



Request for Inquiries

# Caregiver Engagement Initiative

## Introduction

The William Penn Foundation (WPF) has a long history of investing in early learning opportunities for children in Philadelphia. Recognizing that primary caregivers\* play an essential role in supporting social, emotional, and pre-academic outcomes for children, WPF seeks to increase opportunities for caregivers to learn about their children's development.

This initiative seeks to help caregivers to access new information and develop skills that allow them to fully enact their role as their child's first teacher. This initiative will assist high quality early childhood education (ECE) centers and social service organizations in engaging the families they serve to positively influence caregiver behaviors and achieve improved outcomes for young children from birth to age five. This work will help all of us to understand the opportunities to expand caregiver support and engagement.

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\* Throughout this document, the term caregivers will be used to refer to the parents, other adult family members, or guardians who have primary responsibility for raising a child.

## Background

Research consistently supports the critical role that positive parenting plays in leading to better outcomes for children's success in school and later life.<sup>1,2</sup> According to Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child, caregivers can decrease or exacerbate the risks and challenges inherent in growing up in poverty. Caregivers are also the primary force driving the development of their children's social-emotional skills, which helps children manage behavior, maintain self-esteem, and interact productively with others. Supporting caregivers to help foster these skills in their children has shown to be effective at improving child outcomes related to school readiness.<sup>3</sup>

Early childhood educators and social service organizations can effectively partner with caregivers to promote positive behaviors to support children's development and education. One way to do this is by implementing an intervention focused on strengthening caregiver support. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families (ACF) defines such interventions in the [Compendium of Parenting Interventions](#) as "a structured set of activities for children's primary adult caregivers that is intended to positively influence parenting behaviors and achieve positive outcomes for children."<sup>4</sup> The *Compendium* highlighted that evidence-based interventions have shown strong improvements in promoting positive practices and knowledge of child development. These programs have also led to measurable improvements in children's social-emotional competence and reduced problem behaviors.

## Caregiver Engagement Initiative

WPF requests Letters of Inquiry for three-year projects that aim to enhance family engagement efforts in ECE centers by helping to support caregivers' roles as their children's first teachers.

WPF seeks to fund 7-10 programs that focus on implementing evidence-based interventions in ECE centers that will engage caregivers of children enrolled in those programs. **These programs must be provided in partnership between social service organizations and ECE centers.** Examples of eligible applicants include:

- **Social service organizations:** Organizations that provide social or health services and have a track record of delivering caregiver supports to low-income families with young children in Philadelphia.
- **High-quality ECE centers** that are rated as a Keystone STARS 3 or 4 and/or are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), or are certified Head Start providers. ECE centers must primarily serve low-income families (serving a population at least 50% of whom are students supported by child care subsidy, Head Start, or Pre-K Counts) in Philadelphia.

The lead applicant must have a legal status as a 501c(3) public charity.

The objectives of the three-year (August 2017-August 2020) initiative are to:

- **Select** evidence-based interventions based on data on community needs and caregiver input.

- **Implement** evidence-based high-quality interventions for caregivers of children from birth to five in underserved communities in Philadelphia;
- **Evaluate** the impact of interventions on children and caregivers;
- **Build** a network of ECE centers and social service organizations to foster peer learning, collaboration, and resource sharing related to the effective implementation of caregiver interventions; and
- **Disseminate** evaluation findings to relevant stakeholders, including the early childhood and social service communities, education sector leaders, and funders.

### Process

The grant period will consist of a two-phase process, which will include planning and implementation.

#### Planning Phase

##### **Approximately August – October 2017**

Grantees in partnership with the target participants will select an evidence-based intervention based on community needs and input, which will be gathered through data analysis, outreach, and research (focus groups, surveys). External experts, funded by WPF, will assist grantees in final selection of a program.

#### Implementation Phase

##### **Approximately November 2017 – August 2020**

Grantees will implement the chosen evidence-based intervention and participate in an evaluation and shared learning opportunities.

**Project Criteria**

Priority consideration will be given to proposals that meet the following criteria:

