

MAYOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON

# early childhood development & early education

REPORT TO MAYOR KARL DEAN

APRIL 13, 2011



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## ter·mi·nol·o·gy

### **child care vs. early child development**

This report makes a distinction between child care, which refers more to supervising a child (baby-sitting), and early child development, which involves certain education programming efforts to improve the social, emotional, cognitive, literacy and numeracy skills of the child.

April 13, 2011

Dear Mayor Dean:

This report represents a diligent effort of eighteen outstanding and insightful Nashvillians working to analyze early child education and development as it stands today in our community. The overarching goal that continually guides these community members is developing ways to foster high-quality early years programming and healthy brain development that will promote the long-term health and stability of our city's youngest children.

As you well know, the early years have a long-lasting impact on the city and the quality of life for the residents we serve. High-quality development experiences in the early years increase the odds for academic success during the K-12 years and beyond, but it doesn't stop there. When our young children grow up to be adults, what occurs in the early years will strongly influence the social fabric of the city and the prosperity of our local economy.

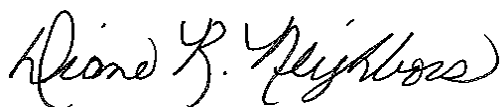
Regarding our work, members assembled as an Advisory Council for the first time on September 1, 2010, and subsequently broke into three work groups: Public Access, Public Awareness, Economic Development Strategies and Models. Throughout our time, we had regular work group meetings and convened full council gatherings to share and report out progress in our work groups. Collectively, we were able to analyze local, state, and national data; consult international research and best practices; interview local practitioners and policy makers; and identify key needs of Nashville-Davidson County families. We also received valuable technical assistance from National League of Cities regarding successful models and practices from around the country that would be beneficial for the needs of our local community.

As a result of the extensive work, we have established a city-wide vision of success for our children from birth to eight, and offer key and concise recommendations that are appropriately aligned to achieve this vision. Improvement in our recommended areas of focus will ultimately have a significant effect on the outcomes and quality of life for our youngest children, their families, and our city as a whole.

The contributions of all the committee members, the report's staff, and Laura McComas with National League of Cities are significant and substantial. This report is much richer and meaningful with their noteworthy investment of time and knowledge.

We are appreciative that as Mayor, you have made education a top priority for our city. Thank you for a keen focus and attention to the critical beginning years of the education lifecycle and the impact it has for our families and our city.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane R. Neighbors". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Diane Neighbors  
Vice Mayor  
Metropolitan Government of Nashville-Davidson County

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## ORIGINAL CHARGE

The Mayor's Advisory Council on Early Childhood Development & Early Education was charged with the following:

To assess existing programs, services, policies and public awareness within Nashville-Davidson County, and use such assessments to make objective recommendations to the Mayor as they relate to the long-term health and stability of these provisions for children (0-8 years of age).<sup>1</sup>

-September 2010

1. See appendix A for the full Scope of Investigation and Timeline of Action for the Council & Appendix B for a general context of Early Childhood Education and Development in Davidson County.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Early child development and education programming have proven to be effective investments in both young children and the communities in which they live. An international body of research points to strong evidence that high-quality early child development and early education policies, with appropriate standards and accountability, yield many more benefits than costs through the use of finite community resource dollars. Not only do young children acquire important social-emotional skills that yield long term benefits to both society and individual families, but the early years are the greatest opportunity to develop cognitive skills for optimal brain development, healthy habits, and lay a foundation for years of future academic success. Employers also capture short and long-term benefits for their local firms when early care and education is supported. Yet many communities, including Nashville-Davidson County have not made concentrated, comprehensive efforts to support robust and aligned early care and education efforts to ensure the sustained healthy development and success of their youngest citizens.

While Nashville-Davidson County does many things “right” in providing key services and supports to promote early childhood development and education, there are undoubtedly needs and weaknesses within the landscape of early care and education that must be addressed. A wide variety of service providers exist within the field of early child development and education. As a result, this has created a patchwork system of care in which:

- Access to high-quality early learning opportunities is limited.
- There is limited public knowledge and awareness, especially among the business community in terms of how to support employee-parents and partner with the early childhood community.
- Transitions between the public schools and the private, public, and informal provision of early care and education are weak and/or uncoordinated.
- Providers lack the supports they need to provide the highest quality of services consistently.
- Perhaps most important, the city lacks an aligned, comprehensive vision for supporting the healthy development, both cognitive as well as physical and sustained school success of all Nashville-Davidson County children.

These concerns are highlighted given the intimate connection of this industry to the productivity of the local economy. The child development and education domain is a source of employment and livelihood for a considerable number of individuals, while simultaneously providing assistance to many more families and single parents seeking active participation in the local workforce.

This report serves two purposes. First, it provides a picture of the current landscape of Nashville-Davidson County’s early childhood policies and programming, including influences from local, state and national forces, and particular barriers that impede high-quality programming. Second, it articulates a vision going forward and recommends a set of prioritized concrete action steps to accomplish the proposed vision.

# PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

1. While Metro Nashville-Davidson County is home to many robust early childhood education programs, there continues to be limited access to both public and private early childhood education for children and families.

- A. Access to programs and support services varies across different geographical locations and neighborhoods. Of Davidson County's approximately 48,285 children ages 0-5, it is estimated that only 37% participate in some form of licensed child care or education program.
- B. Approximately 35% of eligible children who apply for Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) Voluntary Pre-K program are wait-listed.
- C. Formalized infant and toddler care, which is especially critical for a child's earliest developmental stage, is most difficult to access. This is due in large part to its higher costs of operation which are necessary to help ensure the health and safety of young children.

2. High-quality early child development programming among all providers is not universal.

- A. While only 37% of all children are in any type of care, an estimated 27% of Davidson County's entire 0-5 year old population participates in a high-quality formalized care program.
- B. The Department of Human Services (DHS) licensing process for child care providers is designed to ensure the health and safety of children. All programs – Tennessee Voluntary Pre-K (TN-VPK), Head Start, and community-based child care programs – must meet minimal DHS licensing standards.
- C. However, not all programs pursue a DHS star rating. DHS maintains a 3-star rating system that is built upon the licensing process. The 3-star rating program is meant to differentiate program quality among individual providers. Tracking by enrollment in Nashville-Davidson County, 15.7% of County 0-5 year olds are in 3-star centers, 1.8% in 2-star centers, 0.3% are 1-star, 7% are in 0-star centers, and 11.5% are in centers that do not participate (NP) in the star rating system (such as MNPS Voluntary Pre-K).
- D. As a state of Tennessee Department of Education program (DOE), Voluntary Pre-K classrooms in Nashville-Davidson County do not participate in the DHS 3-star rating system, maintaining their own quality oversight process, but must still be licensed by DHS.
- E. Two local supplementary programs, United Way's Read to Succeed and Vanderbilt's Early Reading First Project, have both shown statistically impressive gains in preschool children's language and literacy skills, and especially for Economically Disadvantaged children. Read to Succeed is a program affiliated with a group of local community-based child care providers while Early Reading First is a program based in MNPS Pre-K classrooms.

3. Better accountability is needed that more closely reflects outcome measures of early childhood development and education for young children.
  - A. Ambiguity exists about whether the DHS 3-star rating system and the Tennessee Voluntary Pre-K oversight processes are accurate and effective mechanisms to incentivize and comprehensively measure quality learning and developmental outcomes for children.
  - B. Programs use different standards and assessments that promote and determine a certain set of early childhood programming practices. The data systems, standards, and assessments currently in place do not emphasize non-cognitive skill development for all children that participate in programs as much as they should.
  - C. Current and potential funders, both private and public sources, of early child development programs are unsure of what they are funding – child care or early childhood development and education – and why.
  
4. Many community-based providers in Nashville-Davidson County struggle with day-to-day business management operations. Ultimately, this affects the programming and quality outcome for children in these centers.
  - A. Center operators and personnel face multiple challenges, including budgetary restrictions and lack of time, to implement advanced management technology and techniques to help streamline business operations. Supports such as business and organizational management training and business technologies are needed to help develop and acquire greater business efficiencies.
  - B. Providers throughout Nashville-Davidson County have opportunities to increase the efficiency of the licensing compliance process -- thus allowing more focus and monetary resources to be spent on increasing the quality of early child development programming.
  
5. There is a public awareness gap (both collective and individual) of the critical importance and opportunity of early childhood development (both physical and cognitive) in a child's first few years, and knowledge of the corollary best practices that foster this development.
  - A. As their child's first teachers and greatest advocates, it is important that Nashville-Davidson County families have easy access to a complete set of parent education and support resources. While many parents choose not to access the formal early learning/child care system and arrange for informal care, there is still a need to provide all parents, especially those outside of the care system, with access to information and community resources that will help them promote their child's healthy development.
  - B. The health care and public health provider communities present an excellent opportunity to share early childhood development information and support resources. These are especially crucial partners related to the birth process and pediatrician visits during the window of opportunity to share critical information at the start of a child's physical and developmental life.
  - C. The profile and importance of early care and education and healthy child development need to grow to create a city-wide value for investing in all young children.

6. Transitions between the public schools and the private, public, and informal provision of early care and education are weak and/or uncoordinated.

- A. Communication and synergy between MNPS, parents, and community-based early education providers (such as Head Start, Early Head Start, informal care givers, and private providers) needs to be improved.
- B. School readiness expectations for MNPS students entering Kindergarten are frequently misaligned with community-based providers and informal care givers' early childhood programming. In addition, community-based teachers, parents, and elementary public school teachers need to more effectively communicate individual student needs to each other when a child is moving through a transition phase.
- C. MNPS should formulate a partnership with community-based providers – private and public, informal and formal – to widely and effectively disseminate publicly known Kindergarten intake expectations, and to assist community-based providers to help align curricula, assessments and teaching practices to meet the published expectations. Other developmental expectations including health and nutrition should be included in the conversation.

