



May 24, 2021

The year 2020 has provided a multitude of disruptions and challenges for the world. The work of LAUNCH Flagstaff and Elevate PreK have not been immune to these circumstances. In the following document, we would like to provide a status update on our progress to establish improved access to high-quality early childhood education in Flagstaff.

Like others, Elevate PreK has continued to evolve and respond to the current challenges our community faces. During the COVID-19 pandemic, families with young children have been adversely impacted by the pandemic in a way that many did not anticipate. The disruption to school and childcare services sent families scrambling to find solutions. For families with children under age five, the adverse impacts became higher. Mothers disproportionately left the workforce due to childcare and preschool closures. The limited number of childcare options in Flagstaff became even more limited as some centers and classrooms closed permanently, and staff who were already underpaid left the workforce for good. Families, friends, and neighbors care are providing the bulk of childcare under less-than-ideal circumstances, which do not have any quality measures in place to identify if children will be socially, emotionally, or academically ready for kindergarten. On top of this, families are struggling with multiple stressors that trickle down to long-term childhood outcomes. The implications for a lack of affordable and high-quality early childhood education are being recognized now on a world-wide level. For Flagstaff, this issue is more important with the higher cost of living and lack of affordable housing options. We need more support for our families with young children to restore the workforce, build up family stability, and set up the next generation of children for school readiness that leads to a strong community.

Elevate PreK is moving forward with the community investment towards young children. This past year, we have focused on coordinating social services for families with young children through an online platform and a relationship-based navigation approach. Data will be collected on the needs from families, while continuing to include family voice in our program design. We are continuing to prepare for our pilot classroom launch in 2021. We will be opening our first classroom at Kinsey Elementary with an enrollment of 18 four-year-olds. Research shows the best long-term investments for optimal outcomes come in the youngest years. By continuing to invest in high quality early childhood education supports, we are laying the groundwork for better education outcomes and well-rounded adult outcomes. We are continuing to work with other cities in Arizona who are participating in early childhood education initiatives to develop a sustainability plan for the long-term vision.

Attached to this document are the updates on the progress we have made towards or vision of enhancing the early childhood education system in Flagstaff. We look forward to continuing this conversation about how we can continue to work together to support families and young children in our community.

With gratitude for your continued support,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Kulpinski".

Paul Kulpinski
LAUNCH Flagstaff

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Cirzan".

Rebecca Cirzan
Association for Supportive Childcare



Elevate PreK Progress Update FY21

Quality Goal Updates:

- Identified elements for classroom implementation, including curricula, target student population, staff qualifications, evaluation metrics, and quality measures
- Implemented MOUs between key partners for first classroom at Flagstaff Unified School District. Developed operations manuals for infrastructure
- Formal evaluation of child outcomes approved by the International Research Board; Northern Arizona leading the work for the evaluation study
- Classroom one to begin August 2021 at Kinsey Elementary, with the potential to launch Classroom two at Thomas Elementary in August 2022.
- In process: family engagement strategy for pilot classrooms, partners for classrooms 3-5, pipeline for early childhood workforce
- In process: Classroom proposal submitted to local business, being vetted by their board in May
- Key Partners: Flagstaff Unified School District, Northern Arizona University

Access Goal Updates:

- Parenting Arizona will provide family support services to the first pilot classroom at Kinsey Elementary as part of their existing funding for a Family Resource Coordinator. An Elevate Family Partner will still serve a role for the family support in the classroom, which could be filled by either Parenting Arizona or another community partner.
- Developed digital tool (called the Early Learning Qualifier Tool) for helping families identify early learning eligibility for pilot classrooms and additional subsidies. The tool will also support with data collection for Flagstaff families looking for preschool services, as well as navigation to any childcare service in Flagstaff.
- Data and input gathering from families related to early learning needs and program design in conjunction with the digital tool and Family Partner.
- Coordination Committee with social services and families started to identify shared resource locations online and in-person; work being facilitated by Building Community
- The First Things First Coconino Regional Partnership Director is facilitating community conversations around a one-stop family resource center. This would be a multi-collaborative effort from social services to apply for philanthropic funding from Care First.
- In process: Identifying an Elevate Family Partner (organization or staff member) to help with the Early Learning Qualifier Tool, enroll families into Elevate PreK pilot classrooms, and provide family support services for enrolled families for education engagement and wrap-around services.
- Key Partners: Building Community, Parenting Arizona, First Things First

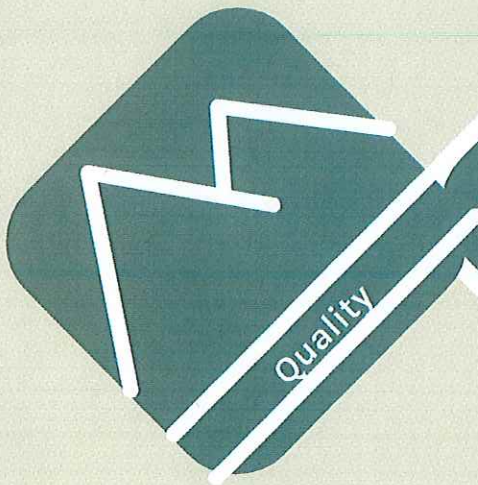
Sustainability Goal Update:

