

Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative

Impacts and insights

Wilder Research

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In 2003, inspired and impelled by growing research evidence and awareness about the critical importance of early childhood experience on brain development, The Minnesota Initiative Foundations (MIFs) launched the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative (ECI). The McKnight Foundation provided \$3.2 million to establish the first 12 pilot coalitions.

Since 2003, the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative has supported and grown to include 86 local early childhood coalitions covering over 200 greater Minnesota communities with funding from The McKnight Foundation totaling \$9.2 million.

This multi-year support helped to leverage an additional \$3.4 million in funding from the Bush Foundation; Buuck Family Foundation; Mardag Foundation; Medica Foundation; Otto Bremer Foundation; Robins, Kaplan, Miller, & Ciresi Foundation for Children; The Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation; and The Sheltering Arms Foundation. Additional resources have been raised in the participating coalition sites from individuals, businesses, civic organizations and foundations. Based on local needs and priorities, these coalitions have implemented more than 500 evidence-informed projects, programs, and activities to improve the well-being of young children.

For over 50 years, The McKnight Foundation has committed to improving the quality of life throughout the state of Minnesota. We operate on multiple levels and in multiple fields because we recognize that life is complex; to improve its quality, we must attend to many aspects of it—our regional vitality, our natural environment, our arts and artists, and so on.

No surprise, then, that McKnight's diverse interests and multiple strategies begin where we all begin, with attention to early childhood development. Today, about 50 percent of our state's youngest children are unprepared to enter kindergarten. Despite this daunting reality, Minnesota's social and economic prosperity depends on every child getting a strong, early start toward reaching their full potential.

Before we can improve the lives of future generations, we must meet the needs of the generation next in line, right now.

Since establishing the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative in 2001, the six Minnesota Initiative Foundations and their partners have brought shared resources, shared understanding, and a shared statewide sense of purpose to serve our youngest citizens. Their work together has exposed and made strides to resolve historical blocks between motivation and action in improving early child development. To overcome challenges, they have embraced several core principles:

To help every child, you need to reach every child. The ECI seeks input and partnership from everyone with a direct or indirect impact on Minnesota's young children. It begins with parents, and actively extends to schools, child care, the healthcare field, libraries, the business community, congregations, community groups, and more. In building relationships with everyone connected to children, they have amassed an effective support network that is reaching more and more young people.

Isolation can undo good work and weaken the best intentions. The ECI has built itself on the strong shoulders of Minnesota's communities, knowing the power of full community engagement is unique and invaluable to the long-term sustainability of efforts like this. Formerly isolated parents and families now have a support network to turn to. Child care providers who previously had to "invent the wheel" on their own, now have access to new resources and peers. And advocates who felt like one voice shouting into the wind now belong to a chorus of like-minded believers.

No individual mind holds all the answers to improve the well-being of Minnesota's children. If we're going to get this done, we need to do it together. That is why the ECI has worked so tirelessly to raise public awareness about the issue, providing training and skill-building to increase the knowledge and understanding among those with the resources and connections to make a difference. Beyond eliminating isolation, true collaboration is the name of the game, and the ECI's coalitions have made a habit of thoughtfully pooling funding, knowledge, and relationships to make a lasting difference.

The outstanding work of the ECI's 86 coalitions continues in hundreds of communities statewide. More children are reached every day. Slowly, pockets of isolation among families, friends, neighbors, and other early care and education providers are dispelled. And powerful new partnerships to serve Minnesota's children and their families continue to appear across our state.

And thanks to the hard work of the Minnesota Initiative Foundations, the Early Childhood Initiative, and its 500-plus evidence-informed projects operating statewide, we have a better framework today to provide opportunities and inspiration to improve the well-being of Minnesota's youngest children—for generations yet to come, and for the generation that has just begun.

Kate Wolford
President, The McKnight Foundation

This report describes and assesses findings from a survey on the perceived impacts and improvements in early childhood practice, programs, and policies in communities with Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative coalitions.

Key achievements

“The Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative has provided both the framework and the resources to help strengthen the local system of care for our young children and their families.”

The Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative has established a solid base of informed and involved community members across agencies and sectors who are able to work closely together in efforts to ensure that young children thrive.

“We now have much stronger partnerships, so we are able to reach and serve families that used to slip through the cracks. We see each other as collaborators, not rivals. We work together for the good of young children.”

As a whole, the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative has achieved progress in wide-ranging areas. Across the state, coalitions have increased and improved:

- Partnerships and collaborations among programs serving young children.

