East Durham Children’s Initiative:  
‘It’s all about the kids’  
Making accelerated progress for East Durham’s children
The Center for Promise is the research institute for America’s Promise Alliance, housed at Boston University’s School of Education, and dedicated to understanding what young people need to thrive and how to create the conditions of success for all young people. The Center’s work will add to the academic exploration of these issues and help give communities and individuals the tools and knowledge to effectively work together to support young people.

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**Foreword**

Great progress has been made in the United States on increasing academic proficiency and high school graduation rates, and reducing teen pregnancy rates and homicides. In the low-income, urban centers of our nation, however, progress often stagnates. When a high school diploma becomes less of a norm than violence and incarceration, more needs to be done to transform the lives of young people. Our belief is that this transformation occurs when government, schools, nonprofits and community members come together around a common goal, plan together around a common agenda, and act together around common tactics to support their young people.

The Center for Promise series on comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) is meant to provide guidance to communities ambitiously seeking to embark on and currently pursuing these multi-sector, community-wide actions. In the case studies, the reader will find the stories about the why and the how. Why the community decided to create and implement a CCI and how the community was able to move from an idea to substantive action.

We know that those working day-to-day and week-to-week to implement a CCI can feel hopeless and disheartened, often feeling as if they are taking two steps back for every step forward. Our goal is that lessons from these case studies help communities strengthen their work and, maybe more importantly, give communities hope that hard work can, in fact, result in success. The lives of young people in economically disadvantaged and marginalized communities can be transformed. We do not believe, nor would evidence suggest, that there is one way for a community to support its young people. Rather, there are overarching principles that increase a community’s chance for success. Here, we start to tell the story of how.
The East Durham Children’s Initiative has successfully connected more than 700 children to a pipeline of high-quality supports that equip parents with practical tools to help their babies and toddlers reach age-appropriate milestones, prepare young children to succeed in school, strengthen students’ academic skills, enrich children’s in-school and out-of-school activities, and help families navigate and negotiate educational experiences.

Bordering North Carolina’s bustling Research Triangle Park (or Triangle as the region is called locally), Durham has more than 245,000 residents. Its population has exponentially grown, increasing by approximately 22 percent from 2000 to 2010. Historically, the city’s economy was built around tobacco and textiles. African-American entrepreneurship also thrived in Durham, with a once-prominent business section known as Black Wall Street. Deindustrialization, which began in the 1950s, however, reshaped the city’s economy. Today health care and research represent major industries. With these new industries, downtown Durham is being revitalized, with restaurants, bars and apartment buildings proliferating. Another large development includes a proposed light rail transit system that would link universities, hospitals, and other key locations in Durham. All this activity is garnering public attention: Travel + Leisure magazine named Durham as a best place to visit in 2015.

However, similar to urban areas across the United States, deep disparities exist. According to a 2014 report by The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, eight urban census tracts in Durham County are economically distressed based on their elevated rates of poverty and unemployment. East Durham covers one of these areas, a 1.2-square-mile community of approximately 11,500 residents, an estimated one-third of whom are between 0–17 years old. Residents are predominantly African American (66 percent) and Latino (22 percent). More than half of residents live below the poverty line, with average household income at just $23,000. The community has struggled with underperforming schools and high rates of teen pregnancy, asthma, child obesity, food insecurity, crime and child maltreatment.

The East Durham Children’s Initiative (EDCI), a place-based organization in East Durham, has mobilized more than 30 partners to collectively combat these issues. Since 2011, EDCI has coordinated a pipeline of supports to transform the trajectories of children and youth growing up in East Durham.
From its founding four years ago, EDCI has made significant, concrete progress toward incorporating many of the evidence-based practices essential for organizations to effectively work together and produce positive changes in children’s lives. The team did many things right, including:

- defining a clear theory of change
- establishing strong governance
- developing mutually beneficial partnerships and gaining early momentum
- fostering trusting relationships with partners
- authentically engaging families and the broader community
- creating channels for regular feedback
- securing stable funding
- systematically using data to shape programming.

This case study illustrates key lessons from EDCI’s effort to build supports from cradle to college or career. We selected EDCI as part of our series of exemplary case studies based on its substantive progress in improving the lives of children and youth in the East Durham community. In its first three years of operation, EDCI has built a sustainable infrastructure for delivering the key developmental supports that children of East Durham, birth through 5th grade need to thrive; with systematic plans in place to extend this pipeline of supports to older youth. Children, youth and their families are being engaged in substantive ways, such as more than 40 percent of new mothers participating in a home visiting program and 360 kindergarten through fourth grade students having their parents connected with the school, social and human services that their family needs.

The report draws on multiple sources, including interviews with EDCI leadership, partner organizations, frontline providers and local caregivers (see Appendix A for a complete list); a review of key documents and reports; observations from a site visit; and broader research on community efforts to improve child and youth well-being.

EDCI’s accelerated growth in a few short years shows that communities can support young people’s healthy development and help them thrive, as other CCIs have done. (See the East Lake Foundation in Atlanta, New Orleans Kids Partnership in New Orleans, and Parramore Kidz Zone in Orlando, which are profiled in our series.) While each community is unique, these collective experiences can inform similar efforts across the country helping to enable young people to flourish in all aspects of their lives—academically, physically, socially, emotionally and civically.

### About Comprehensive Community Initiatives

EDCI is part of a broader national movement that is embracing collaboration as a tool for addressing young people’s interconnected needs. This strategy seeks to coalesce multiple sectors to follow a common agenda to achieve shared goals and metrics, what has been called “collective impact.”

The idea gained popularity in the 1990s with the growth of comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs), which target the needs of marginalized neighborhoods, including housing, economic development, health care and education. Recent examples include the federal Promise and Choice Neighborhoods initiatives, as well as locally led efforts such as the ones described above.

Meaningful collaboration is hard work, but research has identified a set of shared practices that can help guide CCIs, including selecting a lead organization, carefully aligning the strengths of a diverse group of partners, using data to inform and drive practice, and focusing efforts on a specific geographic area.
Identifying Critical Needs, Catalyzing Action

The emergence of EDCI

In 2008, several strategic actions catalyzed a collective effort to address the critical needs of the East Durham community. Timely research helped uncover the depth of the community’s needs and sparked action. Community members gathered key stakeholders and explored various approaches to creating systemic change until they discovered an appropriate model for the local context. They built strong community support before moving forward. While inevitable starts and stops occurred, these actions helped forge a solid foundation from which to develop a collective effort with the potential to produce substantive change in East Durham.

Here’s where our story starts: In 2008, researchers at Duke University’s Children’s Environmental Health Initiative documented myriad health, educational, safety, economic and environmental challenges impacting Durham, showing particularly deep distress in East Durham.21 Another report that same year by the Durham-based nonprofit MDC (previously called the Manpower Development Corp.) generated concern about young people in the city who were neither in school nor working.22 Together, the reports led local leaders to mobilize and begin to identify solutions to these complex problems.

As a first step, stakeholders looked to other communities nationwide to identify promising practices for improving outcomes for young people. In early 2009, a group of approximately 19 political and community leaders traveled to Portland, Oregon to visit initiatives supporting young people, such as Connected by 25 (which has since evolved into an organization called All Hands Raised Partnership) and Gateway to College. Returning to Durham, several members proposed launching an initiative that would first deliver wraparound supports to young children and then extend to older youth. Not everyone shared the same vision, and disagreements arose when choosing which age group to target, leading a core set of members to form an independent group.

In this new entity, the group continued to explore existing models for improving outcomes for children and youth. One of the group’s members, Durham County Commissioner Ellen Reckhow, learned about the Harlem Children’s Zone (HCZ) while listening to National Public Radio (NPR). “What came across in the interview was this systemic approach, so that it’s not just one scattershot program here and another there... you’re trying to affect all [of children’s] formative years,” she recalled.23 Reckhow shared Harlem’s example with other members, who were equally intrigued by its holistic concept. To more fully understand the approach, the group jointly read and discussed Paul Tough’s Whatever It Takes: Geoffrey Canada’s Quest to Change Harlem and America, which chronicles HCZ. With their interest piqued by NPR and confirmed by Tough’s depiction of HCZ, they became deeply interested in implementing a similar model in Durham. Many questions remained: Where? How? For whom?
At their next meeting, members identified a geographic radius for such an effort, with the help of former Durham Public Schools Superintendent Carl Harris. Data indicated that Y.E. Smith Elementary Museum School—which currently has approximately 420 students—was the most economically disadvantaged school in the district. As such, the group selected Y.E. Smith’s attendance zone as its geographic focus and defined a catchment area of 120 blocks. In addition to a high level of need, “a critical element was selecting a small enough geographic area … to test the model,” according to founding Board Chair Barker French, a retired investment advisor and community volunteer.