- Budget completed with projections for three-year projects, with adjustments for new strategies (such as the Front Door model).
- Two community partnerships have formed to support the work of Elevate PreK: Lowell Observatory and Coconino County Health and Human Services will be supporting STEM and Physical Development curricula and training for the pilot classrooms and the larger early childhood community.
- Flagstaff High School, Coconino Community College, and Northern Arizona University are collaborating to strengthen the early childhood professional pipeline. This includes alignment of high school CTE programs for early childhood education, an AAS at the community college, and a BAS at the university. The alignment includes scholarship funding for students to successfully complete coursework at any degree level at no cost to the student.
- Statewide work with the National League of Cities (NLC) is supporting strategy development for sustainability at the municipal level. The city of Flagstaff's Director of Economic Vitality is participating in the work with LAUNCH and Elevate PreK, and he has been committed to raising the awareness of the importance of early childhood education.
- An Arizona PreK Alignment team has formed with the cities in the state that have early childhood initiatives. This includes Tempe, Tucson, Mesa, and Phoenix. The work has included proposing an Early Childhood Data Scan that includes shared data points and funding sources.
- In process: Draft strategy identified for EPK and business engagement, discussion of a feasibility study past the three-year pilot.
- Key partners: City of Flagstaff, National League of Cities, Lowell Observatory, Coconino County Health and Human Services, Flagstaff High School, Coconino Community College, Northern Arizona University

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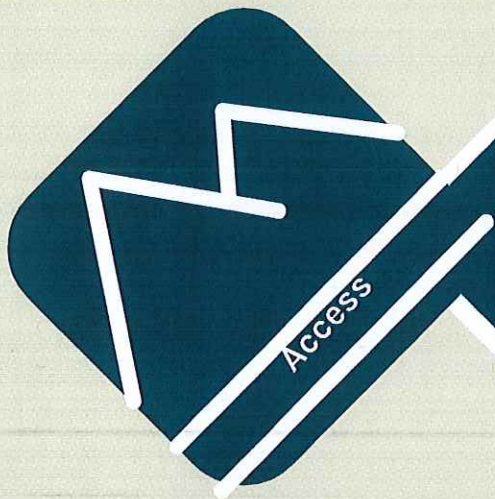
PRE K

A collective impact project to enhance
Flagstaff's early childhood system



Elevate PreK Pilot

Establish a high quality, full day, year-round preschool program that sets a gold standard for early education and can be scaled in Flagstaff and beyond.



Elevate Family Partner

Develop a streamlined system of supports that increases access to high quality early learning for families in Flagstaff and beyond.



Community Collaboration

Develop a sustainable financial model that includes and expands current early learning services and supports.

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PRE K

A collective impact project to enhance Flagstaff's early childhood system

GOALS

Sustainability

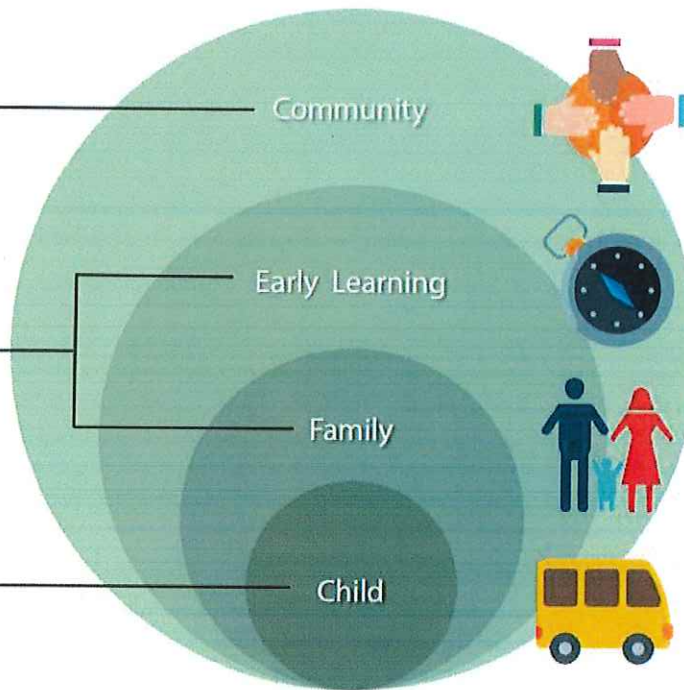
Develop a sustainable community-based system that includes and expands early learning services and supports

Access

Develop a streamlined system of supports that increases access to high-quality early learning

Quality

Establish a high-quality, full-day, year-round, free preschool program that sets the gold standard for early education



STRATEGIES

Community Support for All Families

Community-wide alignment of family support services producing equitable, efficient and effective impact for improving service delivery

Early Learning Locator

Providing coordinated placement in existing early learning settings to improve school readiness and long-term student outcomes

Family Partner & Advocate

Providing relationship-based supports to families that enhance engagement in their student's learning

Elevate PreK Pilot Classrooms

Increasing the availability of high-quality preschool, because 55% of three and 4-year-olds in Flagstaff are not enrolled in any early learning program

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PRE K

Elevate PreK Pilot

Establish a high quality, full day, year-round preschool program that sets a gold standard for early education and can be scaled in Flagstaff and beyond.



