCT have transformed the ways in which organizations work together and reach families and young

children who are least resourced. These core elements are:

A hub agency (lead agency) responsible for convening, organizing, and providing a backbone structure for local efforts to advance children's development.⁵

Parent partners (parent leaders) from diverse linguistic and racial backgrounds responsible for weaving connections between and among parents and community resources. Parent partners also take an active role in determining appropriate programming and supporting its implementation. In three of the six communities, parent partners have also been trained to administer the *Ages and Stages Questionnaire to families (ASQ)* whose young children are not in an early education and care setting ---- a second Thrive in 5 strategy.

School Readiness Roundtable (SRR), a leadership board comprised of partnering agencies, parent leaders, and other key stakeholders. The SRR’s in each community meet regularly to create and implement an aligned neighborhood network of resources and supports for families and caregivers.

An array of programs for families offered by the hub agency and other members of the SRR. Although programs vary from community to community, some core activities include playgroups, field trips, family nights, parent trainings, welcome baby visits, and trainings for early educators.

³ BCT neighborhoods include: Allston-Brighton, Fields Corner, Dudley Square area, East Boston, Lower Roxbury/South End, and South Boston

⁴ Douglass, A. & Maroney, M. (2015). Parent leadership in an urban school readiness initiative: A case study. Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of

the American Educational Research Association, American Educational Research Association, Chicago (April 19, 2015).

⁵ A complete list of hub agencies and core partners can be found in the appendix.

A membership card system (launched in 2012), in which a membership card with a bar code for each adult caregiver is issued to participating families. The card is designed to be scanned when families participate in planned activities. At the time of this report, four of the six communities continue to use the card system.

A learning community, comprised of hub agency and parent representatives from each neighborhood, meeting regularly to share learnings and promote cross community actions.

Thrive's Healthy Child Development Strategy.

Thrive in 5's Screen to Succeed (f/n/a the School Readiness Pipeline) has broken new ground in advancing universal child development screening for young children in the City of Boston. Screen to Succeed goals are twofold: **Support Children & Families** by building community capacity to screen children early for potential developmental delays, and use the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) as an opportunity for family engagement, education, and referral to services; and **Drive Policy & Systems Change** by creating a universal screening system in order to gain a better understanding of the developmental progress of young children in Boston to inform funding and policy decisions.

Citywide, the Screen to Succeed (STS) data on young children's development have the potential to help City leaders, policymakers and early childhood advocates make strategic and informed decisions about alignment of public and private resources and supports where they are most needed. StS currently engages trained peer-to-peer Parent Screeners in three neighborhoods (Allston-Brighton, Fields Corner, and Dudley), in addition to 22 early education and care partner programs and community agencies across the

City. *Thrive in 5* is using developmental screening as an opportunity for family engagement, education, and referral to services. At the individual level, screening data offers families information which enables them to be active partners in supporting their children's healthy growth and development, with their child's teachers and pediatricians. After completing the ASQ, parents receive a toolkit with activities they can do with their children at home. Some sites hold screening days when parents can fill out the ASQ and receive training on the tool kits at the same time. Participating Early Education and Care centers are experimenting with using the ASQ to inform classroom activities and as a feedback and engagement tool for working with parents. **From May 2013 – June 2015, 2,071 children across 16 Boston neighborhoods** have been screened at least once through *Thrive in 5's* STS initiative.

Quality Early Education and Care. *Thrive in 5's* Ready Educators strategy is working to raise the quality of early education and care across all settings – center-based programs, Head Start, family child care providers, and the Boston Public Schools' (BPS) early childhood classrooms. *Thrive in 5* is currently investing in two demonstration projects to identify strategies to quickly and efficiently improve early education quality, leading to better and more consistent outcomes for children: Boston K1DS and Ready Educators Quality Improvement Program (REQUIP).