The effort continued to gain momentum throughout 2009. Former Superintendent Harris invited local business leaders to the group’s next meeting, and they supported the organizing effort and offered seed funding. This money, along with a financial contribution from Duke University, totaled approximately $20,000, which enabled them to hire a consultant to facilitate meetings and help articulate the group’s vision.

Members also engaged Minnie Forte-Brown from the Durham Public Schools Board of Education, local community activist Wanda Boone, and other key leaders. Forte-Brown and Boone joined Durham County Commissioner Reckhow and French as a core team in what became affectionately called the “gang of four.” The participation of prominent leaders from the Durham community helped this tight-knit group recruit a growing number of community members to meetings and assemble steering committees to help guide their effort.

During the summer of 2009, the four leaders, along with eight other political representatives and community stakeholders, visited HCZ. This dynamic experience fueled further creative thinking and reflection. Returning to Durham energized, the group formulated a model that would emulate Harlem’s pipeline of seamless supports, while modifying other core components. “We wanted to follow the general approach—cradle to career—but realized that we needed to be adaptive because the amount of resources [HCZ] had were unattainable,” described Reckhow.

EDCI organizers envisioned a modest start, scaling and replicating the Harlem model in the future. This approach led them to adopt an inherently different service delivery model than Harlem’s. Unlike HCZ, which opened its own charter schools, they chose to use the public school system as the mechanism for targeting services. In fact, Durham Public Schools remains EDCI’s largest partner.

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“We’re a public school model, which allows us to serve any child regardless of whether you have a parent that is so engaged that he/she goes to the edge of the earth to make sure that get you into the lottery,” explained EDCI President and CEO David Reese. “We identify folks who do really good work, bring them back to serve kids in the Zone, and make [the programs] stronger. ... This approach requires us to remove ego and focus on our commonality. It’s all about the kids,” he said.
Defining a Theory of Change

The group next conceived a theory of change to guide its work. The blueprint states: If EDCI builds a pipeline of high-quality supports for youth in the Zone from birth to college or career, then more young people will graduate from high school and continue on to college or career, and East Durham’s poverty will subsequently decline.28

To ensure that this theory of change resonated with the greater community, the group met with several different groups to elicit their buy-in. Group members presented the concept to various government entities, including the Durham Public Schools Board of Education, Durham City Council, and Durham County Board of Commissioners. All three bodies officially endorsed EDCI’s model. The group also publicized the proposed effort through local media and a website. According to Reese, garnering this type of institutional support is crucial to any collaborative effort.

In addition to government support, EDCI organizers raised approximately $200,000 from foundations and individuals. During this time, they also engaged residents during a series of public forums at the neighborhood’s Holton Career and Resource Center. These meetings, held in 2009, attracted an increasing number of community members who expressed widespread support for the proposed pipeline. At a particularly productive meeting, or “community conversation,” over 100 community members contributed input regarding perceived strengths and challenges in East Durham and generated ideas to improve the neighborhood.32 With a broad base of multi-sector support, the group was ready to operationalize the concept.

Shaping EDCI’s Structure and Organizational Processes

After convening key stakeholders, defining a theory of change to guide its work, and obtaining strong community support, the group entered a new phase of growth and significant infrastructure development and capacity-building. It evolved into a fully functioning program in 2010 and became an independent nonprofit organization in 2012.

While the group spent time shaping an early governance structure, it intentionally began to implement programming soon afterwards. It gained initial momentum by forming partnerships and coordinating a pipeline of high-quality supports aligned with its theory of change. After becoming an independent entity, it further refined its infrastructure and built its capacity to effectively serve as a strong intermediary organization.

Identifying leadership

In 2010, a year and a half after the initial idea for a collective effort was proposed, the group embarked on an intensive planning process to build organizational capacity and infrastructure. Establishing a clear structure and transparent processes is essential for effective collaboration.33 The group convened a Community Advisory Board to guide planning efforts and launched the East Durham Children’s Initiative (EDCI) as a program of the Center for Child and Family Health (CCFH), a local consortium of family support and mental health services. CCFH allowed EDCI to operate under its 501c3 status, as well as provided leadership, space and time to get its feet off the ground.
EDCI appointed an executive committee to serve as its chief governing body.

Other strategic actions included hiring David Reese as the organization’s first executive director, securing further financial support (including a grant from the Oak Foundation), cultivating relationships with additional stakeholders, piloting programs (for example, a summer camp), and initiating an evaluation. In 2011, EDCI launched programming in the Zone. The decision to move forward with implementation relatively quickly helped spur initial momentum, an important element that can help sustain stakeholders’ engagement in a collective effort.34

Establishing strong governance

After developing an early governance structure and launching initial programming in East Durham, EDCI was ready to expand and decided to become an independent nonprofit organization in 2012. This marked a new phase during which EDCI adapted its infrastructure to become an intermediary organization that would employ strong leadership to coordinate the delivery of high-quality supports in East Durham. An intermediary structure designates decision-making power to a lead organization and board of directors.35 EDCI and the East Lake Foundation in Atlanta, for instance, serve as lead organizations in intermediary structures. (Findings from a survey of partner organizations indicate that most members believe that EDCI functions as an intermediary.)36

Reese, who is now EDCI’s president and CEO, exhibits exemplary leadership qualities, which research has identified as essential for advancing a collective goal. These attributes include an ability to mobilize diverse stakeholders (Reese has built and maintained strong relationships that range from board members and funders to his staff and on-the-ground practitioners to children, youth and families), set clear goals aligned with a theory of change, and effectively implement strategies.37 According to Michael Becketts, director of the Durham County Department of Social Services (DSS), an EDCI partner, his agency’s relationship with EDCI is supported through “a combination of [David’s] tenacity…and a fundamental understanding of the client population.”

In addition to operating as intermediaries, CCIs employ other common approaches to governance and decision-making, including consensus-building (when partners agree on decisions through a consensus process, e.g., the New Orleans Kids Partnership) and centralized structures (when one organization possesses most decision-making responsibilities, e.g., the city-led Parramore Kidz Zone in Orlando).

As an independent entity, EDCI elected a board of directors to direct its work. Members from partner organizations generally perceive a high level of efficacy among EDCI’s leadership, believing that it can successfully develop the organization’s capacity, employ effective strategies, and motivate members toward collective action.39 Additionally, most members report that EDCI can resolve problems that may arise.40
EDCI also created several board committees targeting governance, development, finance, administration, and programs. Members of the program committee assist EDCI staff with identifying gaps in services, as well as investigating evidence-based practices for strengthening the pipeline. Wrestling with these types of important issues shows EDCI’s growth, according to board member Ted Fiske, who co-chairs the committee. “It’s a sign of the organization’s maturation that we can dig really deep,” he said.

Delineating shared goals
EDCI also devised six overarching, long-term goals to guide its development, another key practice of successful collaborations. These goals, which are codified in a formal document, state the following:

- Children are healthy and ready to learn.
- Children are prepared for kindergarten.
- Parents and caregivers are actively engaged in their children’s educational success.
- Students are academically proficient.
- Students successfully graduate from high school, college and career ready.
- The EDCI Zone is a safe, healthy and economically thriving community.

Developing mutually beneficial partnerships
Reflecting another feature of well-functioning collaborations, EDCI has coalesced a broad set of partners from multiple sectors, including the school district, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and the faith-based and business communities (See Appendix B for EDCI Pipeline of Services 2015). An essential element of EDCI’s cooperative approach is developing mutually beneficial partnerships, and working hard to eschew ego.

“It’s a very different approach [that] requires us to remove ego [and] focus on our commonality,” Reese said. Partners share this approach, which promotes synergy among them and EDCI. Becketts believes, for example, that a shared leadership philosophy centered on “how do we say yes to getting things done?” has helped spark and sustain collaboration across sectors.

Members from other partner organizations and frontline providers reflect a similar commitment to EDCI’s vision and goals. Partners underscore the importance of having these shared goals.

“If folks are going to partner, they need to make sure they’re on the same page,” said Tonya Post, EDCI preschool manager. Dalia Ghelier, teacher mentor at EDCI LEAP Academy, a preschool jointly operated by EDCI and a nonprofit called the Latino Educational Achievement Partnership (LEAP), echoed this perspective: “The same mindset is so important.” Katie Wyatt of Kidznotes, a partner organization that provides music instruction to youth in the Zone, agrees, adding “having a common goal makes [collaboration] really helpful.”

Reese and team carefully recruit organizations, conducting face-to-face conversations to determine whether collaboration is mutually beneficial. During these meetings, EDCI considers several factors, such as whether the program aligns with its target areas, the quality of the service being offered, the type of indicators monitored, and the presence (or absence) of measurable outcomes.