7. Few businesses in Davidson County are active community partners in the early childhood education and development landscape.

- A. Without question, businesses generously support K-12 education and civic initiatives in Nashville-Davidson County. While much has been done to promote the “family friendly” life of the city, current and newly arriving young families often find limited or nonexistent access to early care services, benefits, or opportunities through employers.
- B. Relationships between the early care and learning community and the business community are not well-developed. These relationships need to be better leveraged to garner greater public support and resource support for early childhood issues.
- C. Employers tend to overlook policies, opportunities and workplace supports that would help reduce employee work-family conflicts, even though many of these measures are low-cost to no-cost. Incorporating these employee policies and benefits to a workplace environment would help increase profitability and productivity by reducing costs associated with higher absenteeism, higher turnover (and new hire training), and low employee satisfaction levels.

## VISION

All Nashville-Davidson County children ages 0-8 will be healthy, well-adjusted and ready for sustained life and academic success. This means having critical social-emotional skills and cognitive skills that are developed through high-quality early childhood education and care opportunities in the home and throughout the community.

Correspondingly, it is critical that Nashville-Davidson County households, schools, and community-based early child care providers and educators ensure robust high-quality development and learning opportunities that are sustained throughout the first eight years of life.

Success is measured by the readiness of our children for life and school and the engagement of all sectors of the community, including our families, schools, neighborhoods, businesses, and government.

## Improving Access to High-Quality Learning

While Metro Nashville-Davidson County is home to many robust early childhood education programs, there continues to be limited access to both public and private early childhood education for children and families.

*\* From here forward, the terms “Nashville” and “Davidson County” or the “County” are used interchangeably to mean all of “Nashville-Davidson County.”*

There are approximately 48,285 children ages 0-5 years residing in Davidson County. According to information provided by the Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS), 17,648, or 36.5% of those children are in licensed child care facilities. Anyone providing care for 5 or more children older than 6 weeks is considered to be a formal provider operating a Center, Family or Group operation, and must be licensed per state regulations. Civil fines and penalties can apply for centers that operate unlicensed. Specific adult-child ratios apply to the different ages of children – with infants and toddlers requiring more adult supervision. There are numerous other licensing requirements designed to ensure the health and safety of young children that must be met.

Thus, 30,637, or 63.5%, of the 0-5 population are not in any formalized child care program. This is a significant number of the County’s youngest citizens. While a number of young children will receive excellent learning and developmental experiences in the home and through social networks of their parents, it is doubtful that all 30,000 children not participating in formal care will receive high-quality learning developmental experiences.

Of the 17,648 children 0-5 that are in formalized child care programs, it is estimated that 13,190 or 27% of all Nashville-Davidson County 0-5 children are enrolled in a high-quality program. We currently define “high-quality” in Nashville somewhat loosely as a child who is enrolled in one of the following:

- a. a program that maintains a 3-star rating,
- b. a program accredited by the NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children)
- c. a classroom under the auspices of MNPS Pre-K, or
- d. a classroom managed by Vanderbilt University child care services.

This distinction of “high-quality” is based on the rating and accreditation systems these specific institutions choose to obtain. However, some ratings and accreditations currently in existence for all providers may not convey actual high-quality provision, as later sections will discuss.

### The Access Landscape: Public and Private Care Available in Nashville

For the 2010-2011 school year Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) has 2,632 voluntary Pre-K seats. The Tennessee Voluntary Pre-K program places an emphasis on at-risk students and high-

priority communities for age 4 students, and requires a minimum of 5 days a week and 5 ½ hours per day. These spots are available for children and are divided among “general education” and “exceptional education students.”

Pre-K classrooms in Nashville are funded through a blend of state Pre-K, Title I, and local dollars. MNPS operates the Tennessee voluntary Pre-K contract from the state Department of Education here in Davidson County. The TN-VPK program also allows community-based organizations to operate a Pre-K classroom under the administration of the Local Education Agency (in this case, MNPS). Classrooms funded by state and Title I dollars enroll primarily low-income students. Children that want to attend public Pre-K at MNPS, but whose families surpass low-income eligibility thresholds are only eligible to attend locally funded or blended classrooms (classrooms that contain exceptional ed students). Doing so for parents requires a co-payment, yet this hardly occurs in practice, as most seats are filled by the high number of low-income applicants.

While there is high demand for the MNPS Pre-K program, many families face barriers in securing a spot for their children. Supply is constrained, particularly in certain neighborhoods and areas of Nashville that see much higher demand than others. The constraint is due in part to the school system’s limited availability of vacant building space and the licensing requirements to bring this space up to proper code for child education services. MNPS received 4,065 Pre-K applications for the 2010-2011 school year, 1,200 more than the prior school year. Only 2,632 total seats were available. In addition, many parents fail to complete the application and registration process based on an awareness and understanding of the process.

Thus, only 64% of children who applied to MNPS Pre-K this year received a seat in the program. This leaves 1,433 children waitlisted or rejected due to space constraints and local availability. <sup>i</sup>

Outside of TN-VPK, a key form of public assistance available to low-income families for child care is the state’s Families First program. Families First provides “certificate funds” based on poverty guidelines. Assistance is limited to 60 months in a participant’s lifetime, and participants must be seeking work, employed, and comply with DHS required health checks and immunizations for their children (follow a Personal Responsibility Plan). Certificate funds can be used for community providers. In FY 2005, 43,200 children were served. <sup>ii</sup>

Head Start, which is a federally funded program, enrolls low-income children aged 3-5 whose families meet poverty guidelines. For example, the FY 2010-2011 guidelines state that income for a family of two cannot exceed \$14, 710, while a family of four cannot exceed \$22, 350<sup>iii</sup>. Head Start in Nashville (through Metro Action Commission) receives funding for 1,485 children. Current levels of funding, available space and capacity for operations with Head Start do not meet the number of low-income children whose parents seek spots. The local Head Start affiliate reports that the 2008-09 year served 1,735 children while an estimated 10,235 are eligible for services<sup>iv</sup>.

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i Hall, Heidi. “Vanderbilt Study shows pre-K’s effects.” *The Tennessean* [Nashville] 24 Feb. 2011: n. pag. *The Tennessean online*. Web. 1 Mar. 2011.

ii “NCCP | Tennessee: Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Subsidies.” *National Center for Children in Poverty*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2011. [http://www.nccp.org/profiles/TN\\_profile\\_14.html](http://www.nccp.org/profiles/TN_profile_14.html)

iii [http://www.nashville.gov/mac/headstart\\_guidelines.asp](http://www.nashville.gov/mac/headstart_guidelines.asp)

iv [http://www.nashville.gov/mac/docs/2010\\_Head\\_Start\\_Community\\_Assessment.pdf](http://www.nashville.gov/mac/docs/2010_Head_Start_Community_Assessment.pdf)

When it comes to accessing quality care for infants and toddlers, many families face significant barriers due to its higher cost. Infant and toddler care is more expensive to operate due to necessary safety precautions and standards that ensure the health and safety of very young children. In addition, demand far exceeds supply because many facilities do not have the resources for materials and necessary space to adequately fulfill the regulations and requirements for infant and toddler care.

Other options are available. A pilot scholarship model has emerged through The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee to help families meet financial obligations for child care in 3-star rated centers and could be scaled up to the needs of families. It is an interesting approach to be examined or modified to be able to serve more families.

In addition, there are a significant number of people who do not qualify directly for low-income child care supports, but would benefit greatly from, and are in need of, this type of assistance. Many middle-low income families or single parents do not qualify for Family First assistance, but the yearly cost of early child education for one child is substantial, and even more daunting with more than one child. The cost of child care averages \$5,732 per 4 year old child and \$6,252 for an infant<sup>v</sup> in center based care, making early care and education a luxury that many families cannot afford.

There are provisions in the federal tax code for child care assistance, but it is unknown what the general level of public awareness, understanding, and ability to use this resource is. These include the child and dependent care tax credit (IRS form 2441), and employer-provided child care exclusion (dependent care accounts)<sup>vi</sup>. Metro Government currently has an FSA dependent care option for employees, and 118 of the roughly 10,000 Metro Government employees use the account benefit<sup>vii</sup>.

## IS VOLUNTARY PRE-K A GOOD INVESTMENT?

There is substantial debate about the merits of Pre-K, especially regarding its cost and if it works. Many valid and complex points of debate for supporting or opposing Pre-K exist.

Recently, Vanderbilt University released an initial report that is part of a multi-year longitudinal study that found “Tennessee children in state-funded pre-kindergarten classes did twice as well or better in literacy and vocabulary than their peers who weren’t admitted to the classes... and moderate gains in math—between 33 and 63 percent higher than children outside the program.”

This is significant, especially relative to the study’s design. The Vanderbilt study is comparing students that enrolled and filled eligible spots (treatment group that shows large gains) with those that applied but did not secure a seat. Since the seat allocation process is done by a random lottery, the study is removing a good deal of potential bias, and clearly showing that Voluntary Pre-K programs are producing important and significant gains, especially for Economically Disadvantaged students.

[http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/Documents/pdf/PRI/SREE\\_presentation\\_2011.pdf](http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/Documents/pdf/PRI/SREE_presentation_2011.pdf)

v staff. “2010 Child Care in the State of Tennessee.” NACCRA March (2010): n. pag. <http://www.naccra.org/randd/data/docs/TN.pdf>. Web. 1 Mar

vi aag, Elaine. “How does the tax system subsidize child care expenses?” <http://www.taxpolicycenter.org/briefing-book/key-elements/family/child-care-subsidies.cfm>. N.p., n.d. Web. 9 Mar. 2011.

vii Metro Nashville Human Resources data

## Recommendations for Improving Access to High-Quality Care

Goal: All Nashville children and families will have increased opportunities to access high-quality public and private early care and education programming, so that all children have an equal start at success.

