



3+ INITIATIVE FINAL REPORT

A gap in services and connection often follows a child and family when the child turns three years old and transitions out of the Early Intervention Program (EI). The types of services available through Community Outreach, Family Support, and school-based services differ from those in EI, causing families to feel a loss of support. Families with children in Family Support, on a waiver or on a waitlist for services, between three and five years of age were the focus of this initiative. Regardless of program, families should have full access to community resources.



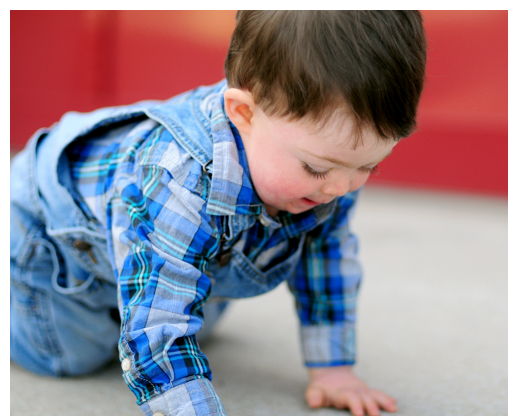
Intended Benefits

- Full inclusion and access to community resources for 3+ children
- Eligible 3+ children remain connected with Developmental Pathways after Early Intervention and into the next service



Intended Outcomes

- All interested 3+ families receive individualized support and training following EI and leading into school supports
- Therapy providers increase group and parent training options
- Preschools and community agencies receive training and have the capacity to serve 3+ kids





Activities

A 3+ Committee comprised of staff from the Community Outreach and Early Childhood Departments of Developmental Pathways consulted with parents, staff and schools to develop the outcomes and plan to fulfill them. The main activities of the initiative are outlined below.

Provider Grants

A grant program was started to award funds to providers to expand or enhance identified 3+ needs including building sensory-friendly environments, providing staff training and connecting families with community activities. A total of **\$189,510** was awarded to the following eleven community agencies.

GRANT RECIPIENTS

- Ability Connections Colorado
- Adam's Camp
- Autism Community Store
- Denver Behavior Consultants, LLC
- Hope Farms
- Lu Bird's Light Foundation
- Monkey Bizness
- STAR Institute
- The Child and Family Therapy Center of Denver, LLC
- The Foundation for Behavior Services
- THRIVE Center

MINI-GRANTS

Additionally, **21 mini-grants**, for a total of over **\$14,000**, were given to preschool classrooms and early childcare settings (public and private) in conjunction with participation in specific trainings, for sensory-friendly equipment, books, games and furniture.

Early Childhood Provider Trainings

Families of any children should be able to access the local community resources, including preschools and early childcare settings. However, many of our children need specialized care and have been limited to providers who are not at convenient locations or affordable prices. Through the 3+ Initiative, regular trainings have been provided low-cost or free of charge to providers who serve children in Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas Counties.



Kristie Pretti-Frontczak, a national early childhood expert, provided a one-day, two-day and two evening trainings for early childhood providers and parents.

Outreach to all the ChildFind teams in Douglas and Arapahoe Counties and the City of Aurora along with 138 public and private preschools by Developmental Pathways' staff promoted the trainings and gathered topic ideas for trainings. After many trainings, individual school consultations were provided to support implementation of the training content.

Developmental Pathways provided training on developmental milestones and managing challenging behaviors in the preschool classroom to the annual Early Childhood Christian Director's Association conference. This opened the door to reach over 400 early childhood providers from across Colorado.



Group Therapy

Children who access Early Intervention services and the individual therapy provided often need continued therapy, which can be cost-prohibitive for families to access when private insurance denies the claims. To address this need, the Developmental Pathways supported the development of group therapy options for needs included but not limited to, speech, social skills, preschool readiness, handwriting and other occupational needs. Now that many different therapy agencies provide these groups, families can access them at a lower cost than individual therapy, or with financial support through the Community Outreach Department.

"Winter Gap" Pilots

Children who turn three years of age and transition out of EI and qualify for preschool services during the winter and early spring months often do not get school placements that meet the families' needs. Placement schools may be at a difficult location or time for families, so the children cannot be enrolled in preschool when they initially qualify.

Developmental Pathways completed three pilot programs to address this need.

- The first pilot program was preschool readiness groups with one provider at two locations. These groups were offered on a weekly basis in February through May. As qualified children transitioned out of Early Intervention, they could join one of the groups.
- The second pilot program was online. Two different online preschool learning sites were offered to qualifying families at no cost.
- The third pilot program was a preschool readiness program offered during the summer months for consecutive days leading up to the school year.