EDCI first pursued relationships with organizations that directly align with its priority areas of early childhood and elementary school and participate in EDCI’s longitudinal evaluation (described on page 16 in greater detail). EDCI allocates modest funding to some of these partners. As an example, it is paying a stipend to Communities In Schools of Durham to help implement an Incredible Years parent group in the EDCI Zone.

The organization also partners with organizations and agencies that serve early childhood and elementary school populations, but do not receive fiscal support and are not currently part of EDCI’s evaluation. Other partners represent organizations that support middle and/or high school-aged youth (such as Citizen Schools NC) and/or...
deliver myriad community resources (for instance, Habitat for Humanity of Durham). These organizations aren’t part of EDCI’s current, core focal areas but still participate in meetings and conversations with EDCI staff about potential opportunities.

Working cooperatively with partners
EDCI convenes quarterly large-group meetings with its partners, which generally feature updates about available programs and services. Communication with EDCI partners who are focused on areas of the organization’s pipeline that it is not yet targeting, such as programs for middle and high school, occurs more informally as needed.

According to Leigh Bordley, executive director of LEAP, quarterly meetings provide a space to share and brainstorm connections among organizations. For instance, Bordley and her staff obtained information about a mental health resource useful for the children that they serve. Liz Stevens, assistant clinical director/nurse at Durham Connects, echoes a similar perspective. “[The meetings] give us all a better sense of where to refer families and how to make connections really strong,” she said.

Some partners, such as Sherri Laupert of The Hill Center and Randi Gressel of the Downtown Durham YMCA, wanted to see more opportunities for organizations to directly communicate and strategize about particular issues. As a response to this feedback, EDCI started to organize small group meetings according to target areas (for example, partners delivering early childhood or elementary school supports). These gatherings are more “task-oriented,” according to Jan Williams, clinical supervisor at Healthy Families Durham (HFD)/Jumpstart. For example, partners attending an early childhood group brainstormed strategies for raising retention rates in a home-visiting program. This conversation prompted the program to distribute diapers to families as an incentive for participation.

In addition to face-to-face meetings, EDCI communicates with partners through monthly email updates and engages them in events. EDCI’s commitment to maintaining regular contact with partners is reflected in the organization’s communications work plan.

Fostering trusting relationships
EDCI employs an informal approach to partnership. It only uses a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), between a community partner and EDCI, outlining each entity’s role and responsibilities, with organizations that it provides a fee for service. For all other partnerships, EDCI relies on close, trusting relationships with partners, not paper.

“We have built enough trust with our partners that we can garner commitments without a written document,” Reese said. EDCI’s approach enables it to collaborate with organizations with few bureaucratic procedures. For instance, it can partner with smaller agencies that might lack sufficient capacity to execute more formal agreements.

Rather than relying on formal agreements, EDCI uses the recruitment process and tools such as its evaluation (a public document) to promote accountability. EDCI’s systematic approach to recruitment enables it to promote accountability because potential partners are thoroughly vetted, according to Director of Programs & Partner Engagement Mary Mathew. Once both parties agree to collaborate, EDCI staff members meet with partners to confer about planning and implementation of programming.
EDCI supports partners in a variety of ways, including introducing them to Y.E. Smith Elementary Museum School (where EDCI has coordinated most of its school-based programs to date), recruiting participants to their programs, and promoting their services through the EDCI website and social media.

In addition, Mathew reviews evaluation results with organizations, enabling both parties to discuss effective and ineffective elements of the intervention and areas for improvement. “We have to know the value of [partners’] work, and the community needs to know the value of their work,” Reese explained, referring to this strategy as “peer accountability.”

Above all, EDCI leaders emphasize the importance of cultivating and sustaining strong relationships with partners to engender trust and accountability. “Continuous communication” and “being respectful and honoring the expertise and resources that each partner brings to the table” are key to relationship building, according to Mathew.

Partners similarly perceive EDCI’s commitment to developing relationships, reporting that they believe that EDCI values relationships and is responsive to their organizations’ concerns. They also feel welcomed and believe that their contributions are recognized. However, partners report that they are somewhat unclear about their roles and responsibilities, suggesting that it might be helpful for EDCI to identify other strategies, in addition to the recruitment process and discussions about evaluation results, to convey expectations.

EDCI continues to evolve its governance structure and processes as it seeks to identify the most effective mechanisms for working cooperatively with partners. For example, EDCI is considering appointing a partner advisory group, comprised of organizations across target areas, to facilitate greater contribution to planning and implementation efforts. Given that members from partner organizations reflect varied perspectives regarding whether decision-making processes are agreed upon and believe that there are not defined decision-making protocols, creating a formal channel such as a partner advisory group could enable members to participate more actively. EDCI also anticipates a need to adapt internal processes as “dynamics change” due to organizational growth and the addition of new staff members, according to Reese.

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**Engaging Families and the Broader Community**

From its beginnings in 2010, EDCI has been located in downtown Durham in the office of CCFH. The location has been problematic and inaccessible to most EDCI Zone children and families. To cultivate closer ties with families and community members, EDCI leaders decided to relocate the organization’s office in 2012 to the Shepard’s House United Methodist Church, which is in East Durham just a few blocks from Y.E. Smith Elementary Museum School and the Holton Career and Resource Center. Mary Mathew, director of programs and partner engagement, credits this strategic move with strengthening EDCI’s connection to families and the broader neighborhood.

Applying another feature of well-functioning collaborations, EDCI sought to meaningfully engage community members, residents and local institutions. This is vital if organizations are to authentically represent community needs and interests and develop positive relationships. EDCI is well-known in the neighborhood: Most families were already aware of the organization, according to EDCI’s community assessment survey, and a majority of staff from frontline provider organizations is also familiar with EDCI.

As noted earlier, community members and residents contributed valuable input during a series of gatherings organized by EDCI founders. The organization has since convened a community engagement team, led by a manager who oversees two community ambassadors, to drive this concerted effort.
The team performs a variety of activities, including raising awareness about EDCI and recruiting families, building ongoing relationships with caregivers, organizing events, and eliciting input on programming. Families frequently move in and out of the community, making it important for community ambassadors to use multiple outreach strategies, such as phone calls, fliers, door knocking, social media, and newsletters. Support from Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina enabled EDCI to launch a free text messaging service to facilitate even faster communication with families.

Once families enroll in an EDCI or partner program, community ambassadors stay closely involved with parents and children, helping them navigate resources and reach out to appropriate programs and services. According to Community Ambassador DeDreana Freeman, “being authentic” and “culturally competent about poverty” is critical for building positive relationships with families. Community Ambassador Clifton Daye echoes the importance of “being genuine.”

The team approaches the relationship from a strengths-based perspective, scaffolding supports, while “walking beside [families], not pulling [them],” Daye described. Parents report that EDCI staff genuinely care about their families. “[EDCI] makes the parents feel as important as the children are to them,” commented Sharmaine McFarland, a mother who lives in the Zone. This relationship is reciprocal: Community ambassadors notify families about existing opportunities, while residents share neighborhood news.

EDCI recognizes that sustaining personal relationships will become more challenging as it expands. “As organizations grow, it’s easy to minimize those relationships. We have to be very intentional about maintaining individual relationships and providing opportunities for our community to be a part of EDCI,” Reese said.

In addition to close relationships with residents, EDCI directly engages families through the Parent and Community Advisory Council (PCAC). Composed of 10 to 12 caregivers who meet quarterly, the council enables families to convey regular feedback and communicate their needs. Following families’ lead is crucial, according to Freeman. “Once [families] have identified a need, it’s time to go to action. Not the other way around,” she emphasized.

EDCI strives to integrate families’ feedback into its programming, responding to identified needs and interests. One example: In 2013 EDCI partnered with Durham Technical Community College and the Durham Literacy Center to offer English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes for Latino families in the community. These classes help increase opportunities for employment, build relationships with neighbors, and help Spanish-speaking parents communicate more effectively with their children’s teachers, and, subsequently, increase their involvement with the school. That same year, EDCI also organized free Zumba exercise classes and additional story hours based on parent feedback. Classes are conveniently located at EDCI’s office and provide free childcare.
The organization also surveys community members and residents to better understand their needs. A community assessment survey of 78 caregivers in 2014 reported families’ desire for greater early childhood supports and afterschool and summer programming.\textsuperscript{77} This data has helped guide EDCI programming (for instance, families’ interest in a preschool informed plans for the EDCI LEAP Academy). As EDCI expands, it will continue to apply survey findings, along with ongoing feedback from PCAC, to shape programming.