<b>Community Need</b>	The partnership demonstrates a clear understanding of the needs of the families they serve and the likely pool of participants.
<b>Family engagement</b>	The partnership describes the plan to actively engage caregivers and the community in the selection, planning, and delivery of any selected intervention. Partners also have successfully undertaken efforts to engage caregivers in the past. There is also a plan to maintain high levels of family engagement and participation.
<b>Evidence-based intervention</b>	<p>The partnership has identified 1-3 evidence-based interventions that they are interested in investigating further which may address caregiver needs. The inquiry describes how the interventions could benefit families and improve child outcomes, and why it is well-matched to the intended participants.</p> <p>The interventions selected should have a strong research base showing improved child and caregiver outcomes. Preference will also be given to interventions that can be delivered in a group-based format for caregivers, which studies indicate has strong positive effects on changes in parenting behavior and building peer support.<sup>5</sup></p> <p>Resources that may assist applicants in selecting evidence-based interventions can be found here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACF's <i>Compendium of Parenting Interventions</i> <a href="https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/compendium-of-parenting.pdf">https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/compendium-of-parenting.pdf</a></li> <li>• Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development <a href="http://www.blueprintsprograms.com/">http://www.blueprintsprograms.com/</a></li> <li>• Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness <a href="http://www.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/">http://www.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/</a></li> </ul>
<b>Organizational Ability</b>	The partnership has a preliminary plan for implementation, including identifying existing or new staff members who have the necessary qualifications and other resources needed to effectively deliver the intervention. The applicant must also describe a plan to provide the intervention during convenient times for families. (It is also expected that programming will be provided at the ECE center and that child care will be provided at no cost for families.)
<b>Partnership</b>	The partnership describes a collaborative plan that defines roles and responsibilities of each organizational partner, any history of working together, and the complementary skills and resources that each partner brings.
<b>Measurable</b>	The inquiry identifies child and adult outcomes as well as implementation indicators that the project could potentially measure. (Please note: evaluation will be funded and conducted separately and this information is to be used only for planning purposes.)
<b>Sustainability</b>	The partnership has initial ideas about how to sustain the intervention beyond the grant period.

## ***Evaluation***

Funded programs will participate in an external, implementation and outcome evaluation. The goal of the evaluation is to learn about supports for and obstacles to program implementation as well as the ultimate impact on children and caregivers. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the interventions impacted:

- **Child** outcomes, including social-emotional or cognitive development; and
- **Caregiver** habits, attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

Participation in the evaluation will be expected through data submission and ongoing communication. As part of the evaluation, formative feedback and technical assistance will be provided. Organizations will be expected to make adjustments to service provision based on collaboration with the external evaluator. Funded program providers will also be brought together on a limited basis for shared learning opportunities.

## ***Project Results***

Between August 2017 and August 2020, evidence-based interventions will have been implemented at ECE centers serving low-income families in Philadelphia. An external evaluation will assess child and caregiver outcomes.

## **Budget**

It is expected that expenses for the project will be covered by a three-year grant from WPF. However, larger projects for which WPF funding is only a portion of project costs are also welcome.

Preliminary project budgets should include an estimate of all resources needed to effectively implement a caregiver intervention, including dedicated staff time (new and/or existing), incentives (limited to meals and child care during intervention delivery), training and associated travel, and materials to support program implementation. Budget descriptions can be provided in the Inquiry Form narrative.

The most competitive inquiries will have total project budgets up to \$300,000. Total funding from WPF should not exceed 25% of participating organizations' operating budgets during the grant period.

External evaluation costs should not be included, as this will be covered by WPF separately.



## Timeline

### **February 27, 2017**

Inquiry submission period opens

### **March 17, 2017**

Inquiry forms due by 5:00 PM EST

### **March 24, 2017**

Select applicants invited to submit proposals

### **April 14, 2017**

Proposals due by 5:00 PM EST

### **July 21, 2017**

Board review of selected proposals

### **August 2017 - August 2020**

Program implementation and evaluation

## Process

The application process begins by submitting an [Inquiry Form](#) through the WPF website by **March 17**. WPF will review all Inquiry Forms and invite select applicants to submit a full proposal.

In addition to the Inquiry Form, please attach a brief summary as “additional documentation” detailing:

- Key staff who will work on this project
- Number of caregivers that might be served by the intervention
- Organizational information for each participating organization (single or multi-site center, locations, number of families served, percentage of low-income families served) and family demographics

This request or any subsequent response does not commit William Penn Foundation or the responding organization to any future funding or engagement.

If you have any questions, contact Kerri Lee at [Klee@williampennfoundation.org](mailto:Klee@williampennfoundation.org).

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## References

- <sup>1</sup> Brooks-Gunn J, Markman LB. The contribution of caregiving to ethnic and racial gaps in school readiness. 2005;15(1):139-168. Available at: [http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr\\_doc/pg\\_139\\_markman\\_&\\_brooks-gunn.pdf](http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/pg_139_markman_&_brooks-gunn.pdf)
- <sup>2</sup> Collins WA, Maccoby EE, Steinberg L, Hetherington EM, Bornstein MH. Contemporary research on caregiving: The case for nature and nurture. *American Psychologist* 2000;55(2):218-232.
- <sup>3</sup> Sheridan, S., Knoche, L. L., Edwards, C. P., Bovaird, J. A., & Kupzyk, K. A. (2010). Parent engagement and school readiness: Effects of the getting ready intervention on preschool children's social emotional competencies. *Early Education & Development*, 21(1), 125-156.
- <sup>4</sup> National Center for Parent, Family and Community Engagement. (2015). *Compendium of parenting interventions*. Washington, D.C.: National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement, Office of Head Start, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.
- <sup>5</sup> Layzer, J. I., Goodson, B. D., Bernstein, L., & Price, C. (2001). *National Evaluation of Family Support Programs. Final Report Volume A: The Meta-Analysis*.