Information & Resources Access

To address the need for sharing information on services for 3+ children, Developmental Pathways developed a [webpage of resources](#). Resources for parents and early childhood professionals are included. There are four videos to support families in the transition from Early Intervention to the Community Outreach Program.

Internal Staff Training

The 3+ Initiative work brought to light the need for new and ongoing staff training on the EI transition. An online training for staff and providers was created and made available to share about the Community Outreach Program, which, for eligible children, follows after the EI Program.

Preschool Consultation Model

The Preschool Consultation Model was one of the first activities of the 3+ Initiative. This project worked to bridge the social-emotional support received from a behavior specialist and what was being done in the classroom and home for three preschool classrooms in Aurora Public Schools.

Continuum of Colorado's Behavior Services Department provided behavior skills training, collaborative planning training followed by bi-weekly team collaboration meetings, and classroom consultation including coaching and modeling. While the data and anecdotes all showed a successful program, other school districts expressed concern for the time dedication for this program. No other districts would commit to further discussion of the program.



Early Childhood Professionals



11

agencies received provider grants

21

schools received mini-grants



200+

connected with preschools, childcare and drop-in centers to identify needs



59

trainings given with 2,700+ participants

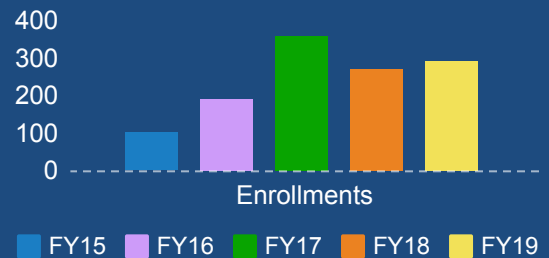
Approximately

100 children

participated in the expanded summer social skills groups through the five providers.

97% INCREASE in 3+ enrollments

Priority efforts were given to support families in the transition from EI to Community Outreach (CO) services.



Provider grants impacted at least

2,600 children

in Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas Counties the first year of grant use. The mini-grants will impact around **400 children** each year.

180 parents, caregivers & providers

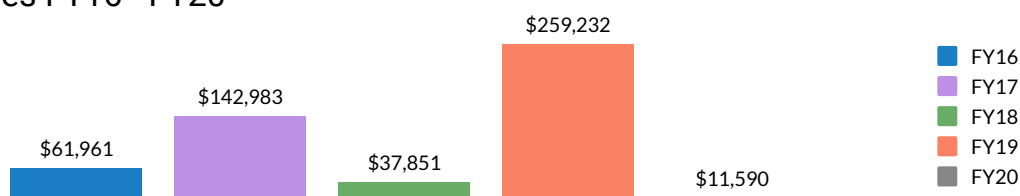
are part of the Facebook 3+ Parent Group



Financials

Total Board Designated & Donations Funds: \$513,617

Expenses FY16 - FY20





Lessons Learned

How to expand services in a cost-effective manner:

The CO Department expanded group therapy options, but many of the options cannot be billed through insurance and are still too expensive for ongoing family expenses. While the group expense is cheaper than individual therapy, this leads to an ongoing shared expense for the CO Program in order to ensure access to the therapy for many families.

Winter Gap Projects

The “Winter Gap” projects were cost-prohibitive as each family affected had different requirements to meet the need. They needed different times and locations for services, necessitating individual therapies and classes. The cost-effective online options were not utilized as parents wanted their children in programs with other children, not at home doing individualized work. In response to their feedback, a final pilot was done summer 2019 with two weeks of consecutive group time rather than weekly sessions for longer periods of time.

New Ways to Support

Through the 3+ Initiative efforts, the CO Program adopted new ways to provide supports to families, using more funds for community partnerships that directly benefit families and consequently not needing to provide the same level of individual financial supports to many families. Families who have enrolled in the CO Program during this work value the partnerships and want them to continue after their children turn six.



Next Steps

Changes to come

Most of the actions of the 3+ Initiative led to positive outcomes and changed the way business is done at Developmental Pathways. The initiative brought more collaboration with EI and CO as well as more supports for families as they move from one type of services to another. These efforts must continue as new families come to DP for EI and future services.

Programs/Activities to continue

- 3+ Facebook Group
- Discounted group therapy for children enrolled in the CO Program
- Monthly early childhood professionals and community agencies trainings
- EI transition supports for families
- Mini-grants for providers, as available through Community Outreach funds
- 3+ webpage through Developmental Pathways' website