EDCI promotes active participation within the organization and encourages families to join neighborhood efforts. It connects caregivers, for instance, to attend resident-led activities, such as monthly potlucks, block parties, holiday events and neighborhood cleanups. EDCI staff members also build beneficial relationships with local businesses and churches to raise awareness about their collective work. Partners generally believe that the community supports EDCI’s work.\textsuperscript{78}

**Delivering a Pipeline of Resources for Families and Children**

EDCI takes a systematic approach to delivering a pipeline of integrated programs and services for families and children in East Durham. Here’s an overview of the pipeline.\textsuperscript{8} (For a detailed description of each pipeline component, see Appendix B.)

**Bolstering supports for new parents**

The research is clear: Early childhood is a critical developmental stage,\textsuperscript{79} and poverty can adversely affect young children’s healthy development.\textsuperscript{80} Economic hardship can negatively impact children’s health, academic achievement and educational attainment.\textsuperscript{81} Low-income children have a higher likelihood than their wealthier peers to be less prepared for school,\textsuperscript{82} leading to later academic challenges.\textsuperscript{83} EDCI recognized an urgent need to intervene early and link vulnerable families to appropriate resources, so the EDCI team deliberately developed a pipeline of key supports for parents with young children, seeking to partner with the highest quality programs to build a strong early childhood foundation before extending programming to older children and youth.

EDCI’s pre-existing relationship with the Center for Child and Family Health (CCFH) engendered natural partnerships with Durham Connects and Healthy Families Durham (HFD)/Jumpstart, two evidence-based home-visiting programs overseen by CCFH.\textsuperscript{84} These partnerships are mutually beneficial. While both programs were already serving families across Durham, partnering with EDCI has enabled them to successfully reach those who can most benefit from their supports, while EDCI can connect families in the Zone to high-quality resources.

**Expanding early learning opportunities**

An estimated 50 percent of kindergarten students living in the Zone lack any previous exposure to preschool or formal childcare.\textsuperscript{85} In 2014, Reese and team began conversations with Durham County Social Services (DSS), which allocates childcare subsidies for low-income families. Reese proposed that the agency prioritize assistance for caregivers living in the Zone; DSS agreed to designate the
neighborhood as a geographic priority. Becketts describes this public-private partnership as “bidirectional,” in which EDCI and DSS refer families in need of services to one another.86

EDCI has also boosted access to early learning by strategically partnering with the Latino Educational Attainment Partnership (LEAP), a local nonprofit focused on increasing academic achievement. Reese and team approached LEAP Executive Director Leigh Bordley (a member of the Durham Public Schools Board of Education) in 2014 to explore the possibility of opening a new preschool for three- and four-year-olds in the Zone. After discussing each organization’s expected roles and responsibilities, EDCI and LEAP agreed to partner and opened a new preschool in 2015.

EDCI also partnered with Duke’s Office of Durham and Regional Affairs (DARA) to offer a summer school-readiness program at Y.E. Smith, and the Durham Public Library to enhance children’s literacy skills at community-based story hours.

Developing EDCI’s relationship with Durham Public Schools

EDCI recognized the importance of ongoing academic enrichment and support to sustain children’s school readiness gains in early childhood. As described previously, EDCI founders had directly engaged Durham Public Schools (DPS) stakeholders, including former DPS Superintendent Carl Harris and subsequent Superintendent Eric Becoats, and the district’s board of education in the organization’s early planning processes. These parties championed working together (one of EDCI’s founders was then the chair of the Board of Education). “Public schools are a critical partner for EDCI and vice versa,” current Board Chair Heidi Carter described.87 “EDCI’s service provision model helps us address social and economic determinants of school success.”88

EDCI’s prior history with the district administration has helped it retain an overall positive relationship with the school system despite multiple leadership changes at both the district and school levels. Since the organization had already become “a trusted entity,” shown some success, and leveraged its board of directors to mobilize political will in the community, new district and school leadership supported the collaboration, according to Reese.89 Gaining district support was necessary for EDCI to begin its work coordinating programs and services at Y.E. Smith.

“EDCI’s service provision model helps us address social and economic determinants of school success.”

While EDCI has benefited from strong district support, navigating this relationship has not always been easy. “I didn’t appreciate at the beginning how important and difficult building the right relationships with the school would be,” reflected EDCI Board Chair French.90

DPS Board of Education Chair Carter concedes that connecting meaningfully with school administrators and teachers can be difficult, and requires building trust.91 To make it easier, the district’s board of education facilitates communication between EDCI staff and the district. There are also quarterly meetings between Reese, French and the most recent superintendent, Dr. Bert L’Homme, who joined the district in the fall of 2014.

Empowering families to navigate and negotiate school experiences

EDCI’s signature program within DPS is the Parent Advocate program, which seeks to promote parent engagement by equipping families with the tools necessary for successfully navigating the school system and negotiating opportunities and challenges related to their children’s educational experience.

Low expectations weren’t a problem. Findings from EDCI’s community assessment survey show that families possess high expectations for their children’s educational trajectories92—an important predictor for school success.93
According to the survey, all families believe that their children will graduate high school, most expect them to attend college, and 45 percent expect them to earn a graduate degree. Staff surveyed from frontline provider organizations also reported high aspirations for youth, and most believe to some extent that parents have similar expectations for their children.

Other challenges kept family members away from school—work schedule conflicts, lack of transportation, language barriers, lack of confidence, perceived racism, negative teacher attitudes and an unwelcome school climate. Guided by research on the benefits of parental involvement on academic achievement, EDCI designed a program—the Parent Advocate program—that would equip families to negotiate roadblocks and empower them to actively participate in their children’s education. The program would employ specially trained advocates to work with families at the Zone’s target elementary school.

EDCI presented the concept to the superintendent, who got on board, allowing parent advocates to be hired as DPS employees, paid and supervised through a contract with EDCI. As DPS employees, parent advocates have increased access to school data to inform and guide their work with families. In 2011, EDCI officially launched the Parent Advocate program at the Y.E. Smith Elementary Museum School. According to Reese, the school’s principal at that time was “receptive” to the program.

In addition to the Parent Advocate program, EDCI has developed relationships with several organizations such as Kidznotes, The Hill Center, Rotary Club of Durham, Downtown Durham YMCA, and Playworks. These partnerships enable EDCI to maximize in-school and out-of-school academic and enrichment opportunities for elementary school-aged children attending EDCI Zone schools. Similar to its early childhood approach, EDCI has practiced intentionality as it has expanded the pipeline to reach elementary school children. It has first identified high-quality programs and implemented a set of key supports before further extending the pipeline to older youth.

**Equipping families with young children to navigate resources**

Based on a realization that not all families with young children in the Zone were connected to the HFD/Jumpstart home visiting program, and, for those who were enrolled, few early childhood supports were available once their children turned four years old, EDCI decided to expand the Parent Advocate program in 2014. Early childhood parent advocates now assist with enhancing supports for this age group, helping families navigate developmentally appropriate resources and sharing information during trainings, workshops and individual appointments. EDCI currently employs two early childhood parent advocates, one of whom is bilingual.

**Harnessing partners to enhance wellness**

EDCI’s partnerships also act as a conduit for planning, coordinating and launching initiatives that address pressing issues in the community. For instance, Reese and his team collaborated with Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina, Durham Diabetes Coalition, Durham County Public Health Department, and Inter-Faith Food Shuttle to spearhead the EDCI Healthy Living Initiative in 2012. “We recognize that health is impacted by where people work, play, live, grow, pray. ... It’s all about relationships and leveraging those relationships when opportunities present themselves,” said Gayle Harris, director of the Durham County Public
Health Department. EDCI harnesses the expertise of multiple stakeholders to help improve families’ access to fresh foods, increase understanding about healthy behaviors, connect at-risk children to nutritional counseling, enhance access to primary care and mental health supports, and expand fitness opportunities.

“We recognize that health is impacted by where people work, play, live, grow, pray. ... It’s all about relationships and leveraging those relationships when opportunities present themselves.”

Investing in EDCI’s Pipeline

EDCI’s overarching “it’s all about the kids” philosophy pervades its fundraising approach. Rather than being concerned about where money is allocated in the pipeline, EDCI focuses on generating investment for its collective effort. To accomplish this goal, it has intentionally developed a broad base of funders, another core characteristic of successful CCIs.

EDCI’s fundraising team—composed of the president and CEO, development and communications staff, and the board’s development committee—has employed an “aggressive” approach, according to Reese. This strategy has attracted multi-sector support from diverse funding streams, including foundations, corporations, faith-based organizations and individuals. From Reese’s perspective, EDCI has been able to garner strong support by “producing outcomes and continuing to move the needle.”

In order to secure funding for its collective work and provide support to partners, EDCI identifies joint funding opportunities while encouraging partners to leverage the EDCI brand. This is important given that many frontline providers cited funding as one of their organization’s greatest challenges.