- Advocacy for early care and education involving a broad range of sectors, including business.
- Media coverage and community energy and enthusiasm for supporting early childhood issues.
- Opportunities for training and networking among informal providers, licensed early care and education providers, and early childhood education school teachers to improve child care quality and access to materials and resources.
- Awareness about and referrals for early childhood screening.
- Awareness about the importance of reading to young children and access to books for them.
- The transition to kindergarten through engaging young children and families in fun, learning activities and programs.

“As a result of the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative, our elected officials, business people, and general public are now more informed and engaged in early care and education. As a long time early childhood professional, I am impressed how this effort has sparked the concern and involvement of the mayor, school board members, human service providers, and many others to make our community a better place for young children and families.”

ABOUT THE SURVEY

In March 2010, Wilder Research administered a web survey, completed by 252 members of coalitions compiled by the MIFs. The largest percentage (43%) of respondents identified themselves as being from the early childhood sector. A quarter (24%) identified as parents, and nearly a fifth (17%) represented the K-12 education sector. The remainder identified with other sectors, with 10 or more sectors represented in each of the MIF regions. Survey respondents rated 37 indicators of progress in 5 areas and provided stories about significant change and lasting impact.

Key lessons and attributes of success

A number of themes emerged to account for the accomplishments of the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative:

- **Commitment, communication, and collaboration**—Partners need time to get to know each other and to offer what they bring to the partnership.
- **Continuous learning network**—The Early Childhood Initiative (ECI) provided opportunities to network and learn from each other regionally and across the state. It also offered research-based trainings on a variety of early childhood topics, such as brain development, social/emotional development, and dental health.
- **Efficient use of scarce resources**—Coalitions find creative ways to pool their resources to fund and sustain programs as well as build upon existing programs to expand their reach and focus on early childhood. As a result of collaboration, some literacy and parenting programs have become financially independent, thus freeing up ECI coalition funding for other activities.

One stakeholder sums it up this way:

“The collaboration, networking and the development of professional relationships to serve young children and their families better has been priceless! Because we all work together, we can provide more with the limited resources in our programs and use the talents/skills of so many individuals and agencies. Since we communicate monthly and we know what is happening in our community, we don’t duplicate services. We value each program, share information and do not perceive other early childhood programs as competition. We have worked together to bring about change—because of the ECI connection.”

Another stakeholder points out the importance of allowing enough time to show progress:

“Initiatives take time. That is why it is so unfortunate that grants and other forms of funding typically last only one to three years. The Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative has been ongoing and has provided assistance and support for several years, and the results reflect this commitment. Our local Initiative just keeps getting better and better. The results look more and more promising each year. We have appreciated all that The McKnight Foundation and the Minnesota Initiative Foundations have done for the field of early childhood care and education.”

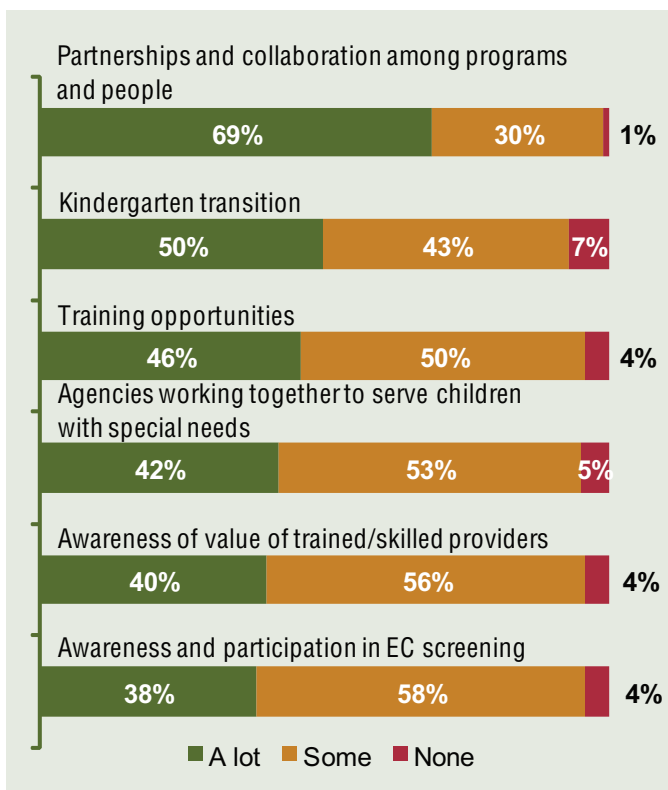


Five key areas of a nurturing community: Perceived impact

Respondents rated a series of indicators of progress in their communities in relation to the MIFs key components of a community nurturing to young children. Survey participants also provided stories about significant changes and lasting impacts in their communities as a result of the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative.