Boston K1DS replicates key aspects of the BPS K1 (pre-K) program, shown to be one of the most effective public pre-K programs in the country⁶, in community-based preschool classrooms. The 14 Boston K1DS classrooms utilize the BPS curricula and assessments, participate in professional development, receive in-classroom coaching, and benefit from a salary enhancement for classroom teachers. This specific array of resources is

⁶ Weiland, C. and Yoshikawa, H. (2013). Impacts of a Prekindergarten Program on Children's Mathematics, Language, Literacy, Executive Function, and Emotional Skills. *Child Development*.

designed to provide a high quality learning experience on a full-day, full-year schedule. This innovative partnership has the potential to be a cost-effective model for expanding access to high quality preschool --- Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) being a Mayor Walsh administration priority--- while supporting the needs of working families and improving the quality of community-based early education programs.⁷

The **Ready Educators Quality Improvement Pilot (REQIP)** is a targeted technical assistance project for private early education programs in low-income neighborhoods where children are at the greatest risk of falling into the achievement gap. Using data about the developmental needs and skills of enrolled children and the specific strengths and areas for improvement at the program level, REQIP has provided technical assistance to 9 pilot center-based programs and four pilot family child care providers in support of the children in their care. This model has the potential to build a pipeline of programs over time that will both improve the quality of their services and also be positioned to provide UPK classrooms in the community.

Thrive in 5 has been regularly asked to take the lead or to be a major partner on important early childhood projects in the city, including for the Mayor's Universal Pre-K (UPK) priority and, with Nurtury, for the Early Childhood Data Center. This role in Boston's early childhood community has brought significant, but time limited, funding to *Thrive in 5*, including for example, a total of over \$1 million over a 3-year period from the Barr Foundation for REQIP and \$400K in federal Race to the Top funding for the Boston K1DS program. In addition, the quality improvement models it has supported have positioned the City and State to receive other federal funding. Boston, Holyoke,

Lawrence, Lowell, and Springfield will share \$15 million in federal funding to develop public school district- and community-based provider partnerships to expand programming to approximately 3,000 4-year-olds. The model that they are using for expansion, and which was selected through a highly competitive process, is based on Boston K1DS.

Evidence Driving Practice and Policies. *Thrive in 5* has been developing its capacity to participate and is now leading city-wide conversations about data collection, management, analysis and dissemination. In particular, *Thrive* has been recognized for its data work with BCT, StS, and the feasibility study for a Boston Early Childhood Data Center.

First, with BCT's unique membership system where families earn points and incentives for participating in developmentally appropriate activities and events, *Thrive in 5* is able to document which families are participating in which services and ultimately, how early family engagement supports children's success in school. Successive evaluations over four years, led by the University of Massachusetts Boston's Center for Social Policy, have found the BCT program elements to be effective at building social cohesion which supports individual, organizational, and community transformation in the city's most challenged neighborhoods.

The *Thrive in 5* central team and evaluators are working in partnership with the state-funded Boston Family Engagement Network (BFEN) to bring the BCT parent leadership model to all Boston neighborhoods, providing technical assistance and capacity building to neighborhood-level partners and utilizing the membership card system to deepen relationships with families and to provide an ongoing data collection and analysis system for each site and citywide.

⁷ It is important to note that the viability of many private community-based early education and care settings is currently in question, as the public funding mechanisms are inadequate for sustaining safe high quality educational and caregiving environments

for children from low income families (Key Informant interviews, 2015).

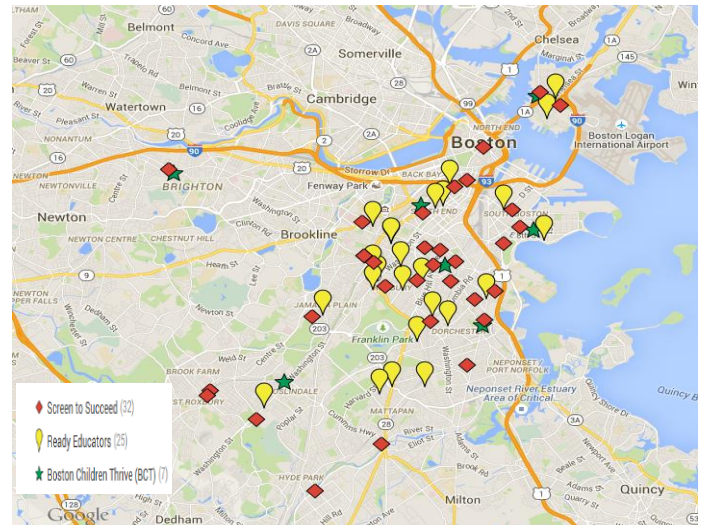
Second, the United Way's PE/VC Council (a group of Private Equity and Venture Capital industry leaders) is providing support to *Thrive in 5* to expand its early childhood developmental screening citywide and to build a technology infrastructure with an easy to use platform that aggregates and analyzes StS data, as well as data from other Thrive focus areas, including BCT membership and participation data, to identify and report on trends and to serve as a data systems integration platform to bring longitudinal evidence to collaborative cross-systems change initiatives.