- MNPS, community providers, and other stakeholders should work together to better align MNPS Pre-K availability with areas of greatest need and demand in Davidson County.
  - ◊ MNPS can better prepare for placing Pre-K classrooms across the city. Along with the current need assessment process and building space availability and suitability factor, MNPS should seek to orient Pre-K classrooms with a greater long-range planning timeframe using Census data and a vital records birth projection data process.
  - ◊ In order to serve the largest number of children with scarce resources, MNPS should coordinate the placement of TN-VPK classrooms relative to other Head Start and community-based provider locations.
- The city and other key stakeholders can partner with MNPS to streamline the registration and enrollment process for Pre-K, and make it more publicly accessible.
  - ◊ The Alignment Nashville Pre-K Committee could take the lead on making this process more efficient and effective.
- As many families do not qualify as sufficiently low-income to attend public programs or receive Families First certificate funds, private and public funds need to be secured to increase funding and the provision of service.
  - ◊ A specific long-term public-private “endowment” fund for early childhood should be established to help families access care and/or enhance existing public-private partnership scholarship programs.
  - ◊ In order to increase the overall number of classrooms in Nashville-Davidson County that offer Voluntary Pre-K, state or local sources could increase funding for community-based providers that wish to participate in the TN-VPK program, helping to alleviate some of the challenges MNPS faces with space constraints.
- Greater information on public assistance options for child care can be provided and more widely disseminated. Examples include information on how to access tax benefits for child care, both individually and through employers, and other supports that reduce the cost burden to families.
  - ◊ The Child Care Implementation Team, as part of the Nashville Poverty Reduction Plan, can assume this task.

## Expanding High-Quality Programming That Is Consistent

High-quality early child development programming among all providers is not universal.

Research shows that the quality of early learning programming during the first five years of life, and especially the first three<sup>viii</sup>, is a significant factor determining the benefits children will gain from early childhood development services.

Tracking by enrollment in Nashville-Davidson County, 15.7% of County 0-5 year olds are in 3-star centers, 1.8% in 2-star centers, 0.3% are 1-star, 7% are in 0-star centers, and 11.5% are in centers that do not participate (NP) in the star rating system (such as MNPS Voluntary Pre-K).

At best, an estimated 27% of Nashville's 0-5 year olds or 13,190 children out of 48,285 participate in a high-quality formalized program. This is not an acceptable level, especially considering 70% of MNPS student demographic is considered Economically Disadvantaged.<sup>ix</sup>

In Nashville-Davidson County, child care providers have the option to show they operate high-quality child care by pursuing a star level through the DHS 3-star rating system. These providers may also pursue a more comprehensive form of accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or none at all. All providers must be licensed, which means adhering to a minimal set of standards to ensure the health and safety of young children. There appear to be limited incentives for providers to pursue a star rating, and for many it may be a prohibitively costly venture.

Looking at the breakdown of enrollment figures, it seems that centers, family, and group operations seem to either strive for a 3-star rating or are not as concerned about star ratings, and choose not to participate in the star rating process. Few centers have any significant enrollment levels at the mid-levels of quality. An "NP" (not participating in Tennessee star program) might be of high-quality, but simply chose not to engage in the 3-star rating program for a variety of reasons. One likely reason is the significantly higher costs associated with obtaining a higher rating, wherein compliance may not be deemed worth the additional revenue a 3 star rating might bring.

Model programs from around the nation have demonstrated the importance of high-quality early education programs on the social and emotional outcomes of children. The Perry Preschool, Chicago-Parent Center program, and work by Nobel Laureate James Heckman has highlighted and shown these particular non-cognitive benefits. Increased opportunities for social and emotional development translates into better outcomes for children later in life when they are

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viii Shonkoff, J and Phillips, D Eds. *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Child Development*. Washington DC: National Academy Press, 2000.

ix <http://www.mnps.org/AssetFactory.aspx?did=39158>

juveniles or adults. One of the most noteworthy differences is the lower incidence of crime among children who participated in high-quality early learning programs<sup>x</sup>.

Nashville-Davidson County has several programs of proven quality. The need persists, however, for all providers to implement high-quality programs consistently.

Two programs in particular that focus on the early literacy skills of young children in Nashville have shown impressive results. In 2004 with Read to Succeed, a supplemental program of United Way Metro Nashville, the first year sample of students entering Kindergarten originally tested an overall 49% proficiency rate on the Get Ready to Read Assessment tool. Of Economically Disadvantaged students in the sample, only 33% originally tested proficient.

## WHAT IS NAEYC?

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) was founded in 1926 to improve the well-being of all young children. It currently maintains over 80,000 members, with 300 local, state, and regional affiliates (such as the Tennessee Association for the Education of Young Children or TAEYC). In addition to public policy and advocacy work, NAEYC started a voluntary accreditation program in 1985 that sets the bar high for programs and providers early childhood best practices for development and learning. NAEYC's seal of accreditation, while somewhat costly to acquire, has a reputation for being rigorous and one of the nation's best accreditation programs. NAEYC accreditation is based on numerous site visits and attempts to comprehensively observe the outcomes of individual providers programming with the children they serve. An NAEYC accreditation is a high stamp of approval recognized throughout the early childhood profession and field.

After a few years of the program's implementation and embedded operation, in 2009, the most recent available results, 98% of Economically Disadvantaged students participating in Read to Succeed were rated as proficient in terms of Kindergarten readiness. The gains appear to stick through the elementary grades. In a longitudinal study tracking an early group of Read to Succeed students, 75% scored proficient or advanced on the Tennessee 3rd grade TCAP. It is estimated that Read to Succeed costs an additional \$1,389 additional dollars per student each year – a relatively affordable supplemental program, especially when compared to costs associated with literacy “catch-up” costs during the later K-12 school years.

The Early Reading First project also shows promise. A collaboration between Metro Schools and Vanderbilt University tracked results stemming from high-quality literacy and language instruction in 13 Metro Pre-K classrooms. Students were tested in fall 2009 and then again in spring 2010. Vocabulary test scores on a test known to correlate to later reading ability increased from a mean of 73.1 to 85. ELL student scores increased from 55 to 75, and African American scores increased from 88 to 94<sup>xi</sup>. This program is more expensive than Read to Succeed and is dependent upon federal funding.

Strong targeted early literacy and language instruction helps alleviate some of the effects of the achievement gap that persists between differing socio-economic populations. A focus especially on social and emotional development, and early literacy and language education will help maximize the positive impact to children while using public-private resource dollars effectively.

x “Nashville Law Enforcement Leaders Champion Pre-K To Cut Crime | FightCrime.org.” FightCrime.org | 5,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, and violence survivors preventing crime and violence. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2011. <http://www.fightcrime.org/state/tennessee/news/nashville-law-enforcement-leaders-champion-Pre-k-cut-crime>.

xi Editor. “Early Reading First Data Shows Impressive Gains.” *Peabody Reflector* Winter 2010: n. pag. Vanderbilt University. Web. 1 Mar. 2011.

## **Recommendations for Expanding Access to High-quality Care**

Goal: All Nashville children and families will have increased opportunities to access high-quality public and private early care and education programming, so that all children have an equal start at success.

- Existing public infrastructures can be enhanced to improve information and resources available to parents regarding high-quality outcomes for their young children. This can include an information outreach campaign to raise awareness and understanding of specific programming measures that lead to high-quality outcomes.
  - ◇ Local organizations such as ONE Nashville, Stand for Children, the Tennessee Association for the Education of Young Children (TAEYC), the Tennessee Alliance for Early Education, United Way of Metro Nashville, Nashville Public Television, and the Alignment Nashville Pre-K group can work to help facilitate greater public awareness.
- Proven high-quality programming, like Read to Succeed and Early Reading First should be replicated more widely at both public and private early care and education centers. Such programs integrate specific programming focused on early child development and education, and not simply child care.
  - ◇ Read to Succeed is an affordable program to scale up. The Mayor's Office can advocate for this and help leverage public-private funding and other supports as needed.

## What is high-quality?

It should be noted that there is no one exact programming practice or curriculum, if implemented across the board for all children, that would ensure all children will be healthy, well-adjusted and ready for sustained school and life success. Growth and development of young children is a relationship-heavy process, and largely depends on trained adults' ability to create the conditions, supports and relationships that encourage learning and ensure the developmental needs of children.

A number of known high-quality early childhood education and developmental practices have been derived from empirical research and time-tested experience. While many specific elements can be argued as having a positive effect on a child's development, the Advisory Council has adopted the following general areas of focus that if done well by community-based programs, will increase the odds that young children will receive appropriate early development and education: (the following are NAEYC's 10 published standards for high-quality programs, <http://www.rightchoiceforkids.org/sites/default/files/file/brochures/FamilyGuide.pdf>)

### ► Relationships

The program promotes positive relationships among all children and adults. It encourages each child's sense of individual worth and belonging as part of a community and fosters each child's ability to contribute as a responsible community member. Warm, sensitive, and responsive relationships help children feel secure. The safe and secure environments built by positive relationships help children thrive physically, benefit from learning experiences, and cooperate and get along with others.

### ► Curriculum

The program implements a curriculum that is consistent with its goals for children and promotes learning and development in each of the following areas: social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive. A well-planned written curriculum provides a guide for teachers and administrators. It helps them work together and balance different activities and approaches to maximize children's learning and development. The curriculum includes goals for the content that children are learning, planned activities linked to these goals, daily schedules and routines, and materials to be used.

### ► Teaching

The program uses developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and effective teaching approaches that enhance each child's learning and development in the context of the curriculum goals. Children have different learning styles, needs, capacities, interests, and backgrounds. By recognizing these differences and using instructional approaches that are appropriate for each child, teachers and staff help all children learn.