Results are provided in order of perceived impact within the five key areas of a nurturing community—effective and coordinated early care and education, optimal early learning opportunities, ready schools, community engagement, and strong families.

INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVE AND COORDINATED EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION



By coordinating efforts to produce essential information, eliminate duplication, and fill service gaps, early care and education professionals increase their own community connections, sense of mutual trust, and opportunities for service coordination.

Partnerships and collaboration

A large majority of respondents across all regions report that “a lot” of progress has been made to increase partnerships and collaboration among the programs and people serving young children.

These programs and people are working together to ensure families have access to programming. They are also collaborating on joint programming, such as developing programs for fathers, creating book distribution systems, bringing in trainings and sponsoring conferences, and implementing literacy and school readiness programs for preschool-age children. These organizations and people are also working together to advocate for early childhood issues.

Notably, the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative has brought together licensed early care and education providers, early childhood education school professionals, and informal providers. County agencies are partnering with family, friend and neighbor providers, and public schools are collaborating with preschools. Professionals are also working across sectors to ensure the very best for children. Public health and early childhood providers are collaborating to address both the health and learning of young children.

“Programs are working together to provide quality initiatives for children and families that improve learning. Just coming together and talking to one another is very beneficial, but the Early Childhood Initiative has done more than that—they have actually made progress that has improved all programs.”

Dialogue around kindergarten transition

Dialogue has increased between early care and education providers and schools (see Ready Schools section on page 10). In addition, increased dialogue between providers and parents—on how to prepare children for kindergarten and what providers and parents can do in their homes—has resulted in a variety of new school readiness programming, from week-long summer programs in the community to year-long programs that partner with schools.

“Opening the lines of communication between private programs and the public schools in our community has allowed us to provide additional opportunities for staff training and connecting children and families to the schools prior to Kindergarten. In addition, this partnership provided opportunities for early childhood teachers to connect with kindergarten teachers. Open communication about kindergarten readiness activities has allowed staff to feel more engaged in the lives of children, helping them to prepare for the transition to school.”

Training for early care and education providers

Providing common age-appropriate curriculum materials across different programs increases the consistent educational approach for all early care services.

Since the ECI began, providers have had many training opportunities on a variety of topics. Some coalitions focused trainings on early literacy and provided books. Others provided health-related

training in such areas as social/emotional development and dental health. Still others selected a new training theme every year. Providers have also received training and materials on other types of curricula, such as math and science, or small and gross motor skill development.

In addition to provider trainings, some coalitions have hosted summits or conferences that bring together people from many sectors. They have focused on various topics, including policy and advocacy, social/emotional development, brain development, literacy, and kindergarten readiness.

Other coalitions bring together early childhood professionals who serve the same schools—child care centers, family child care, Head Start, ECFE/School Readiness—to meet, talk, and learn together with kindergarten teachers. The conversation centers on promoting social/emotional skills of children and referring children with behavioral and/or developmental concerns. This approach is seen as an excellent way to get everyone on the same page about school readiness.

“Child care providers (licensed and unlicensed, English and non-English-speaking) have been beneficiaries of increased numbers of partnerships for training and quality improvements. It's so much easier now, to propose a new project and find partners. We have planned many Spanish-language trainings, meetings, even a conference for child care providers. ...Initiatives are essential now to maintain and to grow projects which encourage higher quality child care.”

Children with special needs

Respondents report that collaboration and partnerships with other child-serving organizations have improved processes for referring children with special needs. Some regions have provided training to providers on how to identify children who may have special needs, and where to refer families to get assistance. Some communities have implemented early childhood developmental screenings as part of their early childhood sites and classrooms to ensure children with special needs are identified early. Home visiting programs have also worked closely with families to ensure children with special needs get services they might not otherwise have received.

Value of skilled providers

Providers have increased their involvement in other child-serving arenas, such as public health, human services and education. As communities gain more understanding of providers' value, they are increasingly involving them in discussions of early childhood issues and providing training. Additionally, some communities have held recognition and award events to show their appreciation for skilled providers and reward those who have gained additional skills or knowledge.