Third, *Thrive in 5* has co-lead, with Nurtury, a feasibility study for a Boston Early Education and Data Center. The goal of the project is to design and determine the feasibility of an early childhood data center for Boston that can drive best practices and inform public policy.

Lastly, *Thrive in 5* is frequently asked to provide consultation to other groups around the country seeking to support a holistic, evidence-driven early childhood agenda, to host site visits, and to provide information about Boston Children Thrive and its membership system. It is represented on some national early childhood initiatives, including the Early Childhood Learning and Innovation Network for Community (EC-LINC) led by the Center for the Study of Social Policy in Washington, D.C.

The institution of the BCT membership card system constitutes one of the most innovative aspects of the program, recognized nationally by

the Center for the Study of Social Policy and FSG⁸ as an example of best practices for measuring family engagement. Most recently, a representative from the National League of Cities (NLC) visited Boston to learn about the membership card system.



Networked Improvement Communities. Over the last six years, *Thrive in 5's* place-based school readiness initiative has built an extensive network of community partners. *Thrive in 5's* ability to bring multi-sector organizations from Boston's neighborhoods to a common table, sparking new collaborations and engaging diverse stakeholders in support of a common agenda, has been a key component of its work. The map depicts Thrive in Five's Community Partners engaged in implementing at least one of its three core strategies. The research-practice partnerships with community partners are based upon the hypothesis that the three core strategies, when delivered together in a neighborhood, result in

⁸ Link to an FSG webinar presentation on collective impact and early childhood indicators. http://www.fsg.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/PDF/Early_Success_Indicators_Webinar.pdf?cpgn=Webinar%20DL%20-%20Early%20Success%20Indicators%20ppt

FSG publication featuring *Thrive in 5* as an example of collective impact. *Markers that Matter: Success Indicators in*

Early Learning and Education. http://www.fsg.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/PDF/Success_Markers_Early_Learning.pdf

Center for the Study of Social Policy - featured innovation. <http://www.cssp.org/reform/early-childhood/ec-linc/BOSTON-EC-LINC-profile-final-101614.pdf>

synergistic child outcomes that are greater than the sum of the impacts from each individual strategy.

Reflecting its longstanding commitment to community engagement and collaborative work, *Thrive in 5* directly supported or co-facilitated several learning collaboratives designed to bring partners together to promote cross-sector collaboration. Currently, these include the Screen to Succeed Learning Collaborative, the Evaluation Advisory Group, the Early Childhood Data Center Strategic Advisory Group, the Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) Steering/Advisory Committees, and the Ready Educators Family Engagement Working Group. Members of the UMass Boston evaluation team have been directly engaged in each of these learning networks as participants, co-facilitators and/or thought partners.

What Next?

Advancing the Vision for Current and Future Generations of Boston's Children: An Unfinished Agenda

The Ready City

To reach the goal that 100% of Boston's children enter kindergarten ready for success in school, two strategic priorities are looming: identifying and building sustainable funding streams (Ready City Strategy 1) and creating a permanent public/private governance and operational structure (Ready City Strategy 2).

Other communities across the country have much to offer to the Boston and Massachusetts early childhood stakeholder communities on these two strategic priorities. The chart on the next page offers examples of sustainable funding streams as well as public/private governance and operational structures that other jurisdictions have created to

ensure long-term viability and sustainability of their early childhood agendas.

Full implementation of Ready Families, Ready Educators and Ready Systems strategies.

A 'collective impact' cross-system and cross-sector alignment of existing resources and of untapped new sustainable resources is needed in several unfinished areas of intervention which impact children's readiness for success in school.