### ► Assessment of Child Progress

The program is informed by ongoing systematic, formal, and informal assessment approaches to provide information on children's learning and development. These assessments occur within the context of reciprocal communications with families and with sensitivity to the cultural contexts in which children develop. Assessment results benefit children by informing sound decisions, teaching, and program improvement. Assessments help teachers plan

appropriately challenging curriculum and tailor instruction that responds to each child's strengths and needs. Assessments are also important in identifying children with disabilities and ensuring that they receive needed services.

▶ **Health**

The program promotes the nutrition and health of children and protects children and staff from illness and injury. Children must be healthy and safe in order to learn and grow. Programs must be healthy and safe to support children's healthy development.

▶ **Teachers**

The program employs and supports a teaching staff with the educational qualifications, knowledge, and professional commitment necessary to promote children's learning and development and to support families' diverse needs and interests. Teachers who have specific preparation, knowledge, and skills in child development and early childhood education are more likely to provide positive interactions, richer language experiences, and quality learning environments.

▶ **Families**

The program establishes and maintains collaborative relationships with each child's family to foster children's development in all settings. These relationships are sensitive to family composition, language, and culture. To support children's optimal learning and development, programs need to establish relationships with families based on mutual trust and respect, involve families in their children's educational growth, and encourage families to fully participate in the program.

▶ **Community Relationships**

The program establishes relationships with and uses the resources of the children's communities to support the achievement of program goals. Relationships with agencies and institutions in the community can help a program achieve its goals and connect families with resources that support children's healthy development and learning.

▶ **Physical Environment**

The program has a safe and healthful environment that provides appropriate and well-maintained indoor and outdoor physical environments. The environment includes facilities, equipment, and materials to facilitate child and staff learning and development. An organized, properly equipped and well-maintained program environment facilitates the learning, comfort, health, and safety of the children and adults who use the program.

▶ **Leadership and Management**

The program effectively implements policies, procedures, and systems that support stable staff and strong personnel, and fiscal, and program management so all children, families, and staff have high-quality experiences. Effective management and operations, knowledgeable leaders, and sensible policies and procedures are essential to building a quality program and maintaining the quality over time.

## Ensuring High-Quality Outcomes for All Children

Better accountability is needed that more closely reflects outcome measures of early childhood development and education for young children.

Assessing growth and development of young children is difficult. Committee members realize the complexity of assessing young children, and would not advocate for more testing and assessment in the youngest years. Issues pertaining to social and emotional growth (non-cognitive skills) are preeminently important in the early years, and while there are instruments to measure this, it would be difficult to employ a testing mechanism or process that could be universally applied across the city to measure each child's individual growth in an efficient or low-cost manner. Rather, a more effective method for accountability is to ensure that providers giving individual care operate as effectively as possible, especially as it relates to non-cognitive skill formation and development.

### The Quality Landscape: Mechanisms and Supports to Ensure High-quality Early Childhood Programming

Tennessee's DHS Child Care 3-star quality rating and improvement system was established in 2001 in an effort to incentivize providers to move to higher quality care. Reimbursement rates for children using DHS certificates are subsequently higher for a 3 star center than for a 2, 1 or 0 star center. In purpose, this "incentivizes" providers to move up the star chain, but the incentive amount in the form of higher reimbursement rates may not always be enough to justify the additional cost of compliance to climb the star ladder.

The intent and structure of the licensing system and 3-star rating system is sound, especially as it relates to ensuring the health and safety of young children. While it can be difficult to objectively assess the cognitive growth and development of young children and their outcomes in a particular center, many tools exist to do so, yet are not featured prominently in the star-rating system. The basic licensing system lacks an ability to comprehensively observe social and emotional outcomes for children in a community-based program, whatever the star rating level of the provider may be, as it is a tool primarily designed to ensure health and safety measures.

The current rating system builds off the initial licensing requirements and focuses on measuring the inputs providers insert into their programs. While these inputs are known to correlate to best practices for children, it is not given that the sum or combination of inputs works in such a way that ensures all children in a particular formalized program receive high-quality learning and developmental outcomes. Alternatively, NAEYC accreditation<sup>xii</sup> takes a more comprehensive evaluation approach to determine a center's effectiveness in actually achieving high-quality outcomes for the children served.

Parents may experience confusion related to the application and purpose of the DHS

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xii "National Association for the Education of Young Children | NAEYC Academy | Accreditation." *National Association for the Education of Young Children* | NAEYC. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2011. <http://www.naeyc.org/academy/>

### 3-star rating system. Is it meant to govern practices of child care, or is it meant to govern practices of early childhood learning and development?

Again, while it is good to ensure the health and safety of young children in a child care setting, this may not consistently translate into high-quality measures of early childhood education and development, especially related to children developing socially and emotionally. Parents might not know that the 3-star rating system can sometimes be manipulated for the purpose of providers securing higher reimbursement rates for children using certificates. A center can be awarded 3 stars on its evaluation day for demonstrating high-quality that day to its DHS inspector. This does not necessarily mean that the center engages in high-quality programming all the time, when the inspector is not present. DHS' 3-star rating system is a good system, but can be improved and modified to more effectively encourage and incentivize high-quality comprehensive outcomes for all children.

MNPS Pre-K classrooms and center-based Pre-K classrooms, as part of Tennessee's voluntary Pre-K program, operate on nine standards, known as the Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards (TN-ELDS), which rank comparatively high relative to other states according to an NIEER standards evaluation process. Though Tennessee Pre-K classes still must comply with DHS licensing regulations, they do not participate in the star rating system. The Tennessee Pre-K standards are comprehensive, and include components of social and emotional development that are particularly important for the development of young children. TN-VPK classrooms must have an approved teacher licensed in early childhood, and the teacher is evaluated each year if on an Apprentice license or evaluated every 5 years if on a Professional license. TN-VPK classrooms follow one of the State-approved curricula.

Again, there exists somewhat of a gap in accountability in the voluntary Pre-K structure to ensure that all Pre-K classrooms are universally producing high-quality outcomes for every child. Pre-K teachers, at least in Nashville, are often evaluated by the elementary school principal in which the Pre-K classroom is housed. The principal is supposed to have completed a 20 hour evaluation training course, yet lack of background in early childhood education creates a potential gap in high-quality oversight. Principals may evaluate a Pre-K teacher through a K-12 "lens" and personal familiarity, may not readily understand early childhood principles or key components of instruction, or possess a familiarity with the various approved Tennessee Pre-K curricula. Additionally, for center-based Pre-K programs, the center director is allowed to evaluate the Voluntary Pre-K teacher if they have completed the evaluation training course, which potentially creates a conflict of interest, as center directors may overlook issues of teaching quality in an effort to keep TN-VPK funding.

#### **A CRITICAL WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY. HIGH-QUALITY NEEDED.**

"From the time of conception to the first day of kindergarten, development proceeds at a pace exceeding that of any subsequent stage of life. Efforts to understand this process have revealed the myriad and remarkable accomplishments of the early childhood period, as well as the serious problems that confront some young children and their families long before school entry. A fundamental paradox exists and is unavoidable: development in the early years is both highly robust and highly vulnerable".

From Shonkoff, J & Phillips, D., Eds. *Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Child Development*. Washington DC: National Academy Press, 2000.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD DATA: A NATIONAL CHALLENGE

The Early Childhood Data Collaborative is a national organization that seeks to improve the quality of early childhood programs, and subsequently, the human capital workforce through promoting comprehensive and longitudinal early care and education (ECE) state data systems. The Collaborative released a key report in the spring of 2011 which found “that states collect a significant amount of data on individual children, early care and education (ECE) program sites, and individual members of the ECE workforce. However, the data are largely siloed by funding stream, incomplete, and therefore unable to help policymakers answer basic policy questions about their state’s ECE systems.”

No single state in the nation, including Tennessee, could answer affirmatively to having a data system in place that could accurately reflect the following questions:

- Are children, birth to age 5, on track to succeed when they enter school and beyond?
- Which children have access to high-quality early care and education programs?
- Is the quality of programs improving?
- How prepared is the early care and education workforce to provide effective education and care for all children?

This has significant implications for high-quality early childhood programming. If comprehensive data systems do not exist to accurately and consistently track high-quality longitudinal outcomes for children – how do we objectively ensure early childhood programs are of the highest quality possible – or how do we know to adjust or modify programs if data systems cannot accurately identify areas of weakness or red flags in early childhood programming without bias?

See the report: <http://ecedata.org/state-ece-analysis/the-early-childhood-profession-and-field>.

## Recommendations for Ensuring High-quality Outcomes for All Children

Goal: 100% of programs in Nashville – community based, public, or voluntary Pre-K – shall produce high-quality outcomes that ensure the health and safety of young children, and focus on known early child development and education best practices.

- Community based providers and other key stakeholders should advocate for improvements in the 3-star system and the MNPS Pre-K evaluation system to ensure accountability and consistency of high-quality programming outcomes for children. As such, it is important to align provider and teacher assessments and ratings such that when a rating system signals “high-quality” – it is a reflection of high-quality child outcomes that are consistent, and not merely inputs that teachers or providers are able to bring to programming.
- Community-based providers and other key stakeholders should consider the possibility of advocating for the widespread adoption of a different quality rating system, such as NAEYC accreditation, that focuses on evaluating learning environments that produce comprehensive high-quality programming that leads to consistent high-quality childhood outcomes.
  - ◊ The Mayor’s Office, in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, can convene a “Business Leaders for High-quality Accreditation Committee,” to engage business leaders in the community to help support and facilitate the successful accreditation of early child providers by a high-quality program, such as NAEYC.
- It is critical that city-wide policy and practice not encourage multiple layers of ratings and accreditation systems that overlap in ways which further burden already strained providers.
  - ◊ Community-based providers could work with DHS to adopt an all NAEYC accreditation process, or alternatively may wish to advocate for a “pass through accreditation” program, such that if a program becomes NAEYC approved, DHS would then award that provider a 3-star credential.

## Fostering Business Efficiencies

Many community-based providers in Nashville-Davidson County struggle with day-to-day business management operations. Ultimately, this affects the programming and quality outcome for children in these centers.