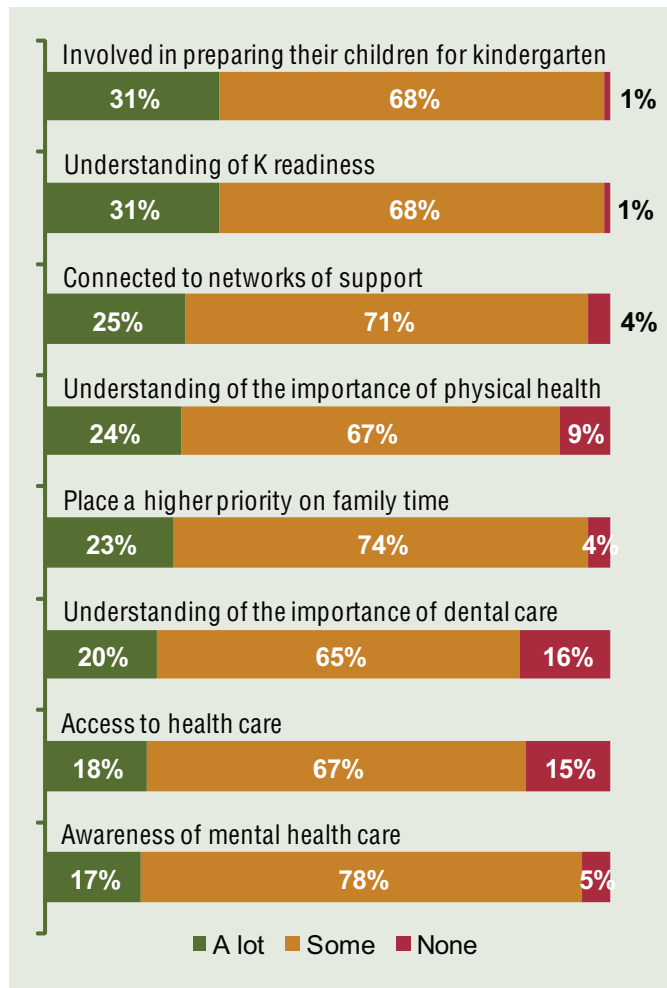
Early childhood screening

In several communities, increased communication among agencies serving young children has resulted in more awareness about early childhood screening and more referrals for them. In addition, through home visiting programs and trainings for child care providers, more families are being referred for early childhood screenings.

“ I could share many stories about improvements in our community as a result of the ECI. The one that I think has made the biggest impact is the Early Childhood Home Visitor who has connected with well over 200 families with phone calls and home visits in the last three years. She has had many success stories where children got the services they needed before entering kindergarten, which has made their kindergarten experience more successful. Our screening numbers are also up because she calls and reminds families of the screening and how important it is to have the assessment done early. The home visitor has made a difference in our community!!! ”



INDICATORS OF EARLY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



The Early Childhood Initiative coalitions empower parents by providing information and resources. The coalitions also support efforts of providers to help children gain literacy skills and develop cognitively, socially, emotionally and/or physically.

Access to books and literacy

Statewide, the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative has broadened access to children's books, and increased awareness among parents and caregivers about the importance of reading to young children.

Through partnerships with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, several coalitions mail books to homes of children under five who live within specified geographic areas. This program is particularly effective in very rural areas, because families do not have to travel to receive books—the books come to them. Many coalitions have leveraged additional funding, such as United Way, to pay for the books and mailing costs.

Several communities have increased access to books by placing book shelves at local businesses, such as restaurants where families go, and/or setting up mobile libraries around town where families can borrow a book. Some communities have found local sponsors to take responsibility for the bookshelves, increasing community engagement in early literacy.

In some communities, the library has become a place for parents to get connected with early childhood services such as ECFE, Head Start and WIC.

Communities have increased awareness of the importance of reading and access to books through literacy programming. This has included curricula for early care and education providers, as well as family events, library reading programs, and school readiness and preschool curricula focused on literacy.

“ Our ECI serves an entire county that has only one public library. We focus on creating a culture of literacy by getting books into the homes of young children and then offering literacy training courses to parents and professionals... We believe we are making a difference for school readiness in our county by making it more likely that children will have the literacy skills they need. ”

Parent education

Coalitions have made progress in the area of parent education in several ways. To accommodate more parents, ECFE programs are offered at new times and locations. For example, parent education is now a part of one hospital's prenatal classes. Communities also offer a series of parenting workshops, such as Love and Logic, to parents.

Trainings offered to early care and education providers are now open to parents. Kindergarten readiness programming for children has been expanded to include a parent component. Finally, many communities have begun resource fairs where parents can connect with community resources; learn techniques for promoting their children's development; and get books or other materials.

Importance of early brain development

Training opportunities provided to early care and education providers and parents have increased awareness about the importance of early brain development. A few communities have implemented specific activities to raise awareness including a partnership with the local school district to provide information on early brain development in mailings to families with children under five, and home visitors who stress brain development during their newborn visits.