Attention to Ready City Strategies 3 and 4 in the coming years can facilitate progress going forward --- specifically, (Strategy 3) aligning the work of city departments, coordinating all programming and initiatives of *Thrive in 5* with existing neighborhood work, including at least one neighborhood where all the pilots are implemented; and (Strategy 4) convening a bi-annual Early Childhood Summit as a vehicle for accountability and for sustaining the citywide campaign for Boston's children.

As is evident from the listing of achievements above, *Thrive in 5* has influenced the public readiness for the next stage of Ready Family, Ready Educators and Ready Systems developments.

The unfinished agenda includes:

Ensuring effective parent engagement

throughout the city in both BPS and in community EC settings and in the city's neighborhoods

Ensuring comprehensive, culturally appropriate support for those families of infants, toddlers and preschoolers least connected to resources

- Family-friendly neighborhoods that build a sense of social cohesion
- Strong networks of support among families
- Every child having a pediatric medical home, supportive of parents and their children

Understanding and raising knowledge about the intersections, gaps, funding needs, and strengths of the various systems impacting young children and their families (i.e. the medical system, Early Education and Care system, public and private family support and safety net systems, etc.)

Ensuring quality implementation as a Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) system rolls out in the city, particularly in community based settings.

Options for *Thrive in 5* (or its Reincarnation) To Advance the Unfinished Agenda

Some new opportunities are on the horizon due to the mayoral change and to increased public awareness of the early childhood period⁹. Not all opportunities may be a good fit for Thrive; some others may be worth considering and are as yet quite invisible to key philanthropic and city stakeholders who are holding resources and have the authority and credibility to advance a citywide early childhood agenda for children birth to 8 and their families.

This section of the White Paper offers some ideas as to important roles, singly or in combination, Thrive in 5 (or its reincarnation) could take into the future. As is now evident from *Thrive in 5's* experience and experiences of other communities across the country, sustainable public funding sources are needed for any organizational entity to successfully carry out any or some combination of the functions described below.

Thrive in 5 as a convener in the 'collective impact' sense. If Thrive (or its reincarnation) were to take this role, it needs adequate resources and the endorsement and backing of the city, of the major

early childhood funders and of the community. It would also need to have a clear understanding of how the current cross system dynamics are working and be well versed in pointing out particular leverage points for change. In this role, one of its functions could be to serve as an information center or hub for research and analyses relevant for city stakeholders, including mapping of the field, resource opportunities, and gaps in the system.

"Looking at the infrastructure would include an analysis of the data and mapping of resources. A possible opportunity for analyzing the infrastructure could include starting with looking at all two-year-olds - analyzing all of the touch points." (Key informant, September 2015)

"Thrive should be a convener of organizations working in the area, helping them to be on the same page. Many organizations don't talk to one another and are not working in a collaborative way. In this way the work would be done in service to the public rather than in service to themselves. Part of this work would be knowing what is available and what is missing in each neighborhood. For example, in one neighborhood there might be more services than actual need. In another neighborhood the reverse. We wouldn't know that unless we took stock of the services. This would facilitate fundraising for the gaps in the communities.....After the city lost the Office for Children, it had no way of bringing the organizations together. All funded organizations should be required to belong to Thrive. Funding would be contingent upon membership. This would give Thrive the authority it needs. Additionally, Thrive should be connected to the Mayor's Education office. The question is: should the city be thinking about education as cradle-to-grave or a lifelong learning department? In this case Thrive should be at the table representing early childhood." (Key informant, 2015)

⁹ The Boston Opportunity Agenda and the Boston Foundation have announced their commitment to bring new ideas and make new investments to advance a citywide early childhood agenda.