The nature and composition of the early child care industry is complex and challenging, and profit margins are slim for center owners and operators. Teacher pay is generally low in community-based programs, and there is high turnover in the field. If teachers have or obtain licensure, many high-quality teachers often leave non-profit and private care centers for MNPS Pre-K classrooms based on the increased compensation and benefits the public school system provides. Turnover is costly both in expenses to the centers and the interruption in quality care for the children.

Many community-based center operators and managers have no formal business training in budget management, accounting controls, or marketing. Often, these managers were great teachers and care givers, and entered into a management position with little business operations experience or training.

As a result, many centers struggle to maintain efficient, cost-effective day-to-day business operations, which can contribute to an increased cost of care and less attention being directed to quality practices. There are limited business supports available to providers in Nashville. The State of Tennessee has a child care business services office, but it is composed of one individual tasked with providing assistance to all DHS licensed centers throughout the state that request or would seek help. The office tends to focus more on assisting programs with the startup process rather than ongoing or established operations.

In addition, the early learning and care industry does not benefit from economies of scale that many other service sectors enjoy. Alternatively, TN-VPK classrooms in Nashville benefit from the operational and management services MNPS provides. However, many individual private or non-profit centers have fewer than twenty employees, so it is difficult for these business entities to offer compensation such as health benefits or any type of retirement benefit 401(k), as the per-employee costs to initiate and maintain these programs are simply beyond budgetary means. Head Start can offer some benefits, under the auspices of the Metro Action Commission as a part of Metropolitan Nashville Government, and Head Start salaries are generally higher for teachers than other community-based providers.

Furthermore, the strict health and safety regulations that federal early childhood programs and DHS mandate often represent high costs to providers that are not completely offset by reimbursement. For example, one Nashville provider reported receiving a playground inspection and subsequent cost estimate of \$33,000-\$38,000 to upgrade the playground to “good standing.” The provider was given an \$18,000 grant from Head Start to help with upgrades, but it had to seek alternative funding sources for the remaining shortfall.

Often, bulk purchasing of materials would reduce costs significantly, but due to the patchwork system of early care, providers don't have the opportunity to leverage collective buying power. Similarly, other business operations and management needs of providers could be streamlined or linked together with compatible organizations to produce significant cost-savings to individual providers. Technology is a particular area of focus that could help centers improve their operational efficiencies, especially as it relates to compliance efforts required by the licensing and 3-star rating process and could become a shared resource cost.

A promising pilot model has emerged in Nashville. Twelve 3-star child care centers in partnership with The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee have received a grant from DHS to explore a shared services model. The intent is to pool provider needs where costs are high (such as Human Resources) and generate cost savings with more purchases at scale (such as food). The program is still developing and exploring where cost savings can be found, and it is undoubtedly challenging to determine the right balance in how to meet the needs of twelve individual providers, yet the model shows good potential to grow or be replicated.

### **Recommendations for Fostering Business Efficiencies**

Goal: Community-based providers will have access to and knowledge of contemporary management practices and tools that increase efficient business operations.

- Providers need greater financial support, business operations aptitude, and technology to achieve mandated quality standards in an efficient manner.
  - ◊ In partnership with the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, the Mayor's Office can convene a Child Care Business Operations Working Group, comprised of business managers, both mid-level and executive-level from the Nashville business community. The committee would help design and implement business mentors, technology supports, and small business operations training programs for child care and early education centers who wish to voluntarily participate.
- The shared services pilot model is emerging as an effective strategy for creating an infrastructure to support the business needs of providers and significantly cut costs.
  - ◊ The Mayor's Office can lend support to the further development of this model, perhaps by publicly championing it, and using its convening power to bring necessary stakeholders to the table to help advance the effectiveness of the model and potentially replicate it for other providers in the city.

## Increasing Public Awareness

There is a public awareness gap (both collective and individual) of the critical importance and opportunity of early childhood development (both physical and cognitive) in a child's first few years, and knowledge of the corollary best practices that foster this development.

**Increasing Awareness: Parent Education and Support**  
Parents are their child's first teachers. In order to ensure that Nashville children grow up prepared to succeed in school and in life, Nashville parents, caregivers, and the entire community must be equipped with knowledge and resources they can use to contribute to a child's physical and cognitive healthy development. While Nashville is home to a variety of parent education and support initiatives, and while most child care providers make efforts to engage parents, it is unclear what parents really know about healthy physical and cognitive child development and what other supports they might need.

Technology is a tool that can help disseminate important early childhood development information more effectively, but there is also an acknowledgement that using technology that requires Internet connectivity and navigation skills will not be feasible or accessible for a number of Nashville families.

The State of Tennessee, through DHS, has launched a "Parents Know, Kids Grow" website ([www.parentsknowkidsgrow.org](http://www.parentsknowkidsgrow.org)) that provides information related to child care providers in Tennessee and Nashville. The site also includes important health and safety practices. In addition, The Talaris Research Institute of Seattle has a free member access website: (<http://www.parentingcounts.org/>). Parents can watch short and accurate videos that convey early childhood development knowledge and teaching techniques. Signing up also provides parents and providers access to a developmental timeline that proceeds by age (starting at birth), and includes appropriate developmental benchmarks related to the social and emotional development, physical development, cognitive development, and language development of young children. The information presented is grounded in relevant and timely research.

The Advisory Council recognizes that most young children and their parents will "touch" a hospital or delivery center during the birth process. This first connection presents a great opportunity to share appropriate early childhood physical and developmental best practices and resources with parents and caregivers so that parents and caregivers are more aware of what

### A NOBEL LAUREATE'S FINDING...

"Many major economic and social problems in America - crime, teenage pregnancy, high school dropout rate, adverse health conditions - can be traced to low levels of skill and social ability such as attentiveness, persistence and impulse control."

Professor James Heckman, a Nobel Laureate Economist, found that "early nurturing, learning experiences and physical health from ages zero to five greatly impact success or failure in society. The most economically efficient time to develop skills and social abilities is in the very early years when developmental education is most effective."

America's greatest asset has always been its people. Investing in early childhood development builds the human capital we [America] need for economic success. Economic development starts at birth and how we invest in our young children will have a substantial impact on our future prosperity.

should be expected from their child, and what services can be accessed in Nashville. In addition, it is crucial to provide follow up and reinforcement supports for this process, and pediatrician visits can be a great resource and opportune time to share critical information.

In order to determine what parents of young children know about early childhood development in Nashville, and what kinds of services and resources are available to them, parents and child care providers should be surveyed to gauge awareness and access levels. For child care providers, the survey would examine what type of information is provided, how the information is made available to parents, who are their agency targets, as well as any unique services that they provide.

## **Increasing Awareness: A Citywide Concern for Early Childhood Education and Development**

While Nashville provides many services to support the healthy development of young children, there is a lack of public awareness and advocacy support for early childhood issues throughout the community. There is a need for public messaging that communicates the importance and value of early childhood issues, from early brain development to physical health including proper immunizations and quality Pre-K experiences.

Unless the investment in young children starts at birth, it is very challenging to give children the opportunities they need to develop into healthy, successful students and productive citizens. Research has shown that significant costs are borne by the local economy and community when investments are not made<sup>xiii</sup>. It is more costly to provide K-16 remediation services, and the effectiveness of intervention becomes more difficult and less successful as children grow older. Because there has not been a centralized, institutionalized “champion” for early care and education, the larger citizenry is not aware of the value of investing in young children. It is important to develop public awareness in order to fully engage all stakeholders and garner the support needed to move an early childhood agenda forward. The city stands to gain immensely as it better prepares its youngest residents for future responsibilities and accomplishments<sup>xiv</sup>.

## **Recommendations for Increasing Public Awareness of Early Childhood Development**

Goal: Nashville citizens will have an enhanced awareness and understanding of how to promote their own child’s healthy development and all children in the community through an increased focus on parent education and support, and the collaboration and sharing of information.

- Using carefully crafted surveys, an inventory should be taken of what Nashville parents currently know about early childhood physical and cognitive development practices and available parent support services. Additionally, a survey of existing community providers (not just child care providers) and how they reach and support parents most effectively should be conducted.

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xiii Weiss, Elaine. “Partnership for America’s Economic Success.” *The Pew Center on the States*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2011. [www.partnershipforsuccess.org/uploads/20110124\\_02311PAESCrimeBriefweb3.pdf](http://www.partnershipforsuccess.org/uploads/20110124_02311PAESCrimeBriefweb3.pdf)

xiv Heckman, James. “Learn How Early Childhood Development Affects Society.” *The Heckman Equation*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2011. <http://www.heckmanequation.org/heckman-equation-slideshow>.

- Examine a potential partnership with DHS to help local Nashville parents and providers better utilize State web-based resources such as “Parents Know, Kids Grow” and “Parenting Counts.”
  - ◊ It is important to provide mediums of communication such as paper brochures, DVDs or the 211 assistance line to share information for those families and individuals who do not have web access. Alignment Nashville or United Way of Metro Nashville would be best suited to take the lead.
  
- Develop a more robust referral and information network system with public health and health care providers and those involved in the birth process to help share critical early childhood development information and resources, as well as link families to needed resources.
  - ◊ For example, the project could potentially provide brochures or digital media to new parents while they are recovering from the birth experience. Referral support would then be made available to parents if questions arise or additional knowledge is sought in the future.
  - ◊ The Metro Public Health Department can take the lead on this in partnership with local hospitals and birth programs. With additional private-public funds for MPHD and its program partners, MPHD can effectively tailor this information sharing project to a health care setting.
  