Creating early learning settings for diverse families

A primary way coalitions reach families of diverse backgrounds is through outreach to and training for child care providers, particularly family, friend and neighbor (FFN) providers. Some coalitions focused on these providers by offering language-specific trainings and materials. Others started doing home

visits with providers to model educational activities and bring books into homes. These FFN providers are gateways to families and share what they learn with parents.

Social and emotional development

Progress in this area is a result of the many early care and education trainings and educational opportunities that have been provided to both providers and parents. Many communities have brought in speakers to focus on this topic, or included discussion of social and emotional development as part of larger training events and conferences.

Addressing barriers to access

Several literacy programs have removed barriers by creating new opportunities for families and children, or by providing books through the mail or in places where families congregate. Others are providing family events at apartment complexes, where families live. A few regions have added transportation options, including preschool busing and car seats in public buses. In several regions, home visitors help families obtain necessary resources. Communities have also started offering scholarships so all children can attend preschool.



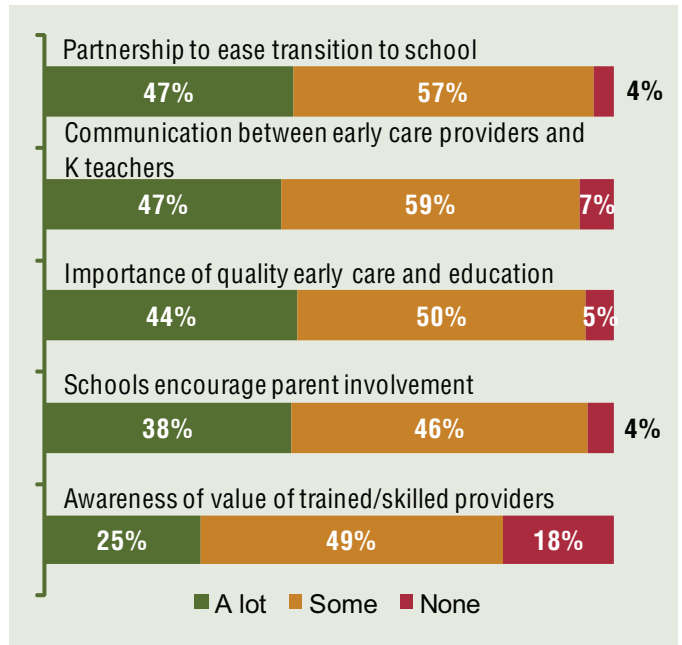
Nutritional and physical health

The health and well-being of children have been areas of concern for many coalition communities. A variety of projects and programs are underway that promote dental health, mental health, good nutrition, and physical health. To ensure young children have access to appropriate play spaces, some communities have focused on building or redesigning playground space suitable for children under five. The new playgrounds provide safe spaces for young children, and places for families to gather where children of all ages can play.

“Recognizing the importance of large motor skill development, our coalition worked to provide age-appropriate playground equipment in the community park and the early childhood school playground. This was done through fundraising efforts and grantwriting. Our effort included educating the community about healthy physical activities for young children and the need for safe places to play.”



INDICATORS OF READY SCHOOLS



Coalition partners and programs ease the transition to kindergarten by building relationships between parents, teachers, and schools and by promoting parent involvement in their children's education.

Increased communication and partnerships

In all of the regions, early care and education providers and K-12 educators are communicating and collaborating to improve the transition to kindergarten for children and their families. Joint training sessions are a common way to reach this goal. Transition-to-kindergarten meetings and trainings often bring together kindergarten teachers, preschool teachers, child care center providers, family child care providers, school administrators, social service providers, community members, and parents to discuss strategies, events, and services that support children and their families. In addition to increasing knowledge, these training opportunities build relationships among all of the partners.

Coalitions have implemented opportunities for kindergarten and preschool teachers and their students to visit each others' classrooms. Some elementary schools also invite preschool children to shadow kindergarten students at the school for a day where they are able to eat school lunch together, play outside during recess, and ride a school bus. This experience allows the preschool children to gain firsthand experiences of what kindergarten will be like. These visits, along with curricular planning and the creation of uniform assessment materials, help to promote a smooth transition to kindergarten.

“As a high school administrator for most of my 30 year career, it was important to be brought up to speed on early childhood issues during the five years of my superintendency. It was an excellent opportunity to ramp up my learning curve as the area [early childhood] leaders took me to workshops, field trips to Grand Rapids, THRIVE, Success by 6, and many other agencies to improve my knowledge base. In fact, I learned so much that I am willing to attempt to create a Center in the area for children and their families needing assistance with mental health issues. There is a great need to be filled and more people are realizing this now because of the efforts of MN Early Childhood Initiative!”