Jurisdiction	Financing Approach	Organizational Governance Approach
	Race to the Top funds -- \$45million	
Denver and Colorado	<p>Colorado Child Care Contribution Credit (CCCC). Taxpayers choosing to make a monetary contribution to promote child care in CO are eligible for a 50% tax credit when filing income tax returns. Funds are used for facility upgrades, equipment, financial assistance to families, provider training, and other early childhood purposes.</p>	<p>Early Childhood Councils - one state ECC and local ECCs have been established to connect the dots across family support, healthcare, social/emotional mental health, early education and care initiatives; the Denver ECC members participate in a shared data system.</p> <p>http://denverearlychildhood.org/</p>
	Tobacco tax of \$.50/pack	
First 5 California		<p>Each county in CA has an Early Childhood Commission which receives tobacco tax funds which must be used to benefit children birth-five and their families. Each county commission is required to have a strategic plan in place for use of funds.</p> <p>Example: Alameda County received \$21m in 2000-2001, \$13m in 2013-2014 and expects \$11m for 2017-2018. These funds are dispersed to providers and used for nine strategy areas: quality EEC, community support, policy advocacy and communication, home visiting and family support, place-based initiatives, training, summer pre-K, Help Me Grow, evaluation and technology.</p> <p>Ventura County CA, in partnership with the Ventura County Healthcare Agency, uses <u>Neighborhoods for Learning</u> councils as vehicles for advancing place-based early childhood initiatives in 11 neighborhoods in the county. These governance structures allocate resources and track progress on shared performance benchmarks covering initiatives that include: early learning, developmental screenings, health, family support (women's screenings, parent education participation and service coordination).</p> <p>http://www.first5california.com/</p>
	Since 1987, a very small portion of property taxes are designated for early childhood purposes: .7025 per \$1,000 of tax valuation for 2013-2014. The maximum rate is 1 millage per \$1,000 of tax valuation	
Florida		<p>There are eight Children's Services Councils across Florida.</p> <p>Most recently, in Palm Beach County, \$87million was dispersed to 53 local programs for prenatal health and early childhood development purposes. These programs count on this funding source for 85%-100% of their services and operations.</p> <p>http://flchildrenscouncil.org/</p>
	Other jurisdictions use tax credits to advance school readiness initiatives:	
Louisiana, Arkansas, Maine, Vermont	<p>Example: Louisiana --- School Readiness Tax Credit, four refundable tax credits: one each for programs, educators, families and businesses</p>	

*Thrive in 5 as the **Weavers of the three strategies of family engagement, healthy child development and quality early education and care in each of Boston's neighborhoods.** If Thrive in 5 were to take this role, it would intentionally engage neighborhood anchor organizations to create and/or expand School Readiness Roundtables or Family Engagement Networks in each neighborhood to include organizational representatives from each of the key sectors (family support, pediatrics, early education and care [EEC]), as well as parent leaders. These SRR/FENs could be offered seed funds to develop a set of strategies that in the words of one key informant:*

"Result in every child in the neighborhood being registered as a citizen of Boston at birth. The idea would be that you are born here and your family is informed, invited and educated around how to guarantee that every child gets to school ready for success. The first thing would be assessments. The families would understand the assessment because there would be time to explain it to them. Then the families would be invited to a play group or some other activity. The local group would help the parents to connect to quality healthcare and to all the services that the children would need. If there was a red flag, the child and parent would be referred to appropriate resources. This would address the need to educate parents from birth that their children, no matter where they come from, will be successful.

Thrive, in the scenario mentioned above, would be the one pushing the campaign.....would be the one stop shopping where they know everything about every neighborhood..... Where early intervention is, where the community center is, where the hospitals are, who specializes in what etc. They don't have to provide the services, but they would be the connectors." (Key informant, 2015)

*Thrive in 5 as a **facilitator of replication and citywide scaling of the effective components** of its Ready Families family engagement and Ready Systems universal developmental screening strategies. If Thrive were to take this role, it could also advance the unfinished health systems change work of ensuring that every child has a*

pediatric medical home, supportive of parents and their children.

Boston Children Thrive. We as BCT evaluators concur with several key informants who note that the BCT model is very flexible and could easily be brought to scale; along with a toolkit and training, clear set of strategies and modest investment (\$100,000 per neighborhood annually), community by community, this model has the potential to transform neighborhoods. If there was adequate funding and buy-in across the city, the membership card could also be brought to scale.

Universal developmental screening. As the universal screening strategy advances neighborhood by neighborhood, attention could be given next to its integration with a more 'universal' place, such as pediatric healthcare providers, who have ultimate responsibility for screenings/developmental assessments of infants/toddlers and preschoolers. A unified, coordinated approach across early education and care, and healthcare systems is needed, with attention to the emerging and innovative parent screener roles for parent outreach and support. Facilitating and tracking connections to pediatricians and early intervention are important next steps as well. The financial sustainability of this strategy depends upon linkage with a public funding source (i.e. Medicaid).