- Public awareness campaigns, when properly designed and implemented, can be a crucial tool for infusing a message into the fabric of a community.
  - ◊ Potential efforts such as a “Parent University for Early Childhood,” could help provide parents with knowledge and tools, and help share resources and information for young children’s development and education. Nearby Tennessee counties have a “Parents Fair day that coincides with Kindergarten and Pre-K registration. At the fair, many social services and information agencies are represented and are easily accessible for parents. This should be considered for Nashville as an effective outreach event, and could be spearheaded by the Alignment Nashville Healthy Starts Committee.
  - ◊ The Mayor’s Office can publicly champion the importance of investing in young children, and also leverage support from other important community leaders to champion the issue.

## Improving Early Childhood Coordination and Transitions

Transitions between the public schools and the private, public, and informal provision of early care and education are weak and/or uncoordinated.

Children undergo a series of transitions throughout the education lifecycle. When children start kindergarten, they are entering into a new system, often one with different teaching practices and expectations, as well as a new environment that may not have many of the supports or routines they were used to.

It is important to provide a supportive infrastructure for children, families and educators as children transition into kindergarten. In Nashville, transition points between the early learning system and MNPS are generally weak and uncoordinated. Highlighting this, one of the key recommendations from the 2011 Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce Report Card was “The State of Tennessee should create a measurable definition of kindergarten readiness.”<sup>xv</sup>

Neither MNPS nor the state of Tennessee has a formal published set of “intake standards” for Kindergarten that the general public could be aware of, including public, private, and informal providers.

It is crucial that the transition points include more dialogue, greater communication, and sharing of standards, goals, and challenges for student success at the next level, as this dialogue is critical to individual child and programmatic success. The Mayor’s Children & Youth Master Plan placed an important emphasis on transitions during the education life-cycle<sup>xvi</sup>.

In addition, public school teachers and community-based early child care and education providers often come from very different professional “cultures” and do not always enjoy strong channels of communication and collaboration. It is more common to see this type of dialogue and “teacher collaboration” between elementary school teachers in the same building, yet little of it occurs between community-based providers and public elementary teachers.

The majority of voluntary Pre-K sites in Nashville have the advantage of being located in elementary schools, and as such, enrolled children are more likely to be familiar with the processes and daily activities of an elementary school setting. The same cannot be said for many children in community-based care centers or in a home setting before they first enter Kindergarten.

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xv Hill, Marc. “18th Annual Education Report Card.” *Nashville Chamber of Commerce*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2011. [http://www.nashvillechamber.com/Libraries/Education\\_Reports\\_and\\_Publications/2009-2010\\_Education\\_Report\\_Card.sflb.ashx](http://www.nashvillechamber.com/Libraries/Education_Reports_and_Publications/2009-2010_Education_Report_Card.sflb.ashx)

xvi <http://www.nashville.gov/mocv/docs/masterplan/CympTaskforce.pdf>

## Recommendations for Improving Early Childhood Coordination and Transitions

Goal: Nashville children and families experience a smooth continuum of services and supports from the early care system to the public K-12 system so that children enter Kindergarten prepared to succeed. Curricula, teaching practices, quality standards, assessments, and school readiness expectations must be aligned between systems to the fullest extent possible.

- It is critical to have strong relationships with the local public school system and community-based providers regarding transition issues.
  - ◊ The Mayor's Office can continue the impact of this Early Childhood Council by formalizing a 0-8 Early Transitions Working Group, composed of Council members and other relevant community stakeholders. The working group should be co-chaired by one community-based provider and by one MNPS executive, with MNPS helping to take the lead to facilitate a dialogue about how to smooth transitions for children as they go from early learning environments to school, including means to ensure all children receive required and recommended health information and services. The task force can be broken into working groups to address specific identified issues.
  - ◊ One such issue the working group can take up would be joint professional development and alignment of quality standards and other classroom practices between early public elementary school teachers and community-based early childhood teachers.
- Many cities have created citywide kindergarten expectations so that all early childhood educators and providers are aligned.
  - ◊ MNPS can lead the way in collaboratively creating, publishing and widely disseminating "expectations for Kindergarten" to the Nashville community, including children's health and well-being components.
  - ◊ This document can be used as a basis for creating a uniform report card used by early care providers to communicate to kindergarten teachers the current school readiness and potential educational needs of incoming kindergartners. MNPS can work with community-based providers through the above-recommended Early Transitions Working group to complete this effort.
- Create a city-wide culture that promotes early Pre-K and Kindergarten registration, and provide easily accessible opportunities for families to visit schools prior to their child's first day.
  - ◊ MNPS should take a proactive role to ensure that the Pre-K and Kindergarten enrollment and registration process is appropriately and widely publicized.
  - ◊ One suggestion is that the Alignment Nashville Elementary Schools Oversight Committee can help facilitate a Mayor's 1st Day for Kindergarten in 2012, where children get to visit their zoned or school of choice with their families as part of a school induction process.

## Engaging the Business Community

Few businesses in Davidson County are active community partners in the early child education and development landscape.

The business community in Nashville is unique in that it is very generous, supportive, and generally involved with the larger Nashville community. Nashville, Davidson County has put forth tremendous effort in attracting new businesses to the area, yet there is insufficient quality formalized child care for families for those that move into the County as well as for those already residing here. As Nashville's economy and employment opportunities grow, so must high-quality care options and other early childhood supports for working families. Moreover, high-quality early child programming helps advance the human capital skill and future workforce of Nashville, a critical need of local employers.

Families new to Nashville often face long waiting lists at most of the community's quality early learning programs, especially for infant and toddler care. All working families face challenges inherent with juggling family and work life, and many lack employer support. We cannot expect children to thrive if working parents do not have the supports they need to invest in convenient high-quality care for their children, and be fully engaged in their child's healthy development and education.

Nashville's business community has long shown strong support for public K-12 education. Businesses themselves stand to benefit from a high skilled labor force that local educational institutions can produce. Yet, there has been little formal involvement from the business community in early childhood education issues to strategically attain this goal. There are a variety of ways the Mayor's Office and the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce can more directly engage the local business community in supporting the healthy development of all children into successful students, and subsequently into locally productive workers and citizens<sup>xvii</sup>.

Cursory research conducted by the Advisory Council identified very few employers as having on-site child care or full benefit supports for employees' child care needs. Of the top 50 employers in the Nashville area as identified by the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, only six were found to have any type of on-site or affiliated child care facility, serving a total of only 944 children.

Investments in early childhood are often thought of as strictly yielding economically valuable social benefits<sup>xviii</sup>. Both international and domestic research has strongly documented this phenomenon. What is not often thought of is how employers benefit directly in operations and bottom line by supporting high-quality early childhood programs. Demographic research has shown that more employees are single parents and/or women. Nationally, the employer

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xvii Bartik, Timothy J. *Investing in Kids: Early Childhood Programs and Local Economic Development*. Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 2011.

xviii "Nashville Law Enforcement Leaders Champion Pre-K To Cut Crime | FightCrime.org." *FightCrime.org* | 5,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, and violence survivors preventing crime and violence.. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2011.

participation rate of women with children under age 6 was 64.2% in 2009<sup>xix</sup>. As employers directly assist their employees with child care and education supports, they see higher work attendance, productivity, and lower turnover rates – all of which contribute to an increased profit. Indirectly, employers are supporting high-quality early learning opportunities in the city for its youngest citizens, and also contributing to a higher quality future workforce and the economic social benefits that result from high-quality early learning programs.

Retrofitting buildings to provide on-site child care is prohibitively costly for many employers, but there are other family and child-friendly supports employers can provide. For example, some businesses have Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) for dependent care for employees to set aside tax-exempt money for child care and other dependent child expenses. Some employers also provide designated paid leave hours for parents to care for sick children or to attend parent teacher conferences. Knowledge or usage of these benefits by employees may not be as widespread as possible. Preliminary research done by the Council indicates, however, that this type of support largely lags across the entire business community. For example, Metro Nashville has approximately 10,000 employees, but only 118 employees have used the FSA Dependent Life account.

Through the already existing meaningful relationships with the business community, the Mayor can:

1. Help engage key business leaders to be greater public champions for early childhood education.
2. Leverage financial and in-kind supports for early learning from local businesses.
3. Encourage employers to implement family-friendly policies and practices.

In order to do this, the Advisory Council believes there is a need to raise awareness of the important benefits of early care and learning within the business community with attention to specifically speaking their language and meeting their needs as employers.

### **YOUNGEST CHILDREN + HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE = FUTURE PROSPERITY**

“If local economic development increases local earnings per capita, then it becomes an important class of labor market benefit... local economic development is what state and local public policies do on the labor supply side, in enhancing the quantity and quality of the human capital of local residents. Early childhood programs can play a key role in such local human capital policies. We know enough to say that such programs, if run in a high-quality way at sufficient scale, can play a significant role in enhancing local economic development.”

Timothy Bartik, *Investing in Kids, Early Childhood Programs and Local Economic Development*. Kalamazoo, MI: The Upjohn Institute, 2011.

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xix Month. “Employment Characteristics of Families Summary.” *U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2011. <<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/famee.nr0.htm>

## **Recommendations for Engaging the Business Community in Early Care and Education**

Goal: Nashville's business community will be a collaborative partner in meaningfully supporting city-wide activities and investments focused on young children.

- The Mayor's Office can provide leadership to help convene a city-level "Businesses for Early Learning" organization modeled after the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation (MELF) as a way to engage the business community in early care and education issues.
  - ◇ This organization can include the previously suggested Business Leaders for High-Quality Accreditation Committee and the Child Care Business Operations Support Committee to help expand the network and involvement of business partners for early childhood.
  - ◇ This organization can have formal roots in an organization such as The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, The Tennessee Alliance for Early Education or potentially function as a stand-alone entity.
  - ◇ It is critical that this organization have "business lens" leadership, and should include existing Nashville business leaders from HCA and Dollar General who have already taken important early education and development steps as a part of their operations.
  