Shift to E-12 perspective

Some communities and school-district policy-makers have made some progress embracing the shift to an E-12 perspective, seeing early childhood as part of the school system's responsibility. In addition to changes in how communities view early childhood, some regions report concrete changes in curriculum and assessment that support the E-12

shift, such as uniform pre-kindergarten assessments for preschools and child care programs, which allow kindergarten teachers to evenly compare students' readiness and prepare for their students in the fall.

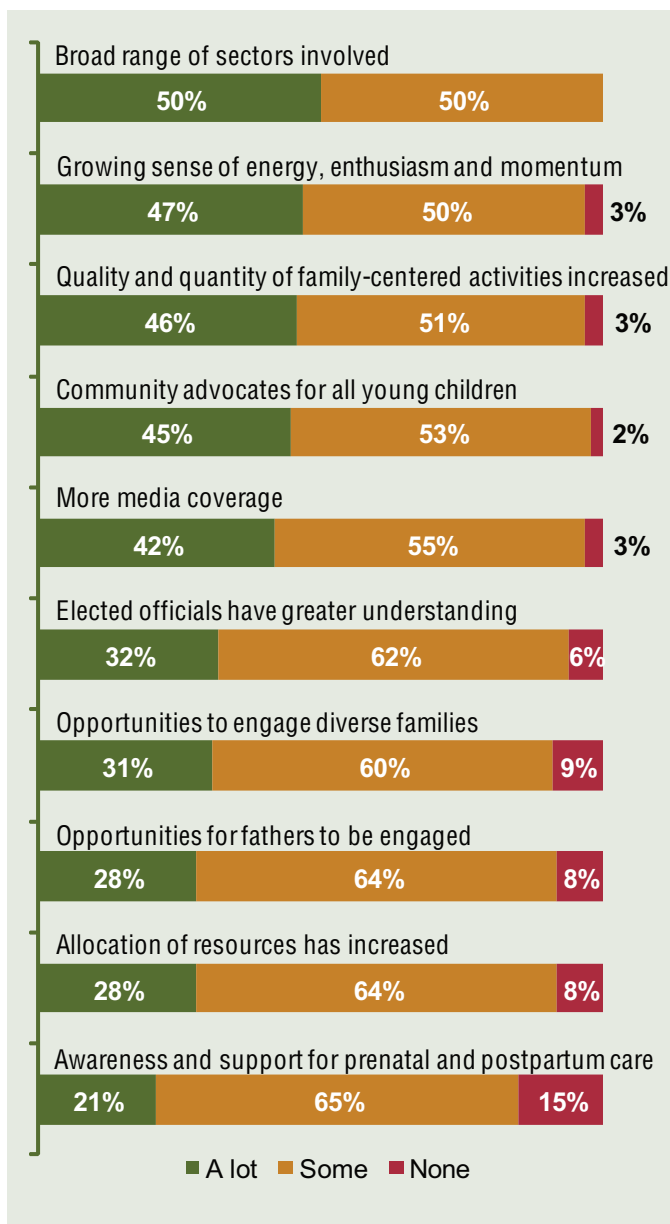
Engaging parents

Initiatives across the state have engaged families and children in the kindergarten transition process through a variety of programs, activities, and fun events. These events are often located in the elementary school, which provides opportunities for children and their families to visit and be more comfortable in the school building.

Coalitions also provide opportunities for preschool children and their families to attend a kindergarten readiness program. The duration and target audience for the programs vary, but they generally consist of a series of transition nights over a few months or an intensive multi-week program. These readiness programs often include readiness activities for parents and children as well as opportunities to meet school staff and learn about school systems, processes, and expectations.

“Our ECI started a pre-kindergarten program for at risk families. It is a two week period right before Kindergarten begins. It is a time when the children with their entire family learn the basic "ins and outs" of the kindergarten classroom, school and school staff, buses, etc. In many cases it was so overwhelming for new families trying to figure out the school setting that they started out on the wrong foot. This program was started by the ECI and is now part of the school district's program.”

INDICATORS OF ENGAGED COMMUNITY MEMBERS



Young children need advocates. When people understand what children need to succeed, they pitch in to improve conditions and outcomes for them.