Unfinished health systems changes: Pediatric engagement. Connecting with the pediatric community, *Thrive in 5* could use BCT, STS and Project LAUNCH as the launching pads for positive pediatric engagement. In collaboration with the Boston Public Health Commission, *Thrive in 5* could endorse and adopt the effective LAUNCH model of early childhood mental health that is preventative and includes ensuring a pediatric medical home. In terms of funding sustainability, Medicaid is a potential sustainable funding source.

Project LAUNCH was a multi-year SAMHSA funded project, led by the Boston Public Health Commission and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. In collaboration with pediatricians at Boston Medical Center, the Codman Square Community Health Center and the Martha Elliot Health Center, this successful family-centered intervention was carried out by a mental health clinician and family partner within pediatric primary care settings. Evaluation findings demonstrated, for participating families, significant decreases in parental stress and significant increases in children's social-emotional capacities.

Another example offered by a key informant noted that:

“Thrive could work with set of pediatricians to devise some practical, feasible and impactful strategies for supporting their patients’ parenting and connections in the community. Every pediatrician could be supported to give each of their family patients: a book (connected to Reach out and Read); a community event calendar, and enrollment form leading to a membership card.”

*Thrive in 5 as an **incubator of solutions**.* If *Thrive in 5* took this role, any of its demonstration projects, funded through private entities, would need to be intentionally short-term, designed to identify the essential effective components and then handed off to a public entity for sustained funding. If such an intention was made public, enterprising community groups would engage in pilot work with the assurance that once the interventions are deemed to be effective, full implementation would be sustained through public funding streams.

Two areas that are ripe for creative design and field testing have to do with (1) increasing low income families’ access to high quality and

affordable infant toddler child care and (2) increasing formal education, on site coaching and other resources for informal caregivers in Boston’s neighborhoods. Increasing access, first and foremost, will require funding for child care vouchers or universal child care, an important advocacy and policy agenda issue. While a great deal of attention has focused on 4 year olds’ access to quality ECE, little attention has focused on issues of access to quality ECE for infants and toddlers. Yet research clearly documents that infant and toddler ECE is less accessible and of lower quality than ECE for preschoolers.

*Thrive in 5 as an **arm of the city to advance the implementation of UPK**.* If *Thrive in 5* took such a role, it could lose its ability to advance policy changes that are contrary to city policies. In this role, however, Thrive could be the bridge between the city and community based early childhood programs ensuring that adequate city and state resources are directed toward replication of the elements of Boston KIDS and REQIP and other pilots associated with positive child development outcomes.

Concluding Thoughts

A solid foundation has been laid for the next stage of early childhood systems-level changes. Building upon these successes has the potential to transform the systems that currently impede developmental progress for many of Boston’s young children and their families.

Sustaining an ambitious early childhood change agenda for the long haul requires full backing of public sector, philanthropic and community leaders and sustainable public funding streams. Other communities that have made the greatest progress have continuing and predictable funding sources equal to the big vision.

It is tempting over time to give up on big vision initiatives when they haven’t delivered an ideal

resolution to a complicated problem. New players in the funding and political environment have novel ideas to bring to the table; they are tempted to start building the vision for change from scratch. However, this 'starting over' strategy has a cost. Neighborhood organizations, families, service providers hopes were raised with Thrive in 5's launch. They invested their energies and made transformative changes in the ways in which they operated. To be set adrift at this point in time undermines the trust and investment that will be needed from them for the next phases of implementation on behalf of Boston's young children and their families.

Appendix

References

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List of Interviewees

The following list includes individuals who were interviewed over the four years of the BCT evaluation. HUB Leaders were interviewed each of the four years and focus groups were held with the Roundtables in years 1-3.

In year two, the evaluation team began to interview families, parent partners and parent screeners. The names of parents and parent partners are not included in order to maintain anonymity. Interviews with families included:

Year 2 - 23 Family Friendly Neighbor and Care providers; 14 parent partners (focus group); and 24 families.