1

Full day, year round programming

Before-, after- and summer care will be offered in the pilot programs within high-quality licensed environments. Site locations and entities are diversified to increase community participation. Pilot programs will target families in the 101-250% of the federal poverty level who are not accessing preschool services.



2

Highly qualified staff and support

Classrooms will serve up to 18 children with a lead teacher holding a bachelors in early childhood education and consistent instructional aides support continuity of care. Coaching will be provided to the pilot sites. Professional development will be accessible to the community at-large.



3

Evidence-based curriculum

Sites will receive training and coaching on use of the High Scope and PATHS curricula. These will support whole-child development with an emphasis on play-based learning, social emotional development and executive functioning skills.



4

Evaluation and measurements

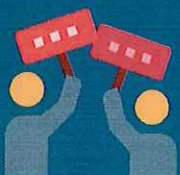
Child outcomes surrounding literacy and social-emotional development will be measured. Program outcomes surrounding high-quality early learning will be measured with the ERS and CLASS tools.



5

Community partnerships

The pilot will have five classrooms by the end of a three-year cycle. Community partners will work together to provide blended and braided supports to the classrooms, such as classroom materials and infrastructure, coaching and training for teachers, and a pipeline for the early childhood workforce.



6

Collective Impact

Funds and supports are braided and blended across the community to support all families and children. Community awareness around the importance of high-quality early learning will elevate the conversation among residents, stakeholders, and politicians.

Develop a streamlined system of supports that increases access to high quality early learning for families in Flagstaff and beyond

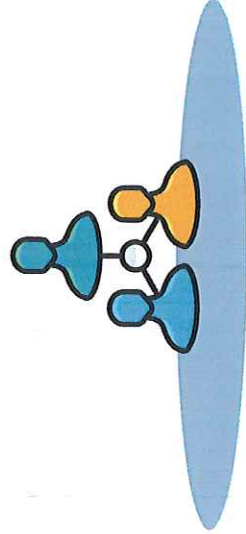
Early Learning Qualifier Tool

Early Learning Qualifier Tool provided to connect families with high quality early learning options

Helps families determine if they qualify for subsidies while matching them to early learning programs

Data collection of Flagstaff families and their child care needs

Supports enrollment into services, including the pilot classrooms



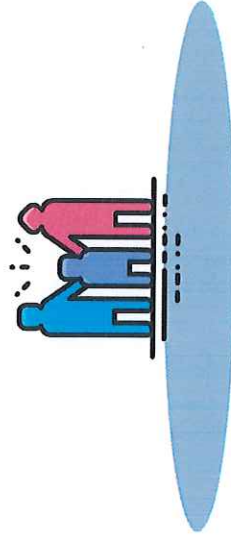
Elevate Family Partner

Builds trusting relationships with families by gathering input and building on family strengths

Develops and connects to multiple family engagement strategies in the pilot classroom

Acts as a communication support between families and schools

Encourages participation in decision-making from families in the community

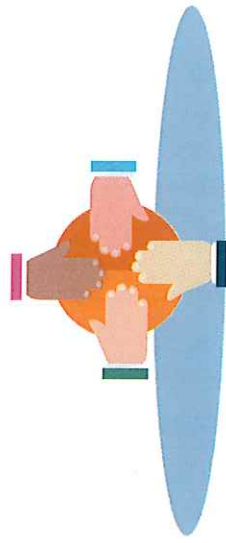


Community Collaboration

Social service organizations come together to support a one-stop shop for wrap-around services

Family voice influences how social services are implemented

Community collaboration among organizations to leverage existing resources





Sustainability

Develop a sustainable community-based system that includes and expands early learning services and supports



STEM and Early Childhood

Elevate PreK and Lowell Observatory have partnered to offer the Lowell PreK STEM curriculum with professional development to select preschool sites at no cost.

Physical Health and Early Childhood

Elevate PreK and Arizona Health Zone have partnered to offer the CATCH curriculum with professional development to select preschool sites at no cost.



Early Childhood Workforce Pipeline

Northern Arizona University, Coconino Community College, and Flagstaff Unified School District are aligning their pathways for students to enter into an Early Childhood Education degree. This will allow high school students to begin to earn college credit that will transfer through the institutions, supporting their completion of a CDA, Associates, or Bachelors in Early Childhood Education.



Statewide and National Collaboration

Elevate PreK joined the Early Childhood Municipal Policy Alignment Community of Practice, a peer learning initiative, at the National League of Cities (NLC.) In the months ahead, the city of Flagstaff, along with twenty other cities from across the country, will share best practices and key learnings on how best to promote early childhood success within communities.



Quality Child Care-Engaged Workforce

88% of primary caregivers said problems with child care hurt their efforts to be more committed at work. Coconino is strong because...



Early Childhood and Business Engagement

Reliable child care is essential to a thriving workforce. Elevate PreK is partnering with local businesses to support the workforce find and secure high-quality early learning services.