- The Mayor's Office can work in partnership with the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce to create an effective mechanism for messaging the benefits of family-friendly early care and education policies that can accrue to individual employers and its potential positive impact for the bottom line.
  - ◇ The messaging can include the expected social return on investment and support of early childhood and the long-term impact to Nashville's human capital. This could also be part of the public awareness campaign recommended previously.
  - ◇ A tangible outcome of this can be to publish a business reference guide for Nashville Area employers that includes resources and ways to support early childhood learning in Nashville-Davidson County. This can include community-based provider contact information, business tax code supports for early care and education, and research supporting the benefits of investing in early childhood.
  
- Convene an early childhood summit, in partnership with the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, as an opportunity to share the vision set forth in this document with business leaders and invite their participation in specific ways in these efforts as mentioned previously in this report.

# APPENDIX

## Appendix A: The Scope of Investigation

The Advisory Council will explore and assess three general areas in order to ascertain what recommendations would be appropriate and feasible within the larger construct of early childhood development and education for Metropolitan Nashville. In an effort to fully explore these areas, the Advisory Council will call upon the expertise of a diverse set of individuals and entities and will work in close collaboration with providers, government officials, and overseers of successful program models. The areas are as follows:

- 1. Public Access** - The Advisory Council will be responsible for gathering and compiling information on existing services and programs and the ability of individuals and entities to access them, as well as their demand for such services and models.
- 2. Public Awareness** - The Advisory Council will be responsible for gathering and compiling information on existing practices and approaches used to convey and educate various constituents on the availability and utilization of various services and programs, as well as the need for such offerings.
- 3. Economic Development Strategies and Models** - The Advisory Council will be responsible for gathering information on business best practices and approaches (from both a provider and consumer perspective) that transcend industries. The Council will also assess the economic impact that high-quality services and program models have on (1) business recruitment/economic development, (2) employee retention for individual businesses, and (3) costs tied to remedial work for impacted children entering the education system up to the conclusion of the 3rd grade.

## Appendix B: Context for Early Childhood Development in Davidson County

States are lining up resources for early education as research continues to demonstrate the short and long-term benefits of the investment, particularly as public disappointment in academic outcomes within our K-12 system persist. We now know that approximately 90% of the architectural structure of the brain is built in the first three years of life<sup>xx</sup>, and nationally, about one-fifth of kindergartners lag behind on cognitive measures and almost one-third are behind on social and emotional measures as they enter Kindergarten<sup>xxi</sup>. The notion that all children will develop equally on cognitive, social, emotional, and academic measures prior to entering the K-12 system is a dangerously false assumption. Furthermore, research has demonstrated that early intervention produces extensive long-term benefits to society. Several studies have shown that model programs for 3-4 year olds living in poverty can produce benefit-cost ratios as high as

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xx “Brain Development.” ZERO TO THREE: Homepage. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2011. <http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/brain-development>.

xxi National League of Cities (NLC), 2010.

17:1 on the dollar and annualized internal rates of return of 18% over 35 years, with most of the benefits from these investments accruing to the general public.<sup>xxii xxiii</sup>

Tennessee, and specifically Davidson County, currently maintains a patchwork system for early education and development services. There are private child care providers, Tennessee Voluntary Pre-K, in-home care, informal relative or friend care, Head Start, and Early Head Start. Tennessee Voluntary Pre-K, one of the more known programs, gives priority first based on eligibility for free and reduced price lunch, followed by other indicators such as presence in state custody, history of abuse or neglect, or English Language Learner status<sup>xxiv</sup>. Access may be just out of reach for some families due to sliding scale payment plans, which Tennessee utilizes; also change in parental work status may affect a child's ability to participate and turnover can be extremely high, costs of targeting can be extensive, and the concern that 'poor programs are poor' endures.

Barnett argues that to effectively target, programs must find and enroll eligible children whose families do not apply to the program on their own, perhaps due simply to being unaware of eligibility, process, and procedures. Statistics noted throughout the report illustrate ineffective targeting as one of Davidson County's current most pressing issues.

In Tennessee, and particularly in Davidson County, there exists a lack of capacity, information sharing, coordination, infrastructure, and available funding to be able to implement a universal high-quality early childhood development and education system that would serve children ages 0-5 years. In some respects, seeking to meet this need completely with a universal Pre-K program is almost too late. A significant portion of a child's development occurs during the period from birth to three years. Pre-K students are typically 4 years old. Nevertheless, as policy moves forward, it is absolutely essential to begin addressing the substantial percentages of children unable to access quality child education and development services in the critical early years. Not to mention, it is critical that students receive high-quality, challenging instruction and necessary supports after age 0-5 in the early elementary years (hence this reports focus of 0-8).

Laying the groundwork for quality programming, especially in the home environment should be a primary focus—efforts that should continue while additional resources are sought to expand formalized and community-based programs. As research supports, Davidson County would be wise to invest fully in the building of this capacity, expanding on proven models and seeking to braid and diversify funding streams to best increase the efficient use of public-private resources.

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xxii "Learn more in kindergarten, earn more as an adult." *Science Daily: News & Articles in Science, Health, Environment & Technology*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2011. <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/08/100811085412.htm>

xxiii "US Department of Justice." *The High/Scope Perry Preschool Project*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2011. [www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/181725.pdf](http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/181725.pdf) & *Chicago Longitudinal Study* & Reynolds, Arthur, Judy Temple, Dylan Robertson, and Emily Mann. "Age 21 Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Title I Chicago Child-Parent Center Program Executive Summary." *Waisman Center*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2011. <http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/cls/cbaexecsum4.html> & "Major Findings." *The Carolina Abecedarian Project*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2011. [http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~abc/#major\\_findings](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~abc/#major_findings) & Grunewald, Rob, and Arthur Rolnick. "Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with a High Public Return - fedgazette - Publications & Papers | The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis." The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2011. [http://www.minneapolisfed.org/publications\\_papers/pub\\_display.cfm?id=3832](http://www.minneapolisfed.org/publications_papers/pub_display.cfm?id=3832).

xxiv Barnett, W. Steven, Dale J. Epstein, Allison H. Friedman, Rachel Sansanelli, and Jason T. Hustedt. "NIEER State of Preschool Yearbook." National Institute for Early Education Research. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2011. <http://nieer.org/yearbook/>.

In the immediate future, Davidson County must address the disparities that are evident in access and quality among varying demographics. The Head Start program of Nashville is funded to serve 1,485 children, making it the largest provider of early childhood education in Davidson County, yet that only addresses a small fraction of the eligible recipients. Approximately 73% of MNPS students qualify for free and reduced price lunches, which would indicate that the need for increasing services such as Head Start prior to entry into the MNPS system are substantial in Davidson County.

The Nashville Mayor's Office released a Child and Youth Master Plan in August of 2010 in which fourteen outcomes are laid out to address the future of youth in Davidson County. Outcome eight states that "all children and youth will achieve academically through high-quality, engaging educational opportunities that address the strengths and needs of the individual," and the first strategy in this effort is to increase the number of children enrolled in high-quality early childhood programs (0-5). Davidson County has identified early childhood as a priority, and suggests use of schools and MNPS resources to help advance the cause. In addition, the Poverty Implementation Plan has a dedicated workgroup specifically focused on families and children in poverty, and increasing the early childhood services and supports available to these citizens.

Given what we now know regarding the importance of early interventions and the mounting support for funding of these services, let the conversation not stagnate, rather, let us intentionally strive to focus efforts in the directions we know to be the best way forward for our youngest citizens, our future prosperity.

## Appendix C: MNPS Pre-Kindergarten Enrollment Fact Sheet

- Metro Nashville Public Schools currently has a total of 144 Pre-Kindergarten classrooms for General Education and Exceptional Education students
- There are 2,498 available Pre-K seats for the 2010-2011 school year. *These seats include General Education and Exceptional Education students.*
- There are 2,358 total students enrolled in Pre-K as of September 2010. *This is both General Education and Exceptional Education students.*
- MNPS received 4,065 Pre-K student applications for the 2010-2011 school year. *This is an increase of 1,200 applications from the 2009-2010 school year.*
- 1,707 Pre-K age children have not obtained placement as of September 2010. *The majority of these families applied in the Antioch, Cane Ridge, Overton and McGavock Clusters.*
- Pre-Kindergarten classrooms are located in 12 clusters throughout the district
- 59 Elementary schools have 1 or more Pre-Kindergarten programs
- 6 Community sites have MNPS State Pre-Kindergarten classrooms: *Bethlehem Center, Fannie Battle, McNeilly Center, Martha O'Bryan (3 classrooms), St. Luke's, and Wayne Reed – total of 8 classrooms.*
- 55 State Pre-K classrooms are funded by the State Voluntary Pre-K Grant and local MNPS budget
- 39 Local Pre-K classrooms are funded by local MNPS budget
- 6 Federal Pre-K classrooms are funded by Title I budget
- 32 Blended Pre-K classrooms are funded by Exceptional Education budget
- 12 Self-Contained Exceptional Education Pre-K classrooms are funded by Exceptional Education budget

## Appendix D: Identified Supports & Services Available for Young Children 0-8 in Nashville-Davidson County

Metro Nashville Davidson County has a number of support providers and organizations. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Books from Birth of Middle Tennessee**

[www.vanderbiltchildrens.org/booksfrombirth/](http://www.vanderbiltchildrens.org/booksfrombirth/)

*The mission of Books from Birth of Middle Tennessee (“BFBMT”) is to increase literacy and school readiness while strengthening family bonds. BFBMT mails a free book a month to registered children in Davidson, Williamson and Sumner Counties until the child’s fifth birthday*

- ◇ **Books sent by mail to those 0 – 5 years of age**
- ◇ **Family literacy trainings**
- ◇ **Jo’s Reach out and Read**

- **Born Learning -- [www.bornlearning.org](http://www.bornlearning.org)**

*Everyday life is a learning experience for children. Born Learning is a public engagement campaign that helps parents, grandparents and caregivers explore ways to turn everyday moments into fun learning opportunities.*