Year 3: 23 parent partners (5 of whom were also parent screeners) and 13 families.

Year 4: 20 families and 5 parent screeners.

Key Informants

Sue Covitz, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Families First (2011)

Arauz Boudreau Alexy, M.D., Co-Chair, Wellness Council (2011)

Cherie Craft, Director, Smart from the Start (2011)

Margot Kaplan Sanoff, M.D., Co-Chair, Wellness Council (2011)

Ted Cross, Evaluator, Smart from the Start (2011)

Sally Fogerty, Senior Researcher, Education Development Center, member of the Ti5 Leadership Council (2011)

Laurie Sherman, Advisor to the Mayor of Boston, member of the Ti5 Leadership Council (2011)

Deborah Allen, Director, Bureau of Child, Adolescent and Family Health, BPHC (2011 and 2015)

Kate Roper, Director, MA Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Project, MA DPH (2011)

Sherri Killins, Commissioner, Dept of Early Education and Care (2011)

Pat Xavier, Co-Director, Boston Alliance for Early Education (2011)

Sonia N. Gomez-Banrey, Director, Countdown to Kindergarten (2011)

Rosa Inniss, Transition Specialist, Countdown to Kindergarten (2011)

Barbara Burke, Senior Policy Advisor, City of Boston (2011)

Patty McMahon, Director, Mayor's Youth Council and Youthline, City of Boston (2011)

Dina Seigal, Office of Governmental Relations, City of Boston (2011)

Kristin McSwain, Executive Director, The Boston Opportunity Agenda (2015)

Marie St. Fleur, Executive Director, Bessie Tartt Wilson Initiative for Children (2015)

Peg Sprague, former Executive Director, United Way of Massachusetts and current advisor to Ti5 (2015)

Elizabeth Pauley, Senior Director, Education to Career – Boston Foundation (2015)

Kimberly Haskins, Senior Program Officer, Education, Barr Foundation (2015)

Sharon Scott Chandler, Executive Vice President, ABCD (2015)

Jeri Robinson, Vice President of Early Learning Initiatives, Boston Children's Museum (2015)

Rahn Dorsey, Chief of Education, City of Boston (2015)

HUB Leadership (interviewed annually)

ABCT

Matt Lapuma, Executive Director, Family Nurturing Center

Randi Freundlich, Director of Community Programs, Family Nurturing Center (retired)

Colleen McGuire, Welcome Baby Coordinator, Family Nurturing Center

DCT

Sheena Collier, BPI Director, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative

Ayesha Rodriguez, 0-5 Manager, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative

May Louie, former Director of Leadership and Capacity, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative

Danubia Campus, former Birth to 5 Organizer, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative

EBCT

John Kelly, Executive Director, East Boston Social Centers

Gloria Devine, Program Manager, East Boston Social Centers

FCCT

Michele Nadow, former President and CEO, Dorchester House

Marika Michelangelo, Family Wellness Manager, Dorchester House

Huong Vu, FCCT coordinator

Tuyen Nguyen, former FCCT coordinator, Dorchester House

SELRCT

Vivian Izuchi, South End Family Engagement Network Coordinator, United South End Settlements

Dianne Curtin, Director of Programs and Services, United South End Settlements

Donna Owens, Vice President of Research, Evaluation, and Training, United South End Settlements

Kevin Hepner, former Executive Director, United South End Settlements

Katy Gobiell, former consultant to United South End Settlements

SOUTH BOSTON (2015 only)

Cheryl Itri, Director of Early Education and Care Programs, South Boston Neighborhood House

Sarah Ryan, former Director of Family Engagement, South Boston Neighborhood House

List of Core BCT Partners

The following is a list of the core partners involved with the five original neighborhoods. Core partners include ONLY those organizations integrally involved with BCT activities in the neighborhood. In addition to the core partners (listed below), sites also engage with a number of additional collaborators – who are not as actively engaged.