EDCI closely coordinates with partners to apply for grants. Durham Literacy Center Executive Director Lizzie Ellis-Furlong said EDCI’s capacity to facilitate meetings and discussions and lead a joint grant-writing process was “phenomenal.” “[They] made [the process] very simple and straightforward,” she said. This experience also enabled partners to become familiar with other organizations and resources in the community. “It gives us a way to more deeply engage with other nonprofits,” remarked Executive Director Beth Briggs of Dress for Success Triangle, another new EDCI partner that will provide career counseling services for mothers in the Zone. “We know each other. ... If we have someone come in and she says, ‘I can’t read,’ we immediately call [the Durham Literacy Center] and set up a referral,” described Briggs.

Working together, partners can also access opportunities they may not have been eligible for if they applied independently. Jan Williams of HFD/Jumpstart said the partnership with EDCI enabled her program to leverage significant federal funding.
As EDCI grows (its fiscal year 2016 budget is $2.4 million), it has needed to adapt its fundraising strategy, pursuing a multi-pronged approach documented in its strategic plan. This strategy entails cultivating future fiscal support from the city and county, in addition to national-level private and corporate foundations.

Looking ahead, Reese believes that the ability to continue to transform outcomes for young people will be key to EDCI’s longevity. Members from partner organizations are also confident in EDCI’s fundraising capacity, perceiving that resources for their collaborative work are sustainable.

Shaping Programming with Data
EDCI has consistently used data to guide planning and implementation, another trait of successful collaborations. Partners report that EDCI values data and reflect a similar commitment, stating that they strongly believe that data helps demonstrate outcomes. EDCI has continued to use data to inform its approach, investing in a longitudinal evaluation to assess its progress each year.

In 2011 EDCI leaders enlisted Duke University’s Center for Child and Family Policy (CCFP) to lead an evaluation of some of its core programs (the most recent report covers its third year of implementation). As part of the evaluation, EDCI and its partners completed an informed consent process with EDCI Zone families participating in its evaluated core programs. As EDCI continues to secure funding, it plans to include more partners in the evaluation process.

CCFP evaluators record data in a protected online system called COACH (Community Oriented Approach to Coordinated Healthcare), which was developed by the Duke Division of Community Health and later adapted by EDCI. CCFP chose this database because it was using COACH for other local projects and was familiar with its functionality. The system is both affordable and adaptable.

“As programs evolve every year, there are changes to COACH to better capture the important data from those programs,” said CCFP Research Scientist Elizabeth Snyder, a member of the evaluation team. EDCI partners currently collect data related to implementation, such as the number of families and children served and engaged in pipeline programs, as well as some outcome-level indicators such as improved literacy skills and parent engagement. As such, EDCI uses varying indicators rather than a set of common metrics across programs to measure progress.

It can be a challenge, but evaluation team members obtain some data from participating schools, enabling the to identify emerging trends. Accessing individual student-level data is also problematic—it’s available only for consenting families and isn’t included in the evaluation at this time. Since CCFP is a repository for state education data, the team expects to more easily retrieve school-level and student-level indicators, such as attendance, discipline, and academic proficiency levels, going forward.

The evaluation team also plans to analyze neighborhood-level indicators to measure long-term effects in the Zone. EDCI and CCFP worked with the Children’s Environmental Health Initiative at Duke to select a Durham neighborhood similar to the Zone. They collected baseline data related to several indicators, including economic, demographic, health and education. Going forward, the team will compare the baseline indicators to more recent data to identify changes.

While COACH is mainly used for evaluation, the database is also employed for case management of the Parent Advocate program. For example, advocates use the database to see which programs a family is participating in and to recommend additional resources as necessary. As described previously, advocates can also access student-level records through EDCI’s contract with DPS, enabling them to more fully understand a child’s academic experience and know what type of supports might benefit a family.
In the future, EDCI might consider granting partners shared access to COACH to facilitate their ability to connect families to other pipeline services. This would enable HFD/Jumpstart staff, for instance, to log on and acquire information related to families’ enrollment in other pipeline programs and to identify their parent advocate. Staff members could then see if families are benefiting from EDCI’s pipeline of supports and gain additional knowledge about their needs from parent advocates.

**Deploying data to strengthen programs**

EDCI systematically applies findings from the evaluation to strengthen programs. Describing the organization’s approach to data, CCFP Research Scientist Nicole Lawrence said, “It’s agility—recognizing where a gap is and doing something about it in a quick way. A lot of programs and organizations get weighed down by administration and bureaucracy…and that’s not how they do it here.” As an example, evaluation data reporting a dearth of supports for early childhood, particularly among three- to five-year-olds, in conjunction with feedback from families, led EDCI to extend the Parent Advocate program to this age group.

EDCI has also deployed data to tailor outreach strategies for both the YMCA-led summer camp and the Durham Connects home-visiting program. In the case of the summer camp, data demonstrating low attendance and retention resulted in changes such as increased phone calls to parents, introducing an array of incentives throughout the program, and more work with the YMCA and Y.E. Smith to strengthen recruitment and retention. For Durham Connects, EDCI used data showing low engagement among African-American mothers to refine recruitment tactics, increase referrals and work more closely with the Early Childhood Parent Advocate program and the Durham County Public Health Department.

“It’s agility—recognizing where a gap is and doing something about it in a quick way. A lot of programs and organizations get weighed down by administration and bureaucracy…and that’s not how they do it here.”

**Gathering feedback from families to improve programs**

Feedback from families and EDCI’s Parent and Community Advisory Council, Board of Directors members, EDCI staff, partners, and youth, represents another significant source of data. EDCI uses surveys to assess current needs and improve programs. For example, as part of its longitudinal evaluation, EDCI surveys parents and children about their experiences in specific programs.

A comprehensive survey of neighborhood families in 2014 identified several important EDCI Zone family needs and interests, such as more summer and out-of-school tutoring programs and greater access to affordable preschools. EDCI has already addressed some of these priorities. As mentioned earlier, it opened a new half-day preschool at the beginning of 2015, in collaboration with LEAP. In response to other interests, EDCI is exploring ways to expand out-of-school opportunities for school-aged youth. Finally, it is planning to act on findings related to families with middle and high school youth as it extends its pipeline.
“I knew we were turning a corner two years ago when I looked out the window and saw mothers walking their children to school. [Before] you didn’t walk in this neighborhood.”

Demonstrating Impact
EDCI has grown rapidly since it first began active programming four years ago. Data from the most recent evaluation covering the organization’s first three years of implementation[117] demonstrates tangible progress. (See Appendix D for detailed information regarding EDCI’s impact.) While the overall number served for each program is relatively small, EDCI is on track to meet its goal of reaching at least 1,300 local youth by June 2016.[118] Through 2014 (i.e., the first three years of EDCI implementation), EDCI engaged a total of 700 children and youth. In addition, during the most recent evaluation year of 2013-2014, EDCI engaged more than 40 percent of new mothers in Durham Connects, a nurse home visiting program. Another example of EDCI’s emerging impact is the Parent Advocate program enrolling 181 families, including 360 pre-kindergarten through 4th grade students. Of those enrolled, 92 percent of those families engaged substantially with an advocate; up from 72 percent of enrolled families the previous year.

EDCI is also retaining more families and children in the pipeline. Although retention is not systematically measured (EDCI needs to resolve how to account for families who leave the Zone), data from COACH documents families and children who are proceeding on to subsequent pipeline programs, according to Mathew.[119] Retaining more families and children in the pipeline and linking them to multiple supports, in addition to measuring long-term impact, takes time. It will take years for EDCI to both build a larger sample size to capture long-term outcomes and to produce systemic change, according to the CCFP evaluation team. Meanwhile, tracking implementation and short-term outcomes is key for preparing EDCI to assess its long-term impact in the lives of families and children.

“I knew we were turning a corner two years ago when I looked out the window and saw mothers walking their children to school,” recounted Reese.[120] “[Before] you didn’t walk in this neighborhood.”[121]

Sustaining Accelerated Progress
As EDCI grows, it is strategically planning for the future. It has set the following expansion goals for the upcoming fiscal year: engage 1,300 children ages 0–17 in one program (representing approximately 40 percent of the Zone’s youth population), and recruit 300 children ages 0–4 (30 percent of the Zone’s young child population) in at least two programs by June 2016.[122] To reach these goals, EDCI will enhance current early childhood and elementary school programming, deploy partners to increase enrollment of families, and recruit additional partners to further build a pipeline of wraparound supports.

