
Ascension Ready Start Network Blueprint

VISION

It is the vision of the Ascension Early Childhood Community Network to provide all children, ages birth to four, with a high quality and easily accessible early childhood education in order to ensure kindergarten readiness and future success in school and beyond.

MISSION

To find and serve at risk families in order to increase the number of children in Ascension Parish who reach kindergarten on time and ready to learn, in order to facilitate future success in school and beyond.

Introduction - Analysis of Current State

The Ascension Parish Community Network consists of 16 school based pre-k sites, 1 Head Start site, and 14 Type III child care centers. Our network currently serves 920 students including 251 Head Start eligible children in five school based sites, 544 additional 4 year-olds in school based classrooms, and 125 CCAP eligible children in private child care centers. At this time, we are meeting the need for almost all of the families who submitted a completed application for publicly funded seats in our school-based and Head Start sites. There are only 6 children on the waiting list for three and four year-old seats in our public school or Head Start sites. However, there are 79 four year-olds and 35 three year-olds that have incomplete applications in our application portal so it is undetermined as to whether these children would have qualified and been placed on a waiting list. If these applications were complete, we would not have been able to serve these families.

Our only funding source for birth to two year-olds is CCAP. We are currently meeting the need for CCAP recipients, as there are no CCAP recipients on a waiting list. However, based on our at-risk cohort data, there are families that would qualify for publicly funded birth to three seats if funding were available. There are open seats for toddler and three year-olds at some of our type III child care centers, although the open seat may not be at the site which is the family's first choice. There are currently no open seats for infants.

Our overall classroom quality rating for the network is proficient, showing an increase from 4.59 in 2017-2018 to 4.77 for 2018 - 2019. Our equitable access rating increased from "approaching proficient" in 2017-2018 to "proficient" in 2018-2019. We increased the number of sites scoring proficient or higher from 19 to 21 and decreased the number of sites scoring "approaching proficient" or lower from 11 to 10, however we increased the number of "unsatisfactory" sites from zero to 1. One of our childcare centers is

currently on a site improvement plan and is receiving support to facilitate improvement. All of our 16 school-based and Head Start sites are “proficient” or higher, while only 6 of our 10 (60%) of our child care centers are proficient or higher. We showed an increase in all CLASS domains except for “Engaged Support for Learning” which declined from 3.13 to 3.08. All domains were proficient or higher except for Instructional Support (3.56) and Engaged Support for Learning (3.08)

STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal 1: By the end of the 2024 - 2025 school year, we will increase access to high quality early childhood for birth to four year-olds by increasing the number of publicly funded seats to meet 100% of the family demand.

Strategies:

- 2020 - 2021 Increase the number of four year-olds served by offering tuition based pk seats, expanding the number of LA4 funded seats, and revising eligibility guidelines for 8(g), Title 1 and EEF to include students that do not meet income guidelines, but at risk because of developmental, social-emotional, or behavioral concerns.
- 2020-2021 Increase the number of publicly funded seats for three year-olds by reallocating Head Start funding from 4 year-old seats to 3 year-old seats in our public school sites.
- 2020-2021 Identify day care sites that have no deficiencies from licensing and are active participants in our Community Network meetings and trainings as potential sites for early head start funding.
- Secure Early Head Start Funding in order to expand service for birth through two year-olds.

Existing Resources:

- licensing at AHS, Private Child Care Centers
- Head Start funding in Ascension Public Schools

Needed Resources:

- licensing at additional public school sites
- certified teachers for pk3 classes
- Early Head Start funding
- additional LA4 funding
- online ASQ screening
- Child Plus Data Management for eligibility determination

Performance Metrics:

- Child Count Data
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Goal 2: By the end of the 2024-2025 school year, we will improve the quality of our early childhood network by increasing our overall performance rating from proficient to highly proficient.

Strategies:

- Increase the Instructional Support domain score from 3.56 (Approaching Proficient) to 5.25 (Highly Proficient) by providing pre-k 3/pre-k 4 teachers and instructional support staff with high quality professional development.
 - Teachstone Training
 - Job embedded professional development and coaching
 - Summer training for teachers, school administrators, and child-care center directors
- Increase Engaged Support for Learning from 3.08 (Approaching Proficient) to 4.50 (Proficient) by providing birth to 2 year-old teachers and instructional support staff with high quality professional development.
 - Teachstone Training
 - Job embedded professional development and coaching through coordinated efforts with our resource and referral agency
 - After hours (Saturdays) professional development

Existing Resources:

- Access to MyTeachstone for child-care centers
- MMCI coaching for Head Start sites
- Instructional coach for public school sites
- Partnership with Volunteers of America (Resource & Referral Agency)

Needed Resources:

- Funding to pay stipends for after hours training for child-care center staff
- funding for an additional instructional coach for public school sites

Performance Metrics:

- CLASS Scores
 - Performance Profile Data
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Goal 3: Identify and reach traditionally underserved populations and provide expanded family support to at risk families.

Strategies:

- Locate at risk families whose children are not being served through our network by expanding outreach events.
- Provide wraparound services to families that include referrals to community resources to meet the needs of at-risk children outside of education, including physical and mental health

Existing Resources:

- Family managers that serve Head Start funded students.

Resources Needed:

- EL Staff fluent in Spanish
- Family managers to serve students in non-Head Start funded seats.

Performance Metrics:

- ASQ data
- Child Plus data
- TSG data

Goal 4: Increase opportunities to identify and provide research-based interventions that foster development of executive functioning and language/literacy skills.

Strategies:

- Partner with health care providers, DHH, community partners, and families to support learning and development in children birth to five.
- Provide professional development for instructional staff, parents, and community partners regarding executive function and language/literacy development.
- Ensure a common screening tool and shared information between partners to identify at risk students.
- Collaborate with families and community partners to determine and provide appropriate interventions that foster executive functioning and language/literacy skills.

Existing Resources:

- District level child search coordinator and evaluation team
- ASQ screeners
- Partnership between EC Lead Agency and district SBLC
- Universal ASQ screening in all public school early childhood classes
- Targeted ASQ screening in child-care centers that are in the EC Community Network

Needed Resources:

- Additional screening instruments to identify students at risk of executive functioning and/or language/literacy deficits that may lead to future barriers to learning or disabilities.
- Universal screening of all children birth to five
- Trained staff members and community partners to provide appropriate interventions to identified students ages birth to five

Performance Metrics:

- Referral data
- Screening data
- Longitudinal cohort assessment data (Universal Screening Results, TSG, standardized tests)