- **Family and Children’s Services -- <http://www.fcsnashville.org/staff.html>**

*The mission of Family and Children’s Service is to strengthen families, children and individuals to achieve self sufficiency, family preservation & emotional well-being.*

- **Family, Friends, and Neighbor child care**

*Vanderbilt University Child and Family Policy Center & United Way of Tennessee work together to identify FFN caregivers to improve the quality of care that they provide. They communicate at the neighborhood level.... faith-based, shopping centers, grocery stores in order to engage these caregivers.*

- **Family Resources Centers/United Way Metro Nashville --<http://www.unitedwaynashville.org/community-work/neighborhood-resource-centers/>**

*United Way’s network of Family Resource Centers is the one-stop-shop for health and human service needs in neighborhoods*

- **Martha O’Bryan Center – <http://www.marthaobryan.org/>**

*Serving Cayce Homes and the surrounding East Nashville community, Martha O’Bryan Center is built on a foundation of Christian faith and empowers children, youth, and adults in poverty to transform their lives through work, education, employment and fellowship.*

- **Metro Social Services -- <http://www.nashville.gov/sservices/>**

- **MIHOW (Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker) – <http://www.mihow.org/participants.html>**

*Parent to parent interventions that improve health and child development for low income families (Vanderbilt Health Services) whose target population is pregnant women and families with young children (birth to three) who are economically disadvantaged and geographically and/or socially isolated. Most participants learn about the program from friends or neighbors. Outreach workers also seek out prospective participants by establishing relationships with community organizations that are serving families in need.*

- **MOMS Club International – <http://momsclubeast.blogspot.com/p/about-us.html>**

*“MOMS offering Moms Support” for stay at home moms.*

- **Nashville International Center for Empowerment – <http://www.empowernashville.org/>**

*The Nashville International Center for Empowerment, formerly the Sudanese Community and Women’s Services Center, is a non-profit, community-based organization dedicated to empowering refugees and immigrants of Middle Tennessee through direct social services and educational programs.*

- **Nashville Public Library – [www.library.nashville.org](http://www.library.nashville.org)**

*Extending the benefits and joys of reading, lifelong learning, and discovery to all people through collections and services..... 20 Branches around the city plus the Main Library*

- ◇ **Services**

- **Resource/referral**
- **Reference**
- **Children’s resources at every location**

- ◇ **Outreach Programs**

- **Bringing Books to Life**
- **Loving and Learning Family literacy training**
- **Story times**
- **Dedicated children’s staff at every location**

- ◇ **Collections**

- **Children’s collections**
- **Parenting collections**

- **Parenting Center (Junior League Center for Parenting Young Children – 615.936.3659 or <http://childandfamilycenter.vanderbilt.edu/news/junior-league-vanderbilt-center-for-parenting-young-children>**

*Dedicated to providing families with emotional and informational support they need to raise their young children successfully. The Junior League-Vanderbilt Center for Parenting Young Children is a one-stop resource for Nashville parents. The Center’s purpose is to provide parenting and support to families of all children and to promote the participation of all young children in their home, school, and community routines. This is the only ‘parenting center’*

*in the U.S. that attends equally to the needs of families of typically developing children and children with special needs.*

*The Center works with parents, teachers, and caregivers of all children ages 7 and younger, including children who are typically developing and those with developmental differences. It is a family-centered, positive behavior support approach that includes discussion of concerns, emotional and informational support, and an individualized plan. Consultation can occur in the family's home, child's school, or another place within 30 miles of the Center.*

- **Parents Know, Kids Grow - <http://parentsknowkidsgrow.org>**

*Tennessee DHS supported website, Parents Know, Kids Grow Network serves parents, grandparents, and others concerned about raising children with resources and information about children's safety, well being, and learning. Covering such topics as finding the best child care, creating a safe-sleep environment, and childhood development, we offer the latest articles, videos, and additional resources supported by expert research.*

- **State Government – <http://www.tennessee.gov/humanserv/> Department of Human Services**

- ◇ **Food program**
- ◇ **Financial assistance – Families First child care certificates**
- ◇ **Child-care finder**
- ◇ **Refugee & Social Services**

- **Tennessee's Early Intervention System ("TEIS") – <http://www.tn.gov/education/teis/index.shtml>**

*TEIS is a voluntary educational program for families with children ages birth through two years of age with disabilities or developmental delays. The primary goal of TEIS is to support families in promoting their child's optimal development and to facilitate the child's participation in family and community activities.*

- **Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral -- <http://www.tnccrr.org/>**

*The CCR&R also helps parents seeking child care to find child care providers in their area. Available to parents seeking child care resources, child care providers seeking help with work, employers trying to assist parents in their organizations, or community organizations involved with children.*

- **Tennessee Voices for Children ("TVC") -- <http://www.tnvoices.org/>**

*TVC has been recognized for bringing people and agencies together to address issues pertinent to Tennessee's children and their families from individual child and family needs, to gaps in services within a community, to policy issues at the local, state and federal levels. In FY 2007-08, TVC served more than 80,000 children, families and professionals across TN.*

- **Parenting Education program "Tied Together"**

*Tied Together parenting initiative gives at-risk parents from the Cayce Homes and surrounding East Nashville the education, resources, and modeling they need to raise healthy*

families. The program, which teaches positive parenting skills and supports good health outcomes among mothers, works to reduce infant mortality. Tied Together helps parents learn how to become their children's best teachers through gaining an understanding of child development. The nine-week curriculum is divided into topics that include Forming a Community of Learners, Immunizations, Brain Development, Health and Nutrition, and Safety. Parents receive essential educational, medical, safety, and nutritional items to take home after each session, to implement best practices learned in class.

- **Vanderbilt Kennedy Center's Family Outreach Center – (615) 936-5118 or: [kc.vanderbilt.edu/site/services/disabilityservices/default.aspx](http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/site/services/disabilityservices/default.aspx)**

*Provides help for families of children with developmental delays or disabilities. The Family Outreach Center provides families with a single point of entry into the many services and supports of the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, as well as the wealth of resources at Vanderbilt University and in the community.*

- **2-1-1-Tennessee -- <http://tn211.mycommunitypt.com/>**

*Tennessee's community services help line, answered by actual people who are trained to help callers sort out needs and give phone numbers and addresses of the closest places to get help for those needs.*

## Services Available for Children 3-8 Attending MNPS

Families of children attending MNPS still have many formalized care needs after and before school. Pre-Kindergarten classes end at 2:00 p.m., and other elementary classes end at 3:00 p.m. This leaves a lot of time in the afternoon for needed care. All MNPS elementary schools have before and/or after care programs at the with the exception of Robert Churchwell Museum Magnet School. The parent point of access is the MNPS website or contacting the child's school office directly. There are 107 before and after school care programs in MNPS schools. Other, non-MNPS programs include, but are not limited to:

- **Cathedral of Praise – 615.876.8740**

*After school program from 3 – 6 for k through 6th graders for elementary schools in zip code area 37218.*

- **Cottage Cove Co. – 615.292.2303**

*After school program from 3 – 5:30 with school pickup, for children 5 – 9th grade living in the Vinehill area of Nashville, specifically 37203 and 37204. Offers tutoring, reading, Bible study, music lessons, cooking, arts and crafts, gymnastics, photography, science, sewing and choirs.*

- **Eighteenth Avenue Family Enrichment Center – 615.320.1131**

*Before and after school care for children up to 12 years of age for low income families.*

- **Fannie Battle Day Home for Children – 615.228.6745**

*After school program from 4 – 10 years old from 6:30 am to 5:30 pm. For children attending Kirkpatrick, Lockland and Warner Elementary Schools.*

- **McNeilly Center at Chadwell, Glenn, Hattie Cotton and Warner Elementary Schools**

– 615.577.1138/615.262.4212/615.228.3933/615.291.6395

*After school program until 6:00 p.m. for children Pre-K through 4th grade at Glenn, Hattie Cotton, Warner, Chadwell and Caldwell Enhanced Option Elementary Schools. Parents must be working, in school, or job training.*

- **Preston Taylor Ministries – 615.596.4386**

*After school program from 2 - 6 for children 5 – 12 years of age living between 28th and 43rd Street in the Preston Taylor and surrounding neighborhood. Christian based after school program which focuses on reading development.*

- **Project Reflect – 615.228.9886**

*A supplemental education program for at-risk children in grades k-4 who attend Smithson Craighead Academy. Offered from 3 – 5:30.*

- **Refugee Youth Program – 615.259.3567**

*After school program for refugee high school students, including assistance with homework, communication skills training and field trips to cultural attractions and recreation.*

- **St. Luke's Community House – 615.350.1140**

*After school program until 5:30 for children k – 12 years of age. Provide tutoring, recreational and cultural activities, and job training. For individuals living in the 37209 zip code.*

- **Various YMCA's**

*Most offer after school programs for children of various ages serving families in the proximity of the center at issue.*

- **YCAP Program at Russell Street YMCA – 615.226.6427**

*After school program until 5 for middle and high school aged children in the East Nashville area. Provide tutoring, recreational, performing arts and various other activities.*

- **Youth Encouragement Services – 615.256.2716/615.350.1140/615.730.8468**

*After school program 4:30 – 6:30 for children 5 – 18 years of age, preferably living in or around J.C. Napier/Tony Sudikum housing, Woodbine housing area of West Nashville Nations area. At both the Lindsley Center, St. Luke's and McIver Center. Provide everything from tutoring, Bible study, field trips, photography and art, cultural awareness activities and language classes.*

- **Youth Life Learning Center W – 615.385.3881**

*After school program from 3 - 6:30 for children k – 4th grade. Provide homework assistance, tutoring, Bible/character building, cultural awareness, computer lab, reading, and behavioral incentives for inner city kids.*







FOR MORE INFORMATION  
Mayor's Office of Children and Youth  
Metropolitan Courthouse  
1 Public Square  
Nashville, TN 37201  
615-862-6000