EDCI also plans to extend programs and services to the neighborhood’s feeder middle and high schools. It currently partners with a small set of organizations offering academic support and college and career readiness services for middle and high school students. For example, EDCI connects rising sixth graders in the Zone to Student U, a Durham-based organization that helps students smoothly transition into middle school, high school and beyond using out-of-school and in-school supports. But middle and high school supports aren’t yet part of EDCI’s cohesive pathway. EDCI is actively exploring evidence-based practices for creating a coordinated continuum of programs and services. As a first step, Reese and team plan to expand the Parent Advocate program to work with families and students at EDCI’s target middle school.

A core component of expansion involves linking children and youth in the Zone to multiple supports. “Ideally, we want to focus on connecting families to a variety of high-quality services. ... For example, we would love to
have a family meeting with their parent advocate, while
their children go to EDCI Summer Camp, are involved in
HillRAP tutoring, attend Kidznotes afterschool program,
and also have a younger sibling who is in Healthy Families
Durham," Mathew explained.23 “Our goal is to provide
multiple wraparound supports to children and families
over time versus just one intervention. For many kids, we
believe that’s what it takes to make a difference.”124

Coordinating resources
Given the decentralized school environment in which East
Durham youth attend public, charter and magnet schools
(Maureen Joy Charter School is around the corner from
Y.E. Smith and a new KIPP middle school is slated to open
in East Durham this fall), EDCI is grappling with how best
to retain all of the young people who live in the Zone in the
EDCI pipeline, according to Board Member Ted Fiske.25

Other collective efforts face a similar challenge as they
seek to identify the most effective mechanisms for reaching
children and youth. For example, the New Orleans
Kids Partnership (NOKP), which operates within an
all-charter school system, has had to explore the most
effective channels—schools, community centers and li-
braries, in this case—for coordinating program and service
delivery. EDCI is considering augmenting school-based
supports with community-based components, such as
afterschool and summer programs at a neighborhood com-
munity center, which would enable youth to participate
regardless of whether they attend EDCI’s target schools.

EDCI is also adapting its model to partner with public
schools in the area not currently designated as target
schools, such as Eastway Elementary School and Maureen
Joy Charter School. Approximately 15 percent of Eastway
Elementary students and 11 percent of Maureen Joy stu-
dents live in the EDCI Zone. EDCI recently signed an MOU
with Maureen Joy, designating it as the new site for the
EDCI Summer Lunch program. This agreement will also
enable EDCI’s parent advocates to continue to work with
families whose children have left Y.E. Smith to enroll at
Maureen Joy.

EDCI’s decision to work with charter schools signals a
significant departure from the past. EDCI was initially
concerned that charter schools would create an opportu-
nity to “skim off the top,” and recruit only the top-per-
forming students, Reese said.26 The presence of a new
charter school in East Durham also produced tension for
many families who wondered why the district wasn’t more
focused on improving Y.E. Smith, which was a struggling
school at the time.27 Tension surrounding charter schools
has since subsided in the neighborhood, and EDCI is now
engaging charter schools as part of its overarching strate-
gy. “[It’s] about the youth that live in the Zone, not about
what school [they] attend,” Reese said.28 “[Our goal is to] make sure that parents are fully aware of the [school] op-
tions, and that we support them along their journey.”29

Replicating EDCI’s pipeline
Once EDCI expands the pipeline from cradle to college
or career, it seeks to scale the model throughout Durham.
“Everything we do should be able to be scaled and meet
a threshold of replicability. This is really about Durham.
How do we make Durham a stronger place?” Reese said.30

While replication is still on the horizon, EDCI’s model is
increasingly attracting attention from a variety of stake-
holders. This past spring, Indianapolis Public Schools
(IPS) announced plans to implement a similar pipeline
of supports from cradle to college or career within its
Far Eastside community.31 IPS leaders and staff from
Indianapolis-based foundations visited EDCI last year to
learn more about the organization and decided to model
their pipeline based on both EDCI and another effort in
Florida called the Tangelo Park Program.32

“Having a large community, like Indianapolis, move for-
ward with an EDCI-inspired model is amazing and one of
the highest forms of recognition of the work of our staff,
board and families. We wish them the absolute best suc-
cess for their children and families,” Reese said.33

As EDCI seeks to sustain and accelerate progress in young
people’s lives, its story can inspire and inform other
community efforts. By applying key evidence-based practices, Reese and his team are championing a common goal and fostering synergy among partners. EDCI’s impressive momentum and early successes can continue to guide and sustain its work building a pipeline of high-quality supports for children and youth who can most benefit from these resources. As developers invest in making Durham a more desirable place for its inhabitants, EDCI and its partners are making important investments in the city’s next generation.
### APPENDICES

#### Appendix A: EDCI Key Informant Interviews

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<th>TITLE AND ORGANIZATION</th>
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<td>Leigh Bordley</td>
<td>Executive Director, LEAP</td>
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<td>Beth Briggs</td>
<td>Executive Director, Dress for Success</td>
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<td>Heidi Carter</td>
<td>Chair, Durham Public School Board</td>
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<td>Avi Castillo</td>
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<td>Clifton Daye</td>
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<td>EDCI Parents and Caregivers/PCAC members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lizzie Ellis-Furlong</td>
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<td>Ted Fiske</td>
<td>EDCI Board Member and Program Committee Chair</td>
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<td>DeDreana Freeman</td>
<td>Community Ambassador, EDCI</td>
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<td>Barker French</td>
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<td>Carla Fryling</td>
<td>Parent Advocate, EDCI</td>
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<td>Dalia Ghelier</td>
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<td>Randi Gressel</td>
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<td>Pamela Hines</td>
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<td>Denice Johnson</td>
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<td>Ingrid Jones</td>
<td>Instructional Facilitator, Y.E. Smith Elementary Museum School</td>
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<td>Letisha Judd</td>
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<td>Sherril Laupert</td>
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<td>Nicole Lawrence</td>
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<td>Mary Mathew</td>
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<td>Mawiyah Patten</td>
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<td>Tonya Post</td>
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<td>Jeff Quinn</td>
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<td>Carlyn Wright-Eakes</td>
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<td>Katie Wyatt</td>
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## Appendix B: EDCI Pipeline of Programs and Services

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<td>• Durham’s Partnership for Children</td>
<td>Duke Integrated Pediatric Mental Health Initiatives</td>
<td>Durham Technical Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Durham Public Library</td>
<td>Durham County Health Department</td>
<td>• REAL Durham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Latino Educational Achievement Partnership</td>
<td>Durham Together for Resilient Youth</td>
<td>• Habitat for Humanity of Durham</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Elementary School</strong></td>
<td>Lincoln Community Health Center</td>
<td>• Museum of Life &amp; Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Communities In Schools of Durham</td>
<td>Inter-Faith Food Shuttle</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Downtown Durham Rotary</td>
<td>Playworks NC</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Durham Public Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Environmental Protection Agency</td>
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<td>• The Hill Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University</td>
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<td>• Kidnotes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Metametrics, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• YMCA</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**EDCI Program Partners**

**Early Childhood**
- Center for Child and Family Health
- Child Services Association
- Duke University Office of Durham and Regional Affairs
- Durham County Cooperative Extension
- Durham County Social Services
- Durham’s Partnership for Children
- Durham Public Library
- Latino Educational Achievement Partnership

**Elementary School**
- Communities In Schools of Durham
- Downtown Durham Rotary
- Durham Public Schools
- Environmental Protection Agency
- The Hill Center
- The Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University
- Kidnotes
- Metametrics, Inc.
- YMCA

**Middle & High School**
- Citizens Schools NC
- Communities In Schools of Durham
- Durham Public Schools
- Student U
- Teach for America

**Health**
- DUHS, Dept. of Community & Family Matters
- Duke Integrated Pediatric Mental Health Initiatives
- Durham County Health Department
- Durham Together for Resilient Youth
- Lincoln Community Health Center
- Inter-Faith Food Shuttle
- Playworks NC

**Community**
- Durham Technical Community College
- REAL Durham
- Habitat for Humanity of Durham
- Museum of Life & Science
Appendix C: EDCI

**Durham Connects and Healthy Families Durham/Jumpstart** Durham Connects—considered a first entry point into the pipeline—is a universal home visiting program through which nurses share important information on infant care and community resources during a few initial home visits. Healthy Families Durham/Jumpstart (HFD/Jumpstart) acts as a next step of support. In this program, family support workers develop longer-term relationships with families of children ages 0-3. HFD/Jumpstart staff seek to strengthen parents’ understanding and knowledge about child development and foster healthy parent/child relationships. An ongoing challenge for recruitment involves families’ frequent moves from home to home. The programs do, however, offer continuity—since they both serve families in all neighborhoods of Durham, they can continue to work with families even if they move out of the Zone.

**EDCI LEAP Academy** Opened in February 2015, the EDCI LEAP Academy is a half-day, English and Spanish bilingual preschool in the East Durham neighborhood. A local community center, leased from the City of Durham Parks and Recreation Department for no charge was re-purposed as the new preschool. A grant from the Carolina Hurricanes Kids ‘N Community Foundation helped to cover other start-up costs.