Range of sectors

In every region, a broader range of sectors is now involved in early care and education advocacy than ever before, sectors that are not typically involved in early care and education issues. Among those involved are:

- **Business**—individual businesses, retail stores, the chamber of commerce, child care centers and providers
- **Public**—public health, social services, WIC, human services, probation
- **Community**—churches, senior citizen apartments/nursing homes, rotary clubs, library, service organizations
- **Schools**—public, private, and charter schools, community colleges, universities, community education, ECFE, ECSE

“ We have great participation from many areas, but one area where you wouldn't really expect it is adult probation. One probation agent attends every meeting, is involved in many activities, and is a huge advocate for young children and their families. She regularly gives out books to the children whose parents she sees for probation appointments. She also shares ideas about literacy to those parents and children... This would not have happened had she not been involved with the Early Childhood Coalition and its focus on children/families and literacy. ”

Community advocacy increased energy and enthusiasm

By working in collaboration with multiple organizations, coalition members are energized and no longer feel as though they are working alone. The activities they work on together help to promote and build support for early childhood programs and the ECI in their communities.

Family-centered activities

Coalitions have increased the quality and quantity of family-centered activities, including:

- **Community events**—pancake breakfast at the firehouse, community egg hunt, family bingo at the nursing home, and family-centered activities at the county fair
- **Family nights**—a meal with arts and crafts, educational activities and networking with parents, and open gym nights for families
- **Resource fairs**—information booths from agencies, community organizations, and businesses on child care, health, educational, and other types of services for their children
- **Literacy events**—library reading programs, read-alongs with the firefighters, and summer story times before "music in the park" concerts

Media coverage

Several regions reported early childhood issues and events are receiving more print, radio and Internet exposure. Examples include: 1) a weekly early childhood calendar printed in newspapers, 2) donations of ad space, 3) a series of articles on early childhood, and 4) letters to the editor.

Elected officials

In several communities, elected officials regularly participate in early childhood coalition meetings; in others, they attend on a more ad hoc basis. Coalitions also educate elected officials by presenting to their county commissioners, holding candidate events, or writing to legislators. They have seen positive change in the understanding of early childhood issues as evidenced by recognition of early childhood efforts by elected officials, attendance by officials at more events and meetings, and even allocation of taxpayer resources for specific programs or projects.

Opportunities for diverse families

Coalitions have reached teen mothers, low-income families, and non-English speaking families. Several coalitions are providing home visiting services for teen parents and/or low-income families to assist them in accessing resources. Other communities have started literacy or book programs in other languages, specifically Spanish. Some are providing training to non-English speaking caregivers.

“ We started a Babies and Blankets program to go in to homes of new teen moms... and to get systems in place to support them. The program was very successful and after a couple of years was able to be picked up by Community Services as part of their programming. A need was identified, resources were secured, and the program was launched and able to gain sustainability. This is an example of the kind of work this coalition has been able to accomplish. ”

“ We have focused a lot of our efforts and resources on our Early Childhood Family Advocate, who identifies, supports, and educates high-risk families who are not being served or are under served by other agencies. She helps them to remove barriers... She has found a kindergarten child who was not enrolled in school, identified families living in their cars, and helped families with personal safety, home safety and more. ”



Opportunities for fathers

Fathers Reading Every Day (FRED) events have been very successful in several regions. Participation has been larger than expected, and teachers are noticing an increase in fathers reading to their children after participating in the event. In at least two communities, the FRED program has become an autonomous, volunteer-led program, which allows the coalition to direct funds to other areas.

Boot Camp for New Dads has been implemented in one region. A national program for expectant fathers, it is facilitated by men, giving them space to talk about their fears and concerns in a supportive environment and to improve their awareness of community resources, their partner's needs, and how to care for their babies.