Alston Brighton Children Thrive (ABCT)

HUB - Family Nurturing Center

ABCD Allston-Brighton Neighborhood Opportunity Centers
 ABCD Allston-Brighton Head Start
 Boston Public Library - Brighton branch
 Boston Public Library - Faneuil branch
 Boston Public Library - Honan Allston branch
 Brazilian Women's Group
 Brighton Allston Congregational Church
 Brighton Public Library Branch
 Brighton-Roslindale WIC Program
 Charlesview Apartments
 Countdown to Kindergarten, BPS
 Cradles to Crayons
 Harvard Education Portal
 Jackson Mann Community Center Preschool
 Jackson/Mann Community Center
 Joseph M. Smith Community Health Center
 Presentation School Foundation

Dudley Children Thrive (DCT)

Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI)

Family Nurturing Center
 Children's Services of Roxbury
 Countdown to Kindergarten
 First Teacher
 Project Hope
 Sunnyside Daycare/Nurtury
 Vital Village

East Boston Children Thrive (EBCT)

HUB - East Boston Social Centers

Associated Early Care and Education
 APAC
 Boston Community Partnerships For Children Program
 Boston Police Department

Boston Public Library
 Boston Public Schools
 Countdown to Kindergarten
 East Boston Collaborative for Families
 East Boston Head Start
 East Boston Neighborhood Against Substance Abuse
 East Boston Neighborhood Health Center
 East Boston YMCA
 Eastie Pride Day Committee
 EBSC Family Workers Dept.
 Families First Parenting Program
 Little Folks/Shining Start Day Care
 Maverick Landing Community Development
 Project Bread
 ReadBoston
 South Boston Neighborhood Center
 The East Boston Cluster
 The Family Nurturing Center
 WIC
 YMCA

Fields Corner Children Thrive (FCCT)

HUB - Dorchester house

Boston Public Library - Fields Corner Branch
 Boston Public Library - Fields Corner Branch
 Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester
 Countdown to Kindergarten
 Dorchester Family Engagement Network
 Dothouse Health
 Family Nurturing Center
 My Child
 Boston Children's Museum
 Museum of Science
 ReadBoston
 WIC

South End Lower Roxbury Children Thrive (SELRCT)

HUB - United South End Settlements

Chinese Church Head Start
 Boston Children's Museum
 Boston Museum of Science
 Countdown to Kindergarten
 Ellis Memorial
 Family Independence Teen Living Program
 Father Friendly Initiative
 Fenway CDC

Inquilinos Boricuas in Accion
Little Sprouts Early Education Program
Mandela Homes
Parent Child Home Program
Read Boston
Resilient Sisterhood Project
South End Library
South Cove Community Health Center WIC
South End Community Health Center
South End Head Start
South End Healthy Boston Coalition

TDC
Vital Village
WIC

List of Participants in the Early Childhood Learning and Innovation Network for Communities (EC-LINC)

Community	Video
Alameda County, CA First 5 Alameda County	https://www.dropbox.com/s/qrr98u4nvd59xj4/Project%20LAUNCH%207%20minute.mp4?dl=0
Boston, MA Thrive in 5	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOj7P9vDsbn
Denver, CO Denver Early Childhood Council	http://denverearlychildhood.org/ http://denverearlychildhood.org/our-work/child-health/
Hartford, CT Office for Community Child Health Connecticut Children's Medical Center Hartford Department of Families, Children, Youth & Recreation	https://www.dropbox.com/sh/uppkb64rce6idrx/AACdVnCM0tIBJgNcr-iltXria?dl=0 https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9wfdc29ik6b4joi/AAC0Or784vRXEG2oWFuUbrEva?oref=e&n=404010516
Kent County, MI First Steps Great Start Collaborative	https://www.dropbox.com/s/6c7bqlar0j8gprrt/15mar12%20sse%20free%20preschool%20english.mov?dl=0
Lamoille Valley, VT Lamoille Family Center Building Bright Futures Regional Council	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-CNp6ZMnZU http://digital.vpr.net/post/take-photos-and-build-confidence-women-venture-montreal
Orange County, CA Children & Families Commission of Orange County	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vNPqootmJU0 http://momsorangecounty.org/changinglives_main.asp
Palm Beach County, FL Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-qgFWF1Gc4&feature=player_detailpage
Ventura County, CA First 5 Ventura County	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSlbPhmMBZA&feature=youtu.be https://youtu.be/k2ITgJFNr78