EDCI early childhood partners or parent advocates primarily refer families to the preschool. The EDCI LEAP Academy is affordable: families pay a monthly $25 fee, though scholarships are available. Teachers report early success: students eagerly share new alphabet letters and songs they have learned.

**Stepping Stones** EDCI boosts school readiness by partnering with the Duke University Office of Durham and Regional Affairs (DARA) and Y.E. Smith Elementary Museum School to offer Stepping Stones, an evidence-based summer program for children entering kindergarten. Since 2013, 30 rising kindergarteners participate each year, practicing their social and interpersonal skills and learning about school routines.

**Durham Public Library** EDCI is continuing to maximize existing resources to address community-identified needs. For example, EDCI collaborates with Durham Public Library to offer regularly scheduled story hours for English and Spanish speaking families. Story hours ignite children’s love for reading, while strengthening their literacy skills.

**EDCI Parent Advocate Program** EDCI’s Parent Advocate program currently includes four parent advocates, three of whom are bilingual, who work with families of children attending pre-kindergarten through 4th grade. Advocates are formally contracted by DPS in positions paid by EDCI, allowing them access to student records. While the relationship is still “a work in progress,” Letisha Judd, the school’s principal, considers consistent communication between EDCI and the school as vital to their working together effectively. Focusing on their commonality of supporting students also nurtures a positive relationship between EDCI and the school, according to Reese.

Trained in evidence-based parenting approaches, advocates recruit eligible families at the beginning of each academic year, deploying outreach strategies such as phone calls, flyers, and distributing information at parent nights at the school. Once a family consents to participate in the program, advocates complete an intake process in which they discuss family’s specific needs and seek to develop long-term relationships with the entire family, closely working with them each year as their children progress through school, while also extending support to siblings of enrolled children. “We see advocates as an extension of the school. ... [they] have more time and resources to provide individualized support to families,” explained Judd.

During conversations with families at their home, the school, EDCI’s office, or over the phone, advocates help families navigate education-related processes and procedures, and respond to other identified needs. An advocate, for instance, might assist a Spanish-speaking parent with interpreting school-related documents or guide a caregiver on how to complete an application for a magnet school. “[We] treat parents as experts and value their strengths and knowledge, [which makes families] feel safe and comfortable coming to us with concerns,” described Parent Advocate Carlyln Wright-Eakes.

Advocates strive to empower parents to take the lead role in expressing any academic and/or behavioral concerns to teachers. EDCI Advocate Mawiyah Patten acknowledges that, “it’s a tricky role." "It’s best whenever we can facilitate having parents and the school communicate directly rather than being in the middle. ... [We] help [parents] be prepared and let them direct the conversation and course of action,” explained
Patten. Recognizing that some parents may have had a negative experience when they attended school that has deterred their involvement in their children’s education, advocates discuss these issues with families and identify ways for them to take a more active role.

As part of their role, advocates develop relationships with teachers and other key staff, such as the social worker, counselor, and nurse. These members embody a “care team.” According to Director of Family Engagement Pam Hines, advocates “have to constantly cultivate” these relationships, and “let the school know that we’re there trying to bridge the gap between parents, teachers, and administration, so that they can see us as a help as opposed to a hindrance.”

**EDCI Early Childhood Parent Advocate Program** EDCI early childhood partners, Durham County Social Services (DSS), local childcare centers, and the EDCI LEAP Academy all refer families to the program. Williams of HFD/Jumpstart considers the program as an important next step of support for families, noting that she would like to see even greater interaction between her organization and EDCI early childhood parent advocates.134

Through home visits and regular communication, early childhood parent advocates seek to develop close relationships with families of young children. Advocates possess a background in early childhood development and are trained in evidence-based parenting approaches, such as Touchpoints and Triple P.135 This expertise equips them to foster children’s well-being by deepening families’ understanding of developmental milestones, supporting families to build positive parent-child bonds, and connecting them to community resources.

Early childhood parent advocates organize trainings and workshops on a variety of topics. As part of EDCI’s partnership with the Lincoln Community Health Center, for instance, staff from both organizations jointly coordinate bi-monthly trainings for English and Spanish-speaking families. At a training in which both parents and children participated, staff led them in an activity that featured making play dough to demonstrate the use of fine motor skills. The collaborative nature of these trainings also enables families to learn about existing resources available through the two organizations.

**In-School and Out-of-School Supports** It engaged Kidznotes, a nonprofit that offers free music instruction to under-served students, as an early partner. “It was a great marriage right from the beginning,” said Wyatt, executive director of Kidznotes.136 Approximately 60 elementary school students enrolled at Y.E. Smith participate in the Kidznotes afterschool program, held both at the school and the neighborhood’s Holton Career and Resource Center. Parent advocates help recruit youth into the music program.

Partnerships with The Hill Center and the Rotary Club of Durham help bolster elementary school students’ academic skills. Students participate in these programs during the school day at Y.E. Smith. The Hill Centers provides literacy support to students who are below grade level in reading. During first two years of implementation, staff from The Hill Center delivered the curriculum; however, EDCI parent advocates were trained in the approach, and they now serve as tutors. A varied number of students have participated – ranging anywhere from 90-16. The Rotary Club of Durham also focuses on strengthening students’ literacy and language skills. In 2012, the Rotary Club launched a volunteer-staffed tutoring program called Reading Rangers at Y.E. Smith and Neal Middle School.

Another significant partnership involves the Downtown Durham YMCA, which serves approximately 100 youth from the East Durham neighborhood through an afterschool tutoring program at Y.E. Smith and a summer camp aimed at preventing summer learning loss. EDCI recruited the YMCA to target summer reading loss based on data demonstrating that these skills are most strongly impacted.137 First-6th grade students from the Zone who are performing below grade level in reading have an opportunity to attend the YMCA’s Camp High Hopes, a six-week day camp at North Carolina Central University. Youth participate in literacy interventions such as web-based programs like i-Ready and EdSphere, while also enjoying recreational activities.

EDCI also partners with Playworks, a nonprofit that offers evidence-based programs at low-income elementary schools and youth organizations to promote children’s physical, social, and emotional development, and the Durham County Health Department to implement health and wellness programming (described in the subsequent section).

**Health and Wellness** EDCI implemented two programs in order to reduce food insecurity and increase families’ access to nutritious meals. In partnership with the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle’s BackPack Buddies program, a local hunger-relief organization (Reese was its former chief
operating officer), EDCI distributes weekend meals to Y.E. Smith students during the school year. It also coordinates with the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle to operate a ten-week Summer Lunch program. This program provides hot, nourishing meals for families and children in the neighborhood. Other efforts include expanding access to fresh produce through the Durham Farmers’ Market and Mobile Farmers Markets, and installing a healthy food aisle at one of the neighborhood’s grocery stores.

As part of its collaboration with Y.E. Smith, EDCI is also working to combat the prevalence of obesity among youth in the Zone. During the 2013-2014 academic year, more than half of elementary students at Y.E. Smith were overweight or obese. This rate is lower at both the state and county levels: approximately 28 percent of youth were obese or overweight in North Carolina in 2013, and 32 percent of Durham Public School high school students and 19 percent of kindergarteners met this criteria in Durham County in 2014. EDCI works with Y.E. Smith staff to refer at-risk students to nutritional counseling services. The organization also partners with the nonprofit Playworks to offer fun fitness activities at the elementary school, including basketball and volleyball teams.
### Appendix D: EDCI’s Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER SERVED</th>
<th>IMPACT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pipeline Engagement</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>700 young people</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Early Childhood Pipeline Supports</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham Connects</td>
<td>118 families</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Healthy Families Durham/Jumpstart</td>
<td>107 families</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepping Stones summer kindergarten readiness program</td>
<td>31 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Care Subsidy Prioritization</strong></td>
<td>75-100 families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elementary School Pipeline Supports</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDCI Parent Advocate Program</td>
<td>181 families, including 360 pre-kindergarten-4th grade students</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EDCI Summer Camp</td>
<td>48 youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hill Reading Achievement Program (HillRAP)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y.E. Smith</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health and Wellness Supports</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDCI Summer Lunch Program</td>
<td>Nearly 3,400 parents and youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backpack Buddies Program</td>
<td>142 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix D: EDCI’s Impact, continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER SERVED</th>
<th>IMPACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nutritional Counseling referrals</td>
<td>Connected families to nutritional counseling services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-level change</td>
<td>Durham County advanced from 17 to 11 in health among North Carolina’s 100 counties, which has been attributed to collaborative approaches among community organizations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[164] [165]
REFERENCES


East Durham Children’s Initiative
Case Study


U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2007). *Poverty in America: Economic research shows adverse impacts on health status and other social conditions as well as the economic growth rate*. Washington, DC.