Resource allocation

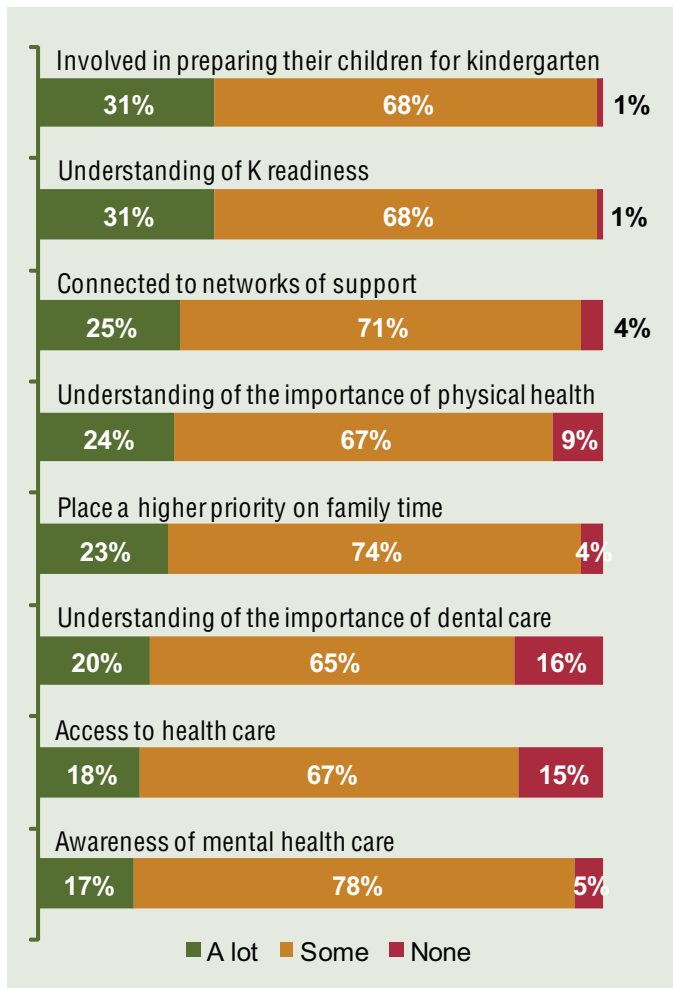
While resources from the county or state levels have not followed the private sector funding, several coalitions have implemented successful strategies to raise additional funding for their local early care and education efforts. Various fundraisers, including the "Literacy.....Run for It!" walk/run, and Jail and Bail fundraiser, raise money for the Early Childhood Initiative, literacy programs, or scholarships for preschool programs. In many communities organizations and businesses are sponsoring book programs.

Funding has been secured to add child safety restraints in city buses, and several regions raised money to build playgrounds appropriate for children under five.

“ As a result of the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative, our elected officials, business people, and general public are now more informed and involved in early care and education. The mayor and business representatives attend meetings, and the city and service clubs provide some financial support! ”



INDICATORS OF STRONG FAMILIES



Coalitions work to build trusting relationships and partnerships that support healthy choices and connect parents to information and resources on their own terms. This is an ongoing effort.

Increasing understanding

Coalitions conduct home visits, organize community events, and collaborate with child care providers to help all parents, especially those in greater need. Through these connections, parents are given opportunities to learn about what they can do to help their child enter kindergarten prepared.

ECI sites have brought in speakers and conducted trainings on the importance of socio-emotional development and mental health. Many of these events

have been attended by early care and education providers, health and human service professionals, and community members in addition to parents.

“ A strong push for ALL families to understand all aspects of what it looks like for their child to enter school prepared is a high priority in our district. Communication and commitment have grown from our involvement with the Early Childhood Initiative. It is not just ‘preschool teachers’ doing their own thing but the ‘team approach’ involving parents, preschool staff, kindergarten teachers, Title 1, ECSE, school nurse, public health nurse, physical education department, etc. It takes a village to raise a child, and together we are getting there thanks to the ECI helping with training and funding.”

Supporting parents

In order to better support families and connect them with resources, coalitions developed resource guides to gain a greater understanding of the services provided by different agencies in their community. This information has helped agencies and organizations be more effective in referring children and families for services.

Coalitions have also supported families in their efforts to hold gainful employment by providing quality child care.

“ This mother, with many complicating factors that include chemical dependency, poverty, domestic abuse, and mental health needs, came to a family literacy class about four years ago...and continued to return despite having relapses, relationship changes, and housing changes. Through this setting, she had available to her Adult Basic Education, high quality child care, parent/child interaction time, parenting classes, home visits to follow-up on parenting needs, and mental health intervention for the parent and child. When her needs are met, she can more effectively meet the needs of her children! ”



The Minnesota Initiative Foundations (MIFS), are six independent, regional foundations serving the 80-county area of greater Minnesota:

- Initiative Foundation — www.ifound.org
- Northland Foundation — www.northlandfdn.org
- Northwest Minnesota Foundation — www.nwmf.org
- Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation — www.smifoundation.org
- Southwest Initiative Foundation — www.swifoundation.org
- West Central Initiative — www.wcif.org

Authors: Richard Chase, Jennifer Valorose, and Katie Broton

Learn more about this topic:

- Babies in Minnesota
- Early childhood Minnesota: Indicators and strategies for Minnesota's early childhood system
- Early care and education in Minnesota
- Project Early Kindergarten - Early Reading First
- The cost-burden to Minnesota K-12 when children are unprepared for kindergarten
- Early learning conditions among low-income families

Find these at www.wilderresearch.org. Learn more about early childhood in Minnesota at Minnesota Compass quality-of-life initiative, www.mncompass.org.

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