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2. City of Durham, n.d.
4. Ibid.
5. Richardson, n.d.
11. EDCI’s evaluation team, the Center for Child and Family Health at Duke University, calculated this data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey 2013 five-year estimates based on EDCI’s catchment area of nine census block groups.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
20. The full set of CCI best practices include:
   • a collaborative, comprehensive approach, with carefully constructed alignment across contexts (e.g., family, school, the broader community) and across institutions (e.g., after-school programs, community health centers, community recreation centers, schools, early childcare facilities), instead of piecemeal, uncoordinated efforts;
   • participation by diverse partners instead of single-sector initiatives;
   • a lead organization that drives the effort instead of a leaderless coalition;
   • a theory of change aligned with the effort’s goals and use of evidence-based strategies/programs;
   • ongoing use of data to guide the effort;
   • an asset-based approach that builds on existing resources and strengths of a community and its residents;
   • engagement of residents as active participants in the effort rather than as passive recipients;
   • a focus on geographically defined areas instead of being too broad in scope; and
   • flexible, non-categorical funding from diverse sources instead of restricted funds that constrain nimble actions.
22. MDC, 2008.
These preliminary findings, however, aren’t generalizable since only four members from EDCI partner organization completed the survey (Center for Promise, 2013b).

Ibid.

Ibid.

Reese, personal communication, June 9, 2015.


Arthur et al., 2010; Marek & Mancini, 2009; Trent & Chavis, 2009; Walker, Rankin, & Winston, 2010.

Kubisch et al., 2010.

EDCI, 2014b.

Center for Promise, 2013d.

D. Freeman, personal communication, April 30, 2015.

C. Daye, personal communication, April 30, 2015.

Ibid.

S. McFarland, personal communication, May 1, 2015.

D. Reese, personal communication, April 29, 2015.

D. Freeman, personal communication, April 30, 2015.

Ibid.

EDCI, 2014b.

These preliminary findings, however, aren’t generalizable since only four members from EDCI partner organization completed the survey (Center for Promise, 2013b).

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2010; Cunha & Heckman, 2010; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000.


Ibid.


Home visiting programs originated in the 1990s as a strategy for preventing child maltreatment and strengthening parenting practices to promote their children’s healthy development. Program models vary (some employ paraprofessionals, while others hire nurses, for instance). Outcome data from the Nurse-Family Partnership indicates improved parenting skills and maternal well-being (Olds, 2006).


Ibid.


Ibid.

D. Reese, personal communication, June 9, 2015.

B. French, personal communication, April 29, 2015.


EDCI, 2014b.

Jeynes, 2005.

EDCI, 2014b.

Center for Promise, 2013d.


Reese, personal communication, June 9, 2015.

G. Harris, personal communication, May 14, 2015.


D. Reese, personal communication, April 29, 2015.

Ibid.

Center for Promise, 2013d.

Ellis-Furlong, personal communication, April 30, 2015.

Ibid.

B. Briggs, personal communication, April 30, 2015.

Ibid.

J. Williams, personal communication, April 30, 2015.

EDCI, 2014a.

These preliminary findings, however, aren’t generalizable since only four members from EDCI partner organization completed the survey (Center for Promise, 2013b).


These preliminary findings, however, aren’t generalizable since only four members from EDCI partner organization completed the survey (Center for Promise, 2013b).

E. Snyder, personal communication, April 29, 2015.

Snyder, Lawrence, & Rosanbalm, 2014.

N. Lawrence, personal communication, April 29, 2015.

EDCI, 2014b.

This period spanned from July 2011-June 2014.

EDCI, n.d.b.

M. Mathew, personal communication, June 8, 2015.

D. Reese, personal communication, April 29, 2015.

Ibid.

EDCI, 2013.


Ibid.

T. Fiske, personal communication, April 29, 2015.

D. Reese, personal communication, June 9, 2015.
Developed at the Brazelton Touchpoints Center in the Division of Developmental Medicine at Boston Children’s Hospital, Touchpoints is a collaborative, strengths-based, culturally-affirming training for providers who work with families of young children. Evaluation findings indicate several positive effects, including increased child development knowledge, improved provider-family relationships, and moderated parental stress, among others (Brazelton Touchpoints Center, n.d.) Visit http://www.brazeltontouchpoints.org/ for more information. Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) is an evidence-based parenting approach that focuses on preventing and treating children and adolescents’ behavioral and emotional issues (Triple P, n.d.) For more information, Additional information is available at http://www.triplep.net/glo-en/home/.

EDCI, 2013c.

K. Wyatt, personal communication, April 30, 2015.

McCombs et al., 2011.

EDCI, 2013c.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015.

Note that the CDC classifies obesity rates according to adults, adolescents, and children. The percentage included in this report represents adolescents, while the Y.E. Smith obesity/overweight rate refers to K-5th grade students.

Partnership for a Healthy Durham, 2014.

Unless otherwise noted, the time period refers to EDCI’s third year of implementation from 2011-2014. Data is derived from EDCI's third annual evaluation conducted by the Center for Child and Family Policy (CCFP) at Duke University.

Snyder et al., 2014.

This number denotes the number served during EDCI’s first three years of implementation from 2011-2014.

Among the total number served, 53% participated in one EDCI core program, 30% were engaged in two programs, and 17% were involved at least three programs. While more than half have participated in only one program, it is anticipated that EDCI will connect more children to multiple services as the organization further evolves. One major benefit of a CCI involves its capacity to coordinate a continuum of supports that can provide more resources to a greater number of individuals.

Future evaluations will include EDCI LEAP Academy, which didn’t yet exist when the research was conducted.

This number denotes the number of participants during EDCI’s first three years of implementation from 2011-2014.

EDCI is seeking to bolster outreach and recruitment through working with the Durham County Public Health Department, Durham Connects, and the organization’s early childhood parent advocates.

This number signifies the number of participants during EDCI’s first three years of implementation from 2011-2014.

EDCI is currently exploring fundraising opportunities to add more slots for Spanish-speaking families. In the case that HFD/Jumpstart exceeds capacity, EDCI and partner organizations can refer families to other resources such as Early Head Start and EDCI’s early childhood parent advocates.

EDCI, CCFH, and Durham Connects facilitated most referrals to the home visiting program, indicating families’ ongoing involvement in the pipeline.

The evaluation team doesn’t currently track data from EDCI’s partnership with the Department of Social Services.

M. Becketts, personal communication, April 29, 2015.

An emerging area of growth involves EDCI’s early childhood parent advocates, who have started to link a small number of families to essential resources and enhanced their parenting skills.

EDCI parent advocates are successfully connecting with a greater number of families through increased outreach efforts via phone, text/email, and mail (phone is most common).

Note that the findings pertain to a small sample.

Based on this data, EDCI is modifying the program in order to more explicitly focus on enhancing families’ school involvement. Advocates will guide families in setting goals to support their children’s academic growth; one focal area is helping parents make the home environment conducive to learning (for example, ensuring that children have a work space and follow a bed routine). As EDCI refines the program, it plans to incorporate measures into the evaluation to allow it to better assess parental school involvement. Specific indicators might include the frequency of parents reading with or to their children, checking their homework, and attending parent-teacher conferences, among others.

Denotes youth who completed both a pre- and post-test.

Given this higher level of participation, it is not surprising that more youth avoided learning loss in 2014, compared to only 50% of pre- and post-tested youth in 2013 (EDCI, 2013b).

Note that different assessment tools were employed in 2013 and 2014 to measure learning loss prevention.

Moreover, a challenge related to data collection is that EDCI and Y.E. Smith do not always track the same indicators, according to Laupert of The Hill Center.


EDCI monitors participation in its hunger prevention programs and tracks referrals to nutritional counseling. The evaluation does not track this data since health and wellness is not currently within EDCI’s target areas.


Martinez, 2015, March 25.
The Five Promises
All young people in America should be able to say that they can count on:

Caring Adults
parents and family members, teachers, mentors, coaches and others who believe in, challenge and nurture them.

Safe Places
spaces at home, in school, in the community and online where they feel safe and have opportunities to learn, explore and grow.

Healthy Start
the right nutrition, exercise and medical care starting with their first years so they can thrive in school and in life.

Effective Education
to develop knowledge and real-world skills so they can fully participate in our economy and our democracy.

Opportunity to Serve
to share their time and talents with others, build their character and competence, and contribute to the civic life of their community.

About the Center for Promise
The Center for Promise is the research institute for America’s Promise Alliance, housed at Boston University’s School of Education and dedicated to understanding what young people need to thrive and how to create the conditions